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2017-2018

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan
Almora

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Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan (USNPSS)

Jakhan Devi, Mall Road

Almora 263601 (Uttarakhand)

Telephone: 05962-234430

Fax: 05962-231100

Email: sevanidhi.almora@gmail.com

URL: <http://www.sevanidhi.org>

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1. Introduction

The Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan (USNPSS), a registered non-government organization, has completed thirty years of work in 2018. Over the last three decades our annual reports have not only documented activities in hill villages of Uttarakhand but presented a journey that transformed the staff of USNPSS as well as communities and teachers/students in schools from the mindset of cynicism and helplessness to positivity and confidence in ourselves. This transformation in our sense of being is reflected in day to day activities with communities; especially in ways women and girls conduct themselves and take leadership roles in various positions in their own villages and outside. This transformation is also reflected by community co-operation and a sense of solidarity that prevails in villages where USNPSS has been working for many years now.

In reflecting on our work with communities, we also bring the issue of changing infrastructure into the discourse that has contributed to significant changes. Now, public roads have reached (or reaching) the villages and communication facilities have improved. Television and cell phone have arrived and, though on a very limited scale, a few families have also started using refrigerators, washing machines etc. Availability and use of these services have not only changed people's mindset but also altered their lifestyle. Still, challenges remain and poor functioning of facilities continue to pose difficulties in day to day life of village residents. So, the challenge is to find ways to facilitate processes that would make the visible infrastructure function smoothly and efficiently. USNPSS has invested on building up rural people's capacity enabling them to access and operationalize the visible infrastructure by understanding and making use of it for their own benefits and for the benefits of the whole community. We call it strengthening the invisible infrastructure or the invisible system that makes the visible systems function properly and efficiently.

Many examples could be cited to illustrate the need for investing in and on strengthening the invisible system to ensure wellbeing of people in the mountains. Take the issue of female education and providing equal opportunities in schools. USNPSS started motivating rural girls (and their parents) to enroll themselves in schools in 1988, much before the launch of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan* and the Right to Education Act. Today, elementary schooling is almost universal in the state and the number of girls attending colleges and other vocational training institutes has gone up significantly. Still, social taboos prevail and need continuous efforts to facilitate equal opportunities to girls in schools. For example, girls hesitate in taking part in sports and other extra-curricular activities in schools. Similarly, the choice of taking mathematics and science subjects still poses many challenges to rural girls.

At another level, the state has made it mandatory to have fifty percent reservation for women in panchayats. However, despite reservation and physical representation of women, many programmes led by panchayats continue to be gender insensitive. In other words, the visible infrastructure of panchayati raj needs inputs from what we call the invisible infrastructure where

elected women representatives could understand, articulate and make use of planned and current activities for the well-being of their communities.

Changing attitudes and aspirations of young women and adolescents to life and livelihoods pose another example of transformation that is occurring in villages. As opposed to the earlier generations of women, young educated girls do not want to work as farmers but aspire for a paid job in the city. Understanding this shift in aspirations of women is important from the perspective of environment, livelihoods, migration and gender relations. The policy implications of this understanding are many and have been documented by USNPSS in an ICSSR supported research on gender, disaster and migration in Uttarakhand (2014-2016). USNPSS continues to study and document this change in rural society, currently in a project supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (2017-2019). This project is coordinated by the G B Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Sustainable Development.

These two research studies conducted recently by USNPSS (2014 and 2017) made it evident that the mountain regions of the state of Uttarakhand were experiencing rapid changes in the physical and social ecosystems. The study (2011- 2014) entitled “Community-driven Climate Resilient Hill Farming in Village Ecosystems of the North West Himalayas (Uttarakhand)” had shown that rural women farmers were the worst affected by the shifts in weather patterns. Taking the village as an ecosystem, the study explored ways to improve its resilience with sustainability as a major component regarding management of natural resources. A resilience index was developed to quantify the health of the village ecosystem. Consequently, several land-based activities were started to improve upon the physical, social and economic aspects of communities in the region.

This expanded model of improving ecosystem health and strengthening resilience was further explored with a gender lens in another research during 2014-2017. The study, “Reframing discourses on gender and disaster: *Pahadi* narratives of change from rural Uttarakhand” examined the issue of how energy and human labour that flows through the ecosystem is structured; and related to gender roles, and how gendered responsibilities may intensify in communities experiencing disasters due to climate change and global warming. One of the conclusions of this study was that we need to consider small scale continuing disasters as different but important from the large-scale events normally understood as a “disaster”. The study also illustrated the massive intergenerational change that is happening in the lives of women in the Himalayan mountains.

On reflection of these two studies and also on our practical experience with communities, we have been able to expand on our earlier understanding of the concept of “resilience”. The earlier approaches were to focus on “building up resistance to change” and on “the ability of the ecosystem to return to its original position after a disturbance”. Now our conceptual understanding of the term resilience is “to improve the ability of the ecosystem to find a new state of equilibrium, which leads to the well-being of the individual, the community and the

physical system". The work of Carl Folk (2017) in "Resilience: The Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of Environmental Science" which was originally published online in September 2016, and first accessed by USNPSS in April 2017, has greatly influenced our theoretical understanding of the term resilience. As we are not an academic institute, we felt that this work gave a confirmation to our own thinking that was emerging from our reflections on research and field-based experiences in the villages of Uttarakhand.

Our work with rural women is now increasingly covering activities that enable them (a) to improve resilience of the existing ecosystems and (b) to seek new survival strategies. With the support of the USNPSS and its partner CBOs, rural communities have been able to think and initiate new activities to improve their livelihoods. This is important because currently village life is undergoing rapid changes. The intensity of these changes (social, ecological and economic), as we could see in the villages, is so intense that a "band-aid" approach would fall short of desired or hopeful outcomes.

Further, this is the time when migration to the cities has become common and people have been losing interest in agriculture and forest related activities. Spread of roads, schools and of communication systems (television, cell phones) has changed the traditional mindset towards the standards of living. Our day to day interaction with rural people has revealed that though the village individuals wanted to change, everybody is not clear on what this change could be or should be. Further, in the highly competitive environment of cities, each migrant is not going to succeed. Some of the migrants return to their village. Also, for various reasons, a sizable amount of the population still lives in the villages. The challenge, therefore, is to develop a balance between the land-based activities, environmental concerns and non-farm work so that an individual, the community and the larger society, can live a decent life in villages.

This year's work has helped USNPSS in developing and nurturing a holistic approach to work *with* the communities (not *for* communities) on issues of social, ecological and economic development in times when the effects of climate change are being experienced as never before.

Building upon the above-mentioned research and community-based experiences, the following programmes were conducted this year. All these programmes are nurtured with a holistic view promoting the idea of interrelatedness in village ecosystems. Being the result of an organic process, always evolving and changing, these programmes also encompass ideas that put "sensitivity" and "practicality" above mainstream thoughts and practice re development issues in rural areas. The main activities focus around the following themes:

1. Village learning centers, Computer centers and environmental education
2. Organizing and nurturing women's groups and adolescent girl's groups
3. Tailoring and knitting centers for women and girls
4. Activities for land-based livelihoods generation
5. Capacity building of communities and the community-based organizations
6. Research and publications

2. Village Learning Centers

During the year 2017-2018, a total of 65 village learning centers (VLCs) and 9 computer literacy centers were functional in five hill districts of the state of Uttarakhand. A village learning center offers a shared space to children, women, adolescents, elderly and the rest of the community members to learn together and initiate action to improve their life in multiple fronts. The names of the villages and a break-up in terms of gender and caste composition of the students attending VLCs is given in Table 1.

The VLCs provide a learning system with activities that use as well as generate knowledge at different levels in the community. With the aim of creating a safe and an enabling environment for learning and also by nurturing educational practices, the VLCs engage the children, the adolescents, women, men and the elderly in the community with different activities suitable for their age and needs.

Whilst the focus for children is on strengthening their learning skills; especially in mathematics, languages and environment education, the adolescents need information and skills on personality development, health (preventive health education, curative health issues, reproductive health etc.), career counselling and so on. The centers create space for leadership of women, adolescent girls and youth too. In particular, members of organized women's groups make efforts to connect learning in the centers to social, ecological and economic changes in their communities. Every month, a meeting of the women's group is held in the village. Irrespective of their socio-economic background women from all the households attend. During the meeting women talk about their problems, discuss solutions and take some action to solve those problems.

A transformative educational approach to community development has encouraged the facilitators in the center as well as the USNPSS staff to explore and integrate ecological, social and economic understandings into the learning processes offered by the center. There are continuous informal interactions and formal meetings between the women's groups, youth, adolescent groups and the facilitators so that everyone in the community is involved and feels connected to the center. Participation in village meetings is voluntary and no money is paid to the village residents. Yet, everyone attends in good faith and with the idea of "doing good" for the community. A small honorarium is paid to the facilitators/supervisors responsible for the program in villages.

Each centre needs to be a vibrant place where children could come and learn in a positive environment. It must stimulate thinking and develop skills among children as well as the facilitators because learning here is seen as a two-way process. The child and the facilitator learn from each other and from others in the community. A majority of centres also maintain a close contact with village schools. After-school activities for children in ages 5-14 years are carried out with the aim of improving the mental, physical and emotional development. Often young

children below the age of 5 years also come along with their siblings. In addition, adolescent girls attend the center on Sunday because on other days of the week they go to school.

In remote Himalayan villages where the quality of education in schools continues to be a major challenge, the VLCs offer well thought-off activities focusing on language development and understanding of mathematical concepts among primary school going children. The centres also focus on building knowledge on environmental issues. In addition, children are encouraged to paint, take part in debate and essay writing competitions and to participate in sports. In rural areas where girls are not allowed to play and take part in sports, the VLCs offer a physical space and create an enabling environment in communities to girls to come forward and participate in sports in schools and otherwise. Each centre hosts sporting equipment such as cricket and badminton sets, volleyball and football, chess, carom board etc. and children are encouraged to play together.

Table 1. Village learning centers with details of children.

Serial number	Name of the village	Cluster (of villages)	Total number of children			Number of children from socially disadvantaged castes		Number of children from general caste population	
			Total	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
1	Maniagar	Maichun	23	12	11	12	11	0	0
2	Girchola	Maichun	20	8	12	1	5	7	7
3	Mauni	Maichun	26	13	13	8	6	5	7
4	Maichun	Maichun	20	11	9	0	0	11	9
5	Banthok	Maichun	24	17	7	13	3	4	4
6	Palyoun	Maichun	28	16	12	16	12	0	0
7	Padai	Danya	30	18	12	0	0	18	12
8	Bashan	Danya	22	10	12	7	9	3	3
9	Thali	Danya	27	14	13	2	0	12	13
10	Dharagad	Danya	28	14	14	5	4	9	10
11	Ukal	Danya	21	9	12	0	0	9	12
12	Danya	Danya	27	12	15	6	13	6	2
13	Dasili	Danya	28	12	16	0	0	12	16
14	Ruwal	Danya	25	19	6	0	0	19	6
15	Gauli	Danya	20	10	10	0	0	10	10
16	Munauli	Danya	23	13	10	0	0	13	10
17	Surna	Binta	28	13	15	0	0	13	15
18	Bhataura	Binta	28	8	20	0	0	8	20
19	Borkhola	Binta	26	16	10	1	0	15	10
20	Jakh	Binta	25	16	9	0	0	16	9
21	Parkot	Binta	34	20	14	0	0	20	14
22	Bedhuli	Dwarahat/Binta	23	11	12	2	2	9	10
23	Ganoli	Dwarahat/Binta	21	9	12	0	0	9	12
24	Gwadi	Ganai Gangoli	28	11	17	2	0	9	17
25	Bhaloogada	Ganai Gangoli	19	8	11	0	0	8	11

26	Fadiyali	Ganai Gangoli	22	14	8	14	8	0	0
27	Bhanyani	Ganai Gangoli	23	10	13	0	0	10#	13#
28	Talli Nayal	Ganai Gangoli	19	7	12	7	12	0	0
29	Hinari	Shama	21	11	10	0	0	11	10
30	Dhari	Shama	20	12	8	0	0	12	8
31	Malkha Dugarcha	Shama	25	16	9	16	9	0	0
32	Namik	Shama	28	14	14	7+1*	13+1*	6	0
33	Talla Namik	Shama	28	17	11	0	0	17#	11#
34	Liti Dhoora	Shama	23	13	10	7	5	6	5
35	Jankande	Pati	30	16	14	7	10	9	4
36	Pokhari	Pati	31	16	15	0	0	16	15
37	Dhoonaghat	Pati	20	15	5	0	0	15	5
38	Lakhanpur	Pati	25	13	12	4	2	9	10
39	Harodi	Pati	20	9	11	0	0	9	11
40	Nandasain	Karnprayag	23	10	13	0	1	10	12
41	Bainoli	Karnprayag	21	10	11	0	0	10	11
42	Toli	Karnprayag	33	18	15	0	0	18	15
43	Jhurkande	Karnprayag	22	7	15	2	9	5	6
44	Pudiyani	Karnprayag	25	16	9	0	0	16	9
45	Sundargaon	Karnprayag	26	11	15	0	0	11	15
46	Diyarkot	Karnprayag	27	12	15	0	0	12	15
47	Jakh	Karnprayag	25	18	7	1	0	17	7
48	Chaundali	Karnprayag	23	9	14	1	1	8	13
49	Badhani	Karnprayag	18	9	9	3	1	6	8
50	Bamiyala	Gopeshwar	42	20	22	0	0	20	22
51	Kandai	Gopeshwar	33	16	17	0	0	16	17
52	Gwad	Gopeshwar	35	23	12	0	0	23	12
53	Siroli	Gopeshwar	19	12	7	0	0	12	7
54	Sagar	Gopeshwar	31	14	17	0	0	14	17
55	Banadwara	Gopeshwar	43	18	25	2	4	16	21
56	Mandal	Gopeshwar	27	13	14	3	4	10	10
57	Devaldhar	Gopeshwar	36	13	23	0	0	13	23
58	Koteshwar	Gopeshwar	22	7	15	4	5	3	10
59	Khalla	Gopeshwar	39	14	25	6	8	8	17
60	Kimana	Ukhimath	23	12	11	0	0	12	11
61	Huddu	Ukhimath	21	5	16	1	2	4	14
62	Ushada	Ukhimath	19	10	9	0	0	10	9
63	Dungar	Ukhimath	27	18	9	18	9	0	0
64	Saari	Ukhimath	28	18	10	5	2	13	8
65	Byolda	Ukhimath	37	22	15	22	15	0	0
Total			1684	858	826	206	186	652	640

*ST, # OBC



Figure 1. A village learning center at Byolda, Ukhimath, district Chamoli.,



Figure 2. Children in VLC Palyun, district Almora.



Figure 3. Learning material at a village learning center, Kamlekh, district Champawat.

2a. Training and workshops

Table 2 exhibits the number of training/workshops held at USNPSS Almora. The number of participants in each event is exhibited in the table. Expenses related to travel, boarding and lodging of the participants are incurred by USNPSS.

Table 2. Training/workshops held at USNPSS Almora.

Serial number	Duration	Number of days	Type of training	Number of participants
1	19.4. 2017	1	CBOs/VLC	8
2	11-15.5.2017	5	VLC Facilitators	25
3	25-29.7.2017	5	VLC Facilitators	28
4	13-17.3.2018	5 (2 simultaneous trainings at Almora)	VLC Facilitators and computer facilitators	36
Total		20		193

2ai. Training for VLC facilitators

A total of four training programs were held for the VLC facilitators during the year. In addition, a workshop for field coordinators was held in April 2017. The field coordinators and the facilitators work together in villages. The aim of these programs was to impart knowledge and develop skills of the village level workers to run the centers. All training programs and workshops were highly interactive and participatory in nature. The participants were encouraged to talk about their experiences and problems that they face in running the centers. In addition, the participants, majority young girls, learnt practical experience-based methods to improve their understanding of the nature, structure and functioning of women's groups and adolescent girls' groups so that they could support group activities in their respective villages.

Special attention was paid to building up understanding of the trainees on language and mathematics. The reasons for bringing in this focus was two-fold. First, a majority of the facilitators are first-generation learners. Their fathers may have attended schools but mothers have not. Hence, their ideas about learning languages and mathematics was inclined towards rote learning, methods that the facilitators themselves have been exposed to while they were in schools. Second, a majority of participants struggle with mathematical concepts and it becomes very difficult for them to deal with the issue in the center. Hence, during training, a lot of time and energy was devoted towards building up their understanding in simple arithmetical and geometrical concepts.



Figure 4 and 5. Training of facilitators at USNPSS Almora.



2b. Educational materials

Each center hosts about 300-500 books for children and adults in the community. The titles include fiction, non-fiction, picture-books for young children, books on science, biographies and autobiographies, dictionaries, books and magazines on current issues to help children prepare for competitive exams etc. These books are selected very carefully by USNPSS with the intention of providing the best titles and the best authors from the country and also translations of some famous writers from abroad.

Sports equipment is provided with the intention of offering opportunities to rural children to play and learn from such activities. In many villages, especially in remote areas, it is for the first time

that children have access to such material. In addition, in a community set-up adolescent girls and young women were not allowed to play and run. Through the learning centers, USNPSS has been promoting an enabling environment for girls to play and take part in sporting activities. As a result, girls have started playing volleyball and cricket in matches organized during Bal-melas (children's fair) and also in their schools/colleges.



Figure 6. Educational material in the centers.



Figure 7. Each center hosts a library of selected books.

2c. Bal mela or educational fairs

During the year, a total of 11 educational fairs were organized by nine CBOs in different locations. The place for holding the bal-mela was selected by the CBOs considering the convenience of the hosting village and the surrounding communities and schools. A total of 6 bal

melas were held in space/fields offered by the local schools and intermediate colleges and 2 bal melas were organized near the *panchayat ghar*.

Bal melas provide an opportunity to children to display their creations and skills before a large gathering of parents, other village residents and students and teachers from neighboring villages. In some cases, the representatives of the local village committees and officials from the local administration also attend. The atmosphere is like a major event in the village particularly because programs like this are rarely held in remote areas. In addition, the residents take pride in hosting the event in their village. To make the event successful, the village residents make special preparations and contribute in terms of their time and voluntary labor. Decorating the venue is a collective activity and often the village residents bring mattresses, chairs etc. from their homes for the guests to sit on. They offer drinking water to the guests and supervise the whole program.

Children from all the village learning centers gather in one place and participate in various activities including arts and sports. Debates are held between the children representing different centers/villages. Essay writing competitions, quiz competitions, poster making and competitions on local art forms are also held.

Educational fairs are also attended by students and teachers from the hosting village and the neighboring villages. Principals and head teachers of government schools also participate and encourage children to express their talent.

This year, debates and essay writing focused on the local environmental issues such as impacts of climate change on agriculture and livelihoods, water shortage, gender and education of girls, crop depredation by wild animals, migration to the cities etc.

It was the first time in Mouni village that an event like this had ever been organized. The village residents were very enthusiastic and felt proud in hosting the fair. Regardless of their age, caste and gender, everyone came to attend the event.

Namik village is situated near the Namik glacier on the border with China in the upper Himalayas. Reaching the village would mean walking uphill for several miles. As a result, it is unlikely that the representatives of the government or other institutions visit the village. Since the availability of civic amenities are limited and the people feel isolated and marginalized, holding a bal-mela brings in a lot of cheer in the village. Like last year and before, all village residents, school teachers and panchayat representatives gathered in the school to celebrate the function. Children performed before the invitees and took part in debate, sports and painting. They were asked to draw an image of the mountain woman as they would perceive it. This competition generated a lot of discussion on the roles and responsibilities of women since the whole village was gathered. The principal and teachers of the school shouldered the responsibilities of judging the art work and prizes were given to all children who had performed.

In addition, an open for all competition on general knowledge generated a lot of interest among the participants.

In Gopeswar outstanding performance of children was observed in skits that each center had prepared for the Bal mela. The *shikshikas* had put in a lot of effort to make it successful. One of the most interesting initiative was the use of internet and mobile phone to download videos enabling children to use appropriate costumes and also to get an idea of the stage-setting. Addressing the local problems, these skits generated a lot of interest in the region. The village residents and teachers became very emotional around issues of migration and loss of traditional livelihoods. Children received a lot of prizes, mostly cash, from the village residents and everyone was appreciative of the work carried out in the centers. Children as well as their *shikshikas* and the local CBO received a lot of support and words of encouragement from communities around.

Table 3. Bal-mela during 2017-2018.

Serial number	Venue	Village	Development block	District	Date	Number of participants (approximate)
1	Government Primary School	Huddu	Huddu	Rudraprayag	31.12.2017	250
2	Sun Flower school	Nandasain	Karnaprayag	Chamoli	2.1.2018	200
3	Panchayat ghar	Devaldhaar	Dasauli	Chamoli	3.1.2018	400
4	Government High School	Dogari Kande	Dasauli	Chamoli	18.1.2018	250
5	Sanstha Bhavan	Danya	Dhauladevi	Almora	6.1.2018	350
6	Village learning center	Mouni	Dhauladevi	Almora	7.1.2018	250
7	Private School	Binta	Dwarahat	Almora	8.1.2018	110
8	Panchayat Bhavan	Kamlekh	Pati	Champawat	23.1.2018	130
9	Village common space	Gwari	Gangolihat	Pithoragarh	28.1.2018	200
10	Government High School	Namik	Munsiyari	Pithoragarh	22.3.2018	200
11	Government High School	Gogina	Kapkote	Bageswar	23.3.2018	100
Total						2440

Bal-melas in all villages were able to maintain an educational environment. A sense of co-operation and support from the communities, schools and the local panchayat representatives prevailed in all villages.



Figure 8. During educational fairs skits are held to raise awareness about local problems.



Figure 9. Children take part in an art competition.



Figure 10. Parents as well as other village residents attend bal-mela.



Figure 11 and 12. Children, especially girls, gain confidence to stand up in public and read aloud poems/essays written by them.



2d. Computer literacy centers

A total of nine computer literacy centers spread over three districts were functional during the year. The names of the villages are as follows:

1. Munoli (Danya cluster of villages), district Almora
2. Aati (Danya cluster of villages), district Almora

3. Girchola (Maichun cluster of villages), district Almora
4. Binta (Binta cluster of villages), district Almora
5. Badhani (Karnprayag cluster of villages), district Chamoli
6. Chaundli (Karnprayag cluster of villages), district Chamoli
7. Khalla (Gopeshwar cluster of villages), district Chamoli
8. Gangolgaon (Gopeshwar cluster of villages), district Chamoli
9. Ukhimath (Ukhimath cluster of villages), district Rudraprayag

The computer center is run six days a week, except on Mondays. The room for the center is provided by the village residents. The center is centrally located to provide easy access to young children and girls who come in the evening.



Figure 13 and 14. Children attend the centers after school.



Training of the facilitators is carried out in Almora. A majority of the facilitators were trained or have been familiar with computers before joining the center. However, during training at Almora not only they learn to run the center but also acquire skills to connect and interact with the community.

Each center hosts at least three desktops and related accessories for children to work on. Each learner is offered at least half an hour alone on a computer. After school, children attend the center in batches. However, enthusiasm is high and children come to the center as soon as they are back from school. Hence, USNPSS has now maintained a small library in each center. While waiting for their turn, children read books in the center.

A small fee of rupees fifty or in some cases rupees hundred per learner is charged. The amount so collected is used in maintenance and to pay the electricity bill in the center.



Figure 15. During training at USNPSS Almora, the computer facilitators learn to operate batteries/invertor and another computer hardware. It is important because maintenance services are very poor in remote villages.



Figure 16. Computer center at Girchola village.



Figure 17. Computer center at Binta.



Figure 18. Each computer center hosts computer sets, printer, invertor, furniture and stationary.

2e. Visits to the centers

Regular visits were made by USNPSS staff to assess the progress of children in the centers and also to provide hands on help to the facilitators/*shikshikas*. On an average, 20 children attend the centers after coming back from schools. Migration to the cities, nearby towns and moving to upcoming habitations along the roadsides is cited as the main reason for decreasing number of children in villages. Also, the number of children per household has declined over the decades. The following observations were made:

- The centres open on a regular basis, six days a week. Since children can devote more time on Sunday and adolescent girls also come to attend meetings, the center opens in the morning and runs through the afternoon. Monday is a holiday. In addition, depending on the duration of the seasonal holidays each center did open for four hours every day during school vacations. Schools in the valleys observe summer vacations while villages uphill and at higher altitudes have winter vacations.
- In a majority of villages, the centres run in a common place provided for free by the community. *Panchayat ghar*, *jan milan kendra*, *barat ghar* are used to run the centres. In some villages, an empty house/vacant room is used.
- Sports and story-telling were observed as the most popular activities in the centres. Children of all ages take a lot of interest in these activities. It was an encouraging trend because during training at Almora the trainers thought that the *shikshikas* were hesitating in telling stories and expression of emotions were poor. However, visits to the centres revealed that *shikshikas* had put in a lot of effort to improve upon the methods of storytelling and children were found to be interested in the activity.
- Changes in learning outcomes regarding Hindi and mathematics were observed. Several examples of improvements in reading and writing abilities in Hindi and in mathematics were cited by the *shikshika*, parents and children themselves during discussions in the centres.
- Learning of Hindi and mathematics are based on multiple methods, and not just rote learning. Stories, songs, jodo gyan material, children-centred games and other educational aids are used to make activities interesting and educational for children. For example, to build an understanding of measurement related issues, children go outside of the room and learn by actually measuring the fields, visit the nearby water source to measure flow and also weigh various items to learn the concepts of weight, mass and volume.
- Children take story books to read in the evenings at home. Each center hosts about 400-500 books and new editions are supplied to villages from time to time. In addition, adolescent girls, educated young daughters-in law, young boys and men also visit the centers to borrow books.

Table 4. Visits to the centres by USNPSS staff.

Serial number	Centre	District	Date of visit	Number of children present on the day of the visit	Impressions on progress of children		
					Very good	Good	Satisfactory
1	Gwar	Chamoli	24.6.2017	11		*	
2	Devaldhar		27.6.2017	10		*	
3	Siroli		26.6.2017	16		*	
4	Koteswar		26.6.2017	16		*	
5	Mandal		26.6.2017	18			*
6	Bamiyala		25.6.2017	19		*	
7	Kandei		25.6.2017	19	*		
8	Jakh		24.6.2017	12		*	
9	Jhurkande		24.6.2017	5			*
10	Diyarkot		28.6.2017	6			*
11	Aati computer center	Almora	10.8.2017	10		*	
12	Dasili		10.8.2017	35		*	
13	Ruvaal		10.8.2017	5			*
14	Danya		10.8.2017	25			*
15	Thali		13.8.2017	11			*
16	Munoli		13.8.2017	13		*	
17	Bhatora		19.8.2017	16		*	
18	Surna		19.8.2017				*
19	Jakh		18.8.2017	15		*	
20	Gorgaon		18.8.2017	27		*	
21	Malla Kamlekh	Champawat	8.9.2017	16			*
22	Harodi		9.9.2017	14		*	
23	Dhunaghat		8.9.2017	18			*
24	Jankande		9.9.2017	17			*
25	Koteswar	Chamoli	16.9.2017	18		*	
26	Khalla		16.9.2017	14			
27	Bandwara		16.9.2017	16			
28	Kimana	Rudraprayag	18.9.2017	34		*	
29	Saari		19.9.2017	22	*		
30	Usaara		18.9.2017	20		*	
31	Huddu		19.9.2017	25			*
32	Dharagaad	Almora	8.11.2017	04			*
33	Munoli		8.11.2017	15		*	
34	Gorgaon		11.11.2017	9		*	
35	Jakh		11.11.2017				*
36	Liti	Bageswar	19.11.2017	5			*
37	Ratir		19.11.2017	24		*	
38	Namik 1		18.11.2017	22	*		
39	Namik 2		18.11.2017	25		*	
40	Ratir		17.11.2017	28		*	
41	Goginadhari		17.11.2017	12		*	
42	Maniagar	Almora	12.1.2018	13		*	

- Each center receives a newspaper every day. This initiative has enabled all people in the community to read the newspaper whilst earlier only men and young boys who would go to the roadside tea shops had access to the newspapers. Women and girls were never able to read because nobody in the village would get a newspaper on a daily basis.

- *Shikshikas* find it interesting to run the centres for two reasons. First, through the center they are able to read a lot of books and can easily connect with educational activities happening around them. Second, a majority of *shikshikas* report that they have become more confident and can articulate their concerns after joining the center and by attending various training and meetings in villages and outside. Lack of confidence was cited as a major concern by young girls before joining the center as *shikshikas* though almost all of them had completed their schooling and some were in college.
- A majority of *shikshikas* were found to be following the curriculum framework designed for the centres. For the first two days of the week activities related to language are held whilst the next two days are kept for mathematical issues. On Saturday, general knowledge and environmental education related activities are held. Sunday is for review, revision of the activities held during the week. In addition, *shikshikas* and children repair torn books, clean the room and outside and also carry out craft work on Sundays. Since there is more time available on Sunday children love to paint, draw, create various items using waste paper/newspaper, collect herbarium and take part in other activities suggested by the *shikshikas*.
- Each *shikshika* has to maintain a diary to record her planning of activities every day. She is also to record her experience/outcome in conducting that activity. During the visits to centres, it was found that they had maintained the diary.
- In each cluster of VLCs, children's fair was held during the winter season. Winter is an agriculturally lean period and all residents of the hosting village and people from surrounding villages come to attend the mela. Children display their knowledge and skills which they have learnt in the centres.
- Children especially girls are encouraged to take part in sports. For example, in village settings adolescent girls were barred from taking part in athletics and cricket, basketball and volleyball etc. were considered appropriate for boys. To break down this taboo, USNPSS has provided equipment/material related to these sports and encouraged adolescent and young girls to play and take part in various sporting activities in schools and beyond. As a result, girls can now play cricket and volleyball in the evenings without the adults raising their eyebrows in villages. Adolescent girls are now also participating in sports in schools and going out of the village to play at block and district-level sporting events.

2f. Assessment of children attending centres

With the aim of overcoming shortages in earlier assessment forms, a new format was developed to track progress of children during the year. Children's progress was assessed on the basis of the impressions made by the facilitator in the beginning of the year and the progress made during the year. Children were monitored across a set of eight indicators that covered various aspects of their development (Table 5). A separate assessment sheet was developed for each child. Assessment was carried out twice a year with a gap of six months. The assessment forms were

developed by USNPSS and taken to villages for record keeping. All the filled-up forms were then brought back to Almora for computation and analysis. Out of a total of 1684 children, 743 (385 girls and 358 boys) in 43 villages were involved on a random basis in the assessment.

Assessment in language development was made in view of children's progress in reading and writing Hindi and whether the child was performing according to his/her age or not. Performance in mathematics was assessed on the facilitators impressions about a child's clarity of concepts and problem-solving ability. Cleanliness and hygiene were assessed based on a child's personal cleanness and his/her perceptions and behaviour regarding the centre and its surroundings.

The final results of the assessment are summarized in Table 5. The facilitators did record progress in language reading and writing in about 61% children. About 50% children had shown improvements in mathematics. It was interesting to note that the facilitators chose to pay a lot of attention on assessing progress in language and mathematics. Other aspects of a child's development such as the emotional (painting, behaviour) and physical (sports, personal hygiene) development attracted less attention during the assessment process.

Table 5. Assessment of children attending centres.

Name of the cluster where VLCs are functional	Number of villages involved	Number of children involved	Subject/theme in which assessment was carried out by facilitators							
			Language	Maths	Painting	Environment	General knowledge	Sports	Behaviour	Cleanliness And hygiene
Maichun	5	87	62.06	51.72	2.25	12.64	13.79	4.6	7.87	12.64
Ganai	3	44	70.45	31.82	6.82	2.27	2.27	6.82	15.91	18.18
Binta	5	86	40.70	37.21	12.79	20.93	15.12	5.81	9.3	11.63
Ukhimath	5	83	57.83	55.42	14.46	6.02	16.87	8.43	13.25	18.07
Karnaprayag	6	112	58.93	51.79	6.25	0.89	8.93	2.68	3.57	6.25
Shama	3	48	72.92	83.33	2.08	00	10.42	2.08	0	6.25
Gopeswar	7	115	58.26	33.91	6.96	4.35	6.09	4.35	13.91	10.43
Danya	7	150	74.67	68.67	4.67	11.33	1.33	3.33	14.00	8.00
Pati	2	18	44.44	44.44	11.11	5.56	00	00	16.67	11.11
Total	43	743	456	369	53	51	83	34	73	82
Percentage			61.37	49.66	7.13	6.86	11.17	4.58	9.82	11.03

In addition to the formal assessment mentioned above, parents of all 743 students were involved in the process of monitoring progress of their wards (Table 6). To record their perceptions regarding their children's progress, the facilitators visited their homes, twice in a year, and spoke with them. These visits also provided an opportunity to the facilitators to interact with parents in an informal manner. Parents appreciated this initiative of meeting with families in an individual basis and could converse with the facilitators freely without any hesitations. Parents were also appreciative of the fact that the facilitators were taking so much interest in the progress of their wards and the method was something that the formal systems of schooling had never adopted. Some of the comments of parents are as follows:

Table 6. Comments of parents regarding assessment of their children's progress during the year.

Serial number	Village	District	Comment (recorded in the assessment form in Hindi)	Respondent
1	Palyun	Almora	After the opening of the VLC, children exhibit change in every aspect. children did a skit on the children's day. They also received prizes.	Shobha Arya, mother
2	Banthok	Almora	Our kids learnt a lot regarding cleanliness and personal hygiene. At home, children make a dustbin and throw garbage in that only.	Kamla Devi, mother
3	Jakh	Almora	Ankita does well in studies now. Her behaviour is better than before.	Kamal Singh, brother
4	Dungar	Rudraprayag	My daughter has learnt mathematics in the center. She is also practicing painting a lot.	Satish Lal, father
5	Badhani	Chamoli	Priyanshu does not eat his meals in time. He watches TV a lot.	Satyavati Devi, mother
6	Bainoli	Chamoli	Goldy attends the center on a regular basis. I check her work every evening. I like her improvements in mathematics and in Hindi	S. S. Choudhary, father
7	Namik	Bageswar	From the center children bring home story books. We parents have also generated interest in reading story books	Har Ram Arya, father
8	Kandei	Chamoli	Due to VLCs children can now make good use of their time in the evenings. They learn as well as entertain themselves in the center	Malyu Devi, grandmother
9	Khalla	Chamoli	I have never seen copies of my children before. Now that you have shown me their work I feel proud of them and felt happy in my heart. Also came to know about their weaknesses.	Janaki Devi, mother
10	Ruwaal	Almora	Pankaja learns and gets a lot of information by reading newspapers in the center.	Gunjan Joshi, sister
11	Ruwaal	Almora	My daughter has improved her understanding on measurement units. She talks about negative impacts of using polythene. Also, she reads news-papers in the center	Govindi Joshi, mother
12	Dungar	Rudraprayag	My daughter Anjali has been showing a lot of positive changes, especially in reading and writing Hindi. Earlier she was very shy and would not speak a word but now she talks to everyone.	Shishu Pal Lal, father
13	Nandasain	Chamoli	Her language has improved but she does not listen to anyone, not obedient.	Mukesh singh, brother
14	Devaldhar	Chamoli	My son Ritesh has joined the VLC and now he has become very interested in painting. He practices a lot and makes very nice sketches.	Hema Devi, mother
15	Borkhola	Almora	After joining the center my son Priyanshu has become very communicative. He repeats every activity at home and insists that I watch him doing all that.	Mahendra Singh, father
16	Usara	Rudraprayag	My daughter Komal pays attention to cleanliness now. She has become interested in reading books of all kinds.	Bhyuraj Singh, father
17	Nandasain	Chamoli	Luxmi watches television all through the day which is not good.	Geeta Devi, mother
18	Nandasain	Chamoli	I want to keep Rahul clean but he spoils his clothes in no time. He does not listen to me.	Genda Devi, mother
19	Mandal	Chamoli	Sagar has improved but he is not obedient.	Nand Lal, father
20	Khalla	Chamoli	We came to know about our children's weaknesses from you. You only told us that we should pay attention to our children. Household work consumes a lot of time but we need to pay attention. I am happy that the shikshika takes so much interest in our children.	Maheswari Devi, mother

3. Uttarakhand Mahila Parishad (Uttarakhand Women's Federation)

Created in 2001 at USNPSS Almora, Uttarakhand Mahila Parishad (UMP) or Uttarakhand Women's Federation is the largest network of rural women's groups in the state of Uttarakhand. UMP builds (and strives to build) institutional capacity of women's groups by involving all women as part of one *sangathan* (Group- which we call the whole village group or WVG) in the village. Irrespective of their caste, age, economic and educational background all women attend meetings and work together to find solutions to their problems. Data collected by USNPSS in 2014-2015 had revealed that about 51% of the women's groups are from mixed-caste villages. 26% are represented by general caste households whilst 23% villages exclusively represent either SC, ST or OBC population.

Currently, nine community-based organizations spread over seven districts of Kumaon and Garhwal regions organize, coordinate and monitor activities of about 400 women's groups in their respective clusters of villages.

In current times when the approaches of organizing women as self-help groups or other small groups have become popular, bringing together all women of the village under one sangathan has become a challenging task. Yet, in our experience it is the most rewarding activity in villages. In a village, women do not form a homogeneous category. Differences of age, caste, educational and economic background influence women's position in the community. Even within a single caste, strands of sub-caste could position women in different spaces of social hierarchy. Further, acceptance of women as leaders or even as members of the WVG is challenged by varying degrees of quarrels and disagreements at home and in the community. In addition, in a community, relationships between the young and the older women is complex. The most apparent inter-generational difference is reflected in expressions of work choices among women. The earlier generation, still attached to the land and the community ways of life would see their roles and responsibilities in a changing yet traditional way. The younger generation of women, however, aspire for a job in the city. They do not want to live in the village leading their life as farmers and going to the forests to fetch fuelwood and fodder on a daily basis.

UMP takes up these challenges and strives towards finding solutions to the problems that rural women face in their daily life. Regardless of their differences in attitudes towards life, caste, age, economic status etc. all women are encouraged to sit together and talk about their concerns. Meetings are held every month on a date and time that women decide for themselves. During meetings, the CBO representatives take care to ensure that women from socially disadvantaged sections of the community speak up and raise their problems and also that the relatively active and more articulate women listen to them and incorporate those problems in consensus building processes. This is not a simple task. Yet, it is only going through and experiencing this process that the WVG learns to cooperate and support activities that benefit women the most. Such a

process can only be institutionalized with a long-term engagement and continuous efforts in the community because issues take time to resolve. A bullet-shot approach can never bring in the desired forms of democratic decision-making processes that enable women to understand issues and make informed choices to resolve problems both at home and in the community. This long-term process of organizing women has also helped women to face elections and take leadership roles in panchayats as well as in several other committees functional in villages. For example, members of women's groups attend meetings in schools and give suggestions as part of the school management committees (SMC) to improve the quality of education in government schools. As elected women representatives they share the responsibilities of taking voices of the women's groups to panchayats to plan gender sensitive projects and their implementation.

Activities that would benefit all in the community are easy to execute through WVGs. For example, regardless of their economic status, caste, age etc. women and children may face violence under the influence of alcohol. Alone a woman cannot do much to prevent it from happening at home and in the community. However, as part of a sangathan, all women join together and protest. Together, they can punish the men by charging a fine or make other arrangements to prevent such incidents. Their decisions are accepted by the community because women have been firm and united on their decisions and soon such issues become a community matter. Often, the sense of solidarity is so strong that women's collective decisions become the rules that everyone in the community follows. For example, in a remote village, the people used to brew liquor at home. Women began to talk about the issue in public when the WVG was formed. Discussions continued for about a year until one day women took the decision to collect the brewing utensils from all households involved in it. After some protests from the households concerned, women's group was able to collect all utensils that were put in the panchayat bhavan. Now, the practice has stopped altogether and violence against women and children has reduced. The evenings are pleasant and women and children feel safe and sleep without anxiety.

3a. Meetings at USNPSS Almora

During 2017-2018 a total of 5 training and workshops were held at Almora (Table 7). UMP brings together women of Kumaon and Garhwal region to Almora to discuss their views, share experiences, review and plan for the future. Women listen to each other's experiences and learn. Further, meetings at Almora provide them with new ideas and information that they use in their own villages after returning from Almora. For a majority of women, this is the first time that they had come out of their village to attend a workshop. Women feel proud of the fact that they were representing their village/region and try to express themselves as best as they could in a public meeting. For many, this is the first time that they had come to Almora and they feel very shy and hesitate in speaking up. However, the trainers/facilitators encourage them to speak in their own dialects which helps in bringing out their own thoughts on various issues that they face back in their villages.

Table 7. Training/workshops at USNPSS Almora.

Serial number	Duration	Partner CBOs represented	Cluster	District	Number of participants		
					Female	Male	Total
1	2-3.7.2017	4	4	3	30	3	33
2	1-2.9.2017	5	5	4	26	2	28
3	5-6.9.2017	4	4	3	26	2	28
4	19-20.12.2017	7	7	6	42	2	44
5	22-23.12.2017	5	5	3	42	1	43
Total					166	10	176

Training at Almora provides a forum to rural women to reflect on issues that have a bearing on their daily life. This year, the following issues were discussed:

3ai. Intergenerational changes in women's lives

Over the last few years UMP's work has increasingly been directed towards developing an understanding of intergenerational changes in women's lives. The intergenerational issues have consequences related to policies and programmes executed by both the government and the non-government organizations. More so because the issue has political repercussions as well as connotations with development in the mountains regions of the state.

In Uttarakhand, mobilization of rural communities especially women around issues of jal jungle jameen (water, forests and land) is not new. In the mid-1970s the world-famous chipko movement and policies/programmes following this drive have linked jal jungle jameen protection, conservation and management issues together into a broader framework of gender and natural resources. The meaning and priorities set to the connections between women and natural resources have been reflected in national as well as international research, activism and in policies on environment, development and gender.

The most perceptive and also the most commonly expressed change by rural women is related to their work in agriculture and forest-based responsibilities which include collecting fuelwood and fodder. For elderly women change in relations between women and farming can threaten one's survival but the young educated women aspire for a city-life.



Figure 19. A meeting of the women's groups at Almora.

3a.iii. Natural resource management

This year, a major thrust on environment, gender and climate change came through the National mission on Himalayan Studies, an initiative of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India. The project is coordinated by the G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Katarmal as the nodal agency of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. Village wise details of the activities are given in the later part of the report.

Besides the villages covered by the NMHS project, women's groups in other villages continued their efforts in conserving, protecting and ensuring better management of forests, water sources and grasslands. This year, large chunks of forests were engulfed by fire that continued for days causing large scale damage of flora and fauna. Where ever possible, the members of women's groups went out and volunteered to put off fire in forests.

During meetings in Almora and also in the villages discussions were held to understand the contradictions and complementarities between women and forests and how this relationship is changing owing to the increasing migration to the cities and also that the roads have reached the villages. For example, migration of the young to the cities has had a significant impact on the way women left at home relate to the forests and grasslands. Mostly, older women (and men) live in villages while the young have settled in the cities. Old people either do not keep cattle at all or would prefer a local cow to meet the daily requirements of milk at home. Consequently, requirements of grass fall down to a considerable extent. Unlike the past, women do not go to the forest to fetch grass/leaf fodder but can meet the requirement from the edges of the agricultural fields. Villages where women used to quarrel about their share of grass in the common land now

exhibit a totally different scenario with women asking the others to cut grass from their share of land too. On another note, reaching of roads have made it possible for the village residents to open shops or start some other non-farm activity along the roadside. Often, the whole family moves from the village to the road side which inevitably changes prior relationship with the forests and other natural resources in the main village. Also, relatively affluent families now prefer cooking gas than wood to prepare their meals. This has also led to less demand for fuelwood from the forests.

Yet, the importance of forests in sustaining livelihoods for millions in the states is undisputed. A majority of people living in villages still depend on forests for various reasons. Relatively poor families totally depend on the forests to meet their requirements of wood, timber and fodder. In addition, households practicing dairying for income generation also depend greatly on the forests for leaf fodder and grass for stall-fed cattle. Degradation of forests would not only affect the land-based livelihoods but also cause soil erosion and landslides.

3aiii. Water

Provision of safe drinking water is an issue that communities in the hills of Uttarakhand have long struggled for. Despite the fact that the country's major river systems originate in Uttarakhand, local people face water shortage, especially during the summer. Further, the land in the hills is unirrigated and even those villages where demand for drinking water is met would always require more to be able to use water for irrigation purposes. The demand for water in the valleys is different from the villages uphill and conservation and protection methods would vary depending on the terrain and requirements of water.

Women's groups have long been working around issues of ensuring better access and provisioning of drinking water in villages. Various methods of water conservation and protection of sources have been used over time. These methods include both the indigenous ways of collecting and storing water and the modern techniques of provisioning through an interconnected system of tanks and pipelines.

This year, women's groups continued their efforts towards conservation and protection of water. Some details are provided under the heading of NMHS supported activities, later in this report. In addition, the women's groups made the following efforts for conservation and collection of water in villages:

- Regulating the use of water in villages by formulating rules that all in communities follow to ensure minimum/no wastage and to set up a system of equal distribution to all households
- Rain water harvesting by roof water collection and digging trenches, small pits to collect rain
- Improving recharge of ground water by digging trenches/*chal-khav* and planting broad leaf trees in the land above the water sources

- Collecting water in cheap plastic lined tanks
- Not allowing the village residents to wash clothes/utensils near the *naula* or *dhara*
- Cleaning of water sources and around by organizing campaigns in villages, one member from each family participates

3aiv. Cleanliness campaigns

The members of the women's groups organize cleanliness campaigns on a regular basis with the motive of ensuring clean and clear paths in the village and hygienic homes and surroundings. In addition, during discussions in monthly village meetings, the facilitators talk about importance of physical hygiene for women, children and the whole community.

Women clear up the village paths by cutting shrubs and grass and also make rules that no one defecates in open. Earlier families used to quarrel as children would defecate in their neighbor's courtyards or in the fields. Now, sanitation facilities are available and women's groups make sure that people use toilets and keep them clean. In addition, women's groups make sure that the villages are clean during weddings and other social events.

Discussions on personal hygiene for women especially during menstruation and pregnancy are held during meetings at Almora and in villages. Since girls and young women find it difficult to talk about such issues with elderly women, separate meetings/training programmes are held for women and adolescent girls.

3av. Savings

The members of the women's groups save small amounts either by keeping money in the village itself or in the nearby banks or post office. These savings are different from the amount that women involved in SHGs save in the banks. UMP does not pressurize women to save money. Women are free to make choices. In case they want to put some amount in *mahila kosh* they are free to do so. In many villages women decide not to save money. Further, in contrast to the SHG programme, women save small amounts for a longer duration. Since everyone in the village cannot put aside large amounts, the WVG does take up the issue for discussions during village meetings. Often women decide to save small amounts varying between rupees ten to fifty every month. In addition, women are free to make decisions on the use of the amount collected in the *mahila kosh*.

In many villages, women's groups have bought large utensils for use during social functions such as in weddings, name giving ceremony or *gaon ki pooja*. These utensils are used for cooking as well as to serve food during social functions. In addition, women have added durries, chairs and Chandni (tent) etc. to their catering assets which they rent out to neighboring villages. In most cases, this material is given for free or at minimal cost to the families within the community but the neighboring communities make some payment. The collected amount is kept in the *mahila kosh*. Women make all decisions regarding such savings and use of the money. In

some cases, they distribute it equally amongst themselves after saving for five years or so. In this way, each woman can get a large amount for personal use.

3b. Visits to villages by USNPSS staff

In addition to organizing training and workshops for women at Almora, the USNPSS staff has integrated various sessions on women's development in training of the VLC facilitators. Meetings are also held with the partner CBOS and the supervisors to discuss issues regarding women's groups and their work. This approach has helped in developing a holistic view towards women's development. Further, USNPSS staff makes visits to the villages to attend meetings of women's groups and to provide hands on information and assistance in developing the programme further.

Over the last few years, meetings with women's groups have largely focused on the issue of crop depredation by wild animals and the sense of helplessness that they feel by not being able to find a solution to the problem. USNPSS and its partner CBOs too have raised the issue at district and state level forums but no appropriate solution is emerging. At the village level, communities have stopped growing crops and vegetables since monkeys destroy them in no time. In addition, tuberous vegetables and cereals are damaged by wild boar at night. Uncertainty of weather conditions and intergenerational changes in women's lives have also become apparent. As a result, people have lost interest in agriculture and they now explore some new off-farm activities.

In view of the changes experienced by communities in rural areas, UMP is also changing its approaches and bringing in a new focus on activities that women take up in their villages. Whilst, some activities such as cleaning the village/homes, personal hygiene, strengthening solidarity, protection and conservation of water continue to be in focus, new activities are more inclined towards generating some cash income in villages.

Table 8. Visits of USNPSS staff to villages to attend meetings of women's groups or to have informal discussions with them.

Serial number	Date	Village	District	Participants			
				Total	women	Girls	men
1	3.4.2017	Dhana	Almora	17	13	4	0
2	3.4.2017	Sela	Almora	21	16	5	0
3	11.4.2017	Banthok	Almora	27	21	6	0
4	11.4.2017	Dhana	Almora	8	5	3	0
5	11.4.2017	Girchola	Almora	9	7	2	0
6	25.4.2017	Maichun	Almora	25	21	4	0

7	2.5.2017	Girchola	Almora	27	20	7	0
8	2.5.2017	Sela	Almora	15	15	0	0
9	16.5.2017	Girchola	Almora	Visit of ONGC officials to see the computer center			
10	8.6.2017	Palyun	Almora	20	20	0	0
11	14.6.2017	Mouni	Almora	25	8	7	0
12	25.6.2017	Bamiyala	Chamoli	30	26	0	4
13	27.6.2017	Gwar	Chamoli	20	16	4	0
14	5.7.2017	Dhana	Almora	11	10	1	0
15	10.7.2017	Lamudiyar	Almora	14	12	2	0
16	15.7.2017	Jaalbagari	Almora	8	8	0	0
17	22.7.2017	Palyun	Almora	17	6	0	11
18	10.8.2017	Aati	Almora	10	7	3	0
19	10.8.2017	Dasili	Almora	7	7	0	0
20	13.8.2017	Kulori	Almora	12	9	3	0
21	16.8.2017	Jaalbagari	Almora	8	8	00	00
22	18.8.2017	Godgaon	Almora	23	22	1	0
23	19.8.2017	Bhatora	Almora	8	8	0	0
24	24.8.2017	Dhana	Almora	12	10	2	0
25	9.9.2017	Joshyura	Champawat	22	10	0	12
26	16.9.2017	Bandwara	Chamoli	15	13	2	0
27	18.9.2017	Byolda	Rudraprayag	13	9	2	2
28	18.9.2017	Kimana	Rudraprayag	30	25	5	0
29	19.9.2017	Huddu	Rudraprayag	22	22	0	0
30	11.10.2017	Bhatora	Almora	15	0	15	0
31	8.11.2017	Aati	Almora	12	12	0	0
32	9.11.2017	Munoli Simar	Almora	30	25	5	0

33	10.11.2017	Munoli	Almora	18	15	3	0
34	11.11.2017	Borkhola	Almora	10	7	3	0
35	17.11.2017	Gogina	Bageswar	12	8	4	0
36	18.11.2017	Namik	Bageswar	22	12	10	0
37	13.12.2017	Lamudiayr	Almora	12	12	0	0
38	13.12.2017	Chanoli	Almora	13	13	0	0
39	16.12.2017	Palyun	Almora	20	18	2	0
40	25.12.2017	Banthok	Almora	32	32	0	0
41	25.12.2017	Sela	Almora	14	14	0	0
42	28.12.2017	Malla Supi Pata	Nainital	55	0	0	0
43	12.1.2018	Maichun	Almora	18	18	0	0
44	16. .1.2018	Banthok	Almora	28	24	4	0
45	20. .1.2018	Pata	Nainital	60	55	0	5
46	25. .1.2018	Mouni	Almora	25	25	0	0
47	22.2.2018	Palyun	Almora	38	38	0	0
48	24.2.2018	Banthok	Almora	22	12	10	0
49	5.3.2018	Dhana	Almora	12	10	2	0
50	5.3.2018	Mouni	Almora	21	18	3	0
51	6.3.2018	Lamudiyar	Almora	15	15	0	0
52	6.3.2018	Chanoli	Almora	10	10	0	0
53	6.3.2018	Maichun	Almora	26	23	3	0
54	7.3.2018	Sela	Almora	19	17	2	0

3c. Medical support

To facilitate the process of rural women's access to health care services, the Dayal Trust, New Delhi has provided support to UMP for many years now (Table 9). A small amount for medical treatment is offered to the poor patients, especially women associated with UMP. As elsewhere

in the country, women have lower education and income than men. In addition, rural women feel very hesitant in talking to the doctors/specialists and also exhibit lower self-reported health interventions.

Table 9. Medical relief provided to very poor women (and men) during 2017-2018.

S No	Name of the patient	Age	Village	District	Hospital	Ailment	Date	Amount given (rupees)
1	D. S. Matiyani	38	Kasson	Almora	Government hospital Almora	Kidney stones	20.5.2017	568
2	Pushpa Arya	22	Rajpura	Almora	Dr. OPL Srivastava, Almora	Stomach ache	10.7.2017	567
3	Mohan Singh Latwal	36	Chausali	Almora	Dr. Manoj Joshi clinic Kaladhungi road Haldwani	Stomach ache-ultrasound+ blood, urine tests etc.	26.7.2017	3378
4	Kamla Arya	35	Maniagar	Almora	Jeevan Jyoti Hospital Almora	Paralysis	24.7.2017	1630
5	Kamla Arya	42	Lamudiyar	Almora	Chirayu diagnostic center	Paralysis	28.8.2017.	5230
6	Mohan Singh Latwal	36	Chausali	Almora	Dr. Manoj Joshi Kaladhungi road Haldwani	Stomach ache	28.8.2017	1052
6	Anandi Devi	35	Dharagaad	Almora	PHC Dhauladevi	Leg fracture	6.9.2017	2500
7	Kamla Arya	42	Lamudiyar	Almora	Sushila Tewari Hospital Haldwani	Paralysis	28.8.2017.	5000
8	Kailash Papnai	35	Dhamera	Almora	Dr. D. K. Pande Almora	Ankle sprain	9.12.2017	800
9	D. S. Matiyani	38	Kasson	Almora	Government Hospital Almora	Rabies injections - Stray dog bite	20.5.2017	1676
10	D. S. Matiyani	38	Kasson	Almora	Government Hospital Almora	infection at the point where rabies injections were given	30.12.2017	751
11	Munni Gahtori	45	Toli, Pati	Champawat	Garv Diagnostic Centre and hospital, Haldwani	Ear infection	22.11.2108	10,000
12	Mohan Latwal	36	Chausali	Almora	Dr. A. P. Pande Almora	Stomach ache	27.1.2018	3249
13	Mohan Latwal	36	Chausali	Almora	Dr. A. P. Pande Almora	Stomach ache	15.2.2018	849
14	Mohan Latwal	36	Chausali	Almora	Dr. A. P. Pande Almora	Stomach ache	22.2.2018	3184
15	Bhagirathi Sah	70	Sahkande Danya	Almora	Base Hospital Almora	Stomach ache	16.3.2018	4650
16	Kunti Kimothi	79	Badhani	Chamoli	Karnaprayag and Dehradun	medication for Paralysis	30.3.2018	10,000
	Total							55,084

The issue of low priority to female health in communities has been a matter of concern for UMP for many years now. Discussions with women reveal that they find it extremely difficult to seek medical care leaving their children and cattle at home. Since performing domestic chores set the priorities, women avoid hospitalization and even evade day-consultations with medical authorities owing to the pressure of work at home and in the fields. For example, women avoid any consultation during agricultural-peak seasons. Further, they might wait for the migrant men's (husband, son etc.) visit home who would accompany them to the hospital.

During meetings UMP brings in these issues for discussions with the aim of building up confidence among women to seek health care as soon as symptoms of any ailment become apparent. The supervisors accompany women to the hospitals and help them pursue diagnostic tests. Often, during their visit to Almora for participation in meetings, rural women visit the local government hospital or even private clinics to seek medical care. The perception is that Almora being the district headquarter would offer better medical care than the PHCs or the CHCs in rural areas. Also, it is possible to get certain medical tests in Almora, facilities for which are not available in villages. Issues related to reproductive health of women and also of adolescent girls are important particularly because of social taboos attached with pregnancy and menstruation.

3d. Annual congregations of women

This year, a total of 10 congregations were held in seven districts of the state during January-March 2018 (Table 10). Congregations provide an opportunity to share new ideas, experiences and the work carried out by women during the year. Women's groups also network and plan activities for the next year.

Women from a cluster of villages (*kschetriya mahila parishad* or the regional women's federation) organize the congregations with support extended by the CBOs and USNPSS. Hundreds of women attend each congregation since they wait for it all through the year. Organizing the event brings in a lot of enthusiasm and reflects cheerfulness all around. It is a major event in remote areas where opportunities of this kind are limited. As a result, there is a sense of competitiveness in hosting the event as communities take pride in getting an opportunity to do so in their own village. In many villages, during a congregation the presidents of the women's groups ask for hosting the event next year.

During congregations, all community members including men, young boys and girls, panchayat members and teachers, work voluntarily to make the event successful. Several meetings are held in the village to plan and share responsibilities regarding management of the programme. Since it becomes an issue of pride, village residents want to leave no lacunae behind and put their best efforts forward. For example, members of women's groups take up the responsibility of looking after the guests who turn up in large numbers from villages around. Men and young boys help in putting up a *shamiyana* and often take up the responsibility of making tea for the guests whilst women take charge of the stage.

Preparation for annual congregations begin much earlier as women's groups decide on the themes, performance etc. and hold practice sessions. Often skits on issues that concern women in their village are prepared. It gives the women's group an opportunity to talk about issues that they find difficult to raise in the village. Issues of alcoholism and violence against women and children, roles and responsibilities of panchayat representatives and the local elected leaders, female foeticide, issues related to reproductive health are taken up for skits and women introduce self-made songs in their performance to make those skits attractive.

Table 10. Congregations of women or *mahila sammelan* during the year.

Serial number	Location	Date	District	Issues discussed	Participants			
					Total	F	M	USNPSS
1	Ukhimath	4.2.2018	Rudraprayag	Crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity among women, aspirations of adolescent girls, impact of climate change and disaster in villages health, panchayats, village learning centres, NMHS, computer centres	175	167	8	Anuradha Rama
2	Diyarkot Badhani	6.2.2018	Chamoli	Crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity, inter-generational changes in women's lives, health, panchayats, VLC, computer centres, NMHS	289	275	14	Anuradha Rama
3	Gangolgaon Gopeswar	5.2.2018	Chamoli	Crop depredation by wild animals, inter-generational changes in women's lives solidarity, health, panchayats, village learning centres NMHS, need for tailoring and knitting centres	223	195	28	Anuradha Rama
4	Danya	8.3.2018	Almora	Crop depredation by wild animals, community solidarity, health, inter-generational changes in women's lives, panchayats, village learning centres NMHS, a restaurant for women	174	169	5	Anuradha Rama
5	Binta	11.3.2018	Almora	Crop depredation by wild animals, adolescent girls' groups, solidarity, women's health, panchayati raj, village learning centres and computer centres	70	65	5	Anuradha Rama
6	Maichun	12..3.2018	Almora	Tailoring and knitting centres for women and girls, Crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity, health, panchayats, village learning centres	148	142	6	Anuradha Kailash Rama
7	Ganaigangoli	28.1.2018	Pithoragarh	Crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity, health, panchayats, village learning centres	80	75	5	Anuradha Rama
8	Pati	18.3.2018	Champawat	Alcoholism among men, crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity, panchayats, village learning centres NMHS	72	68	4	Anuradha Rama
9	Shama	21.3.2018	Bageswar	Crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity, health, panchayats, alcoholism among men, VLCs	138	119	19	Anuradha Rama
10	Galla	10.2.2018	Nainital	Exposure tour, crop depredation by wild animals, solidarity among women and in the village, health, panchayati raj, village learning centres, NMHS	169	146	23	Anuradha Rama
Total					1538	1421	117	



Figure 20. Women come in large numbers to participate in congregations.



Figure 21. In Diyarkot village, Chamoli, rural women act as students and raise the issue of quality of education in schools.



Figure 22. During a congregation, women perform in a skit.

3e. Grading of women

This year, grading of members of women's groups was carried out in 37 villages involving 867 women. Grading was carried out by the supervisors and some of the experienced facilitators running the village learning centres. The whole exercise was carried out under the supervision of the USNPSs staff.

Grading sheets were prepared by the USNPSS staff with the aim of recording individual performance around a set of nine indicators for members of the women's groups. Grading was carried out twice in a year with a gap of six months. Since women's groups address a wide range of issues, the indicators varied from recording progress in confidence in talking to involvement and performance in practical activities carried out by women's groups in villages. Each of the nine indicators was rated on a scale of A to E. In this scale E indicates the least progress and A denotes the best performance. Hence, each grade was given a value as follows:

E=0-1, D=1.1-2, C=2.1-3, B=3.1-4 and A=4.1-5

Table 11. Grading of 867 women in 37 villages during 2017-2018.

Location	Gopeswar					Badhani				Ukhimath					Binta				
Villages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Number of women	26	20	21	24	22	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26	26
Name of the village	Devaldhar	Mandal	Kathoor	Bandwara	Siroli	Pudiyani	Choundal	Diyarkot	Badhani	Mangoli	Semla	Paithali	Painj	bhatwari	Kimana	Bhataura	Bhatora	Bhatora	Surna
Monthly meeting	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.1	5.0	4.7	3.7	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.9	4.4	5.0	5.0	4.7	5.0	4.9
Articulation of issues	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.4	3.9	3.3	2.9	2.4	3.9	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.0	3.7
Participation in WVG	4.5	4.2	4.5	4.1	4.1	3.2	3.1	2.5	1.9	3.9	3.8	3.1	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.7	4.0	3.5	3.5
Health	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.5	2.7	2.6	2.7	3.8	3.4	3.2	3.7	3.7	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.1	3.5
Nutrition	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.7	3.4	2.8	2.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.7	4.3	4.0	2.8	3.4
Equality Gender, among women, children	4.9	4.9	3.9	4.8	4.8	3.9	2.7	2.5	2.1	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.1	3.4
	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.3	3.8	3.5	3.3	2.5	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2	3.9	3.8	4.0	3.2	3.6
	4.3	4.3	4.0	3.6	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.2	2.7	3.4	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.2	3.9	3.5	3.7
Panchayats	4.1	4.1	3.8	4.0	3.9	2.9	2.9	2.6	1.3	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.3	2.5	3.9	3.4	2.0	2.2
Reading (VLC books)	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	3.1	2.3	2.2	1.6	1.0	1.0	1	1.0	1.9	3.7	3.9	3.5	2.9	3.4
Understanding of govt. schemes	3.54	3.9	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.4	3.7	2.7	1.5	3.2	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.7	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.0	3.6
First grading average	4.05	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.6	3.3	2.9	2.3	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	4.1	3.9	3.3	3.5
Monthly meeting	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.3	5.0	4.9	4.3	5.0	4.7	4.9	5.0	4.6	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Articulation of issues	4.6	4.8	5.0	4.8	4.9	4.0	4.1	3.7	3.0	4.9	4.8	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.2	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.6
Participation in WVG activities	4.7	4.8	4.4	4.8	4.6	3.5	3.7	3.2	2.1	4.9	4.7	4.1	4.5	4.8	4.1	4.2	4.9	4.3	4.4
Health	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.0	4.9	4.8	4.4	4.7	5.0	4.2	4.8	4.6	4.0	4.4
Nutrition	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.9	3.4	4.8	5.0	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.1	4.9	4.7	3.7	4.4
Equality	4.8	5.0	4.5	5.0	4.9	4.0	3.6	3.4	2.5	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.0	4.7	4.7	4.1	4.3

Gender, among women, children	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.5	3.9	4.0	3.7	3.0	5.0	5.0	4.7	5.0	5.0	4.1	4.4	4.7	4.2	4.5
	4.6	4.9	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.7	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.1	4.7	4.7	4.2	4.6
Panchayats	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.1	3.6	3.3	1.3	4.9	3.7	3.7	4.1	4.1	2.6	4.4	4.3	2.0	2.5
Reading (VLC books)	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.9	2.8	3.4	2.7	3.0	2.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.2	4.0	4.5	4.3	3.7	4.2
Understanding of govt. schemes	4.0	3.9	3.4	3.6	4.1	3.4	3.9	3.2	1.6	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.3	3.7	4.5	4.5	3.8	4.4
Second grading average	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.3	3.7	3.8	3.6	2.7	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.0	4.6	4.7	4.0	4.3

Table continues

Location	Danya										Ganai		Maichun						Pat i	Av erage
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37		
Number of women	26	19	15	22	16	26	26	26	26	26	19	26	21	18	19	12	26	21	86	7
Name of the village	Dasili	Ruvaal	Ukaal	Dhar	Kulori	Padai	Danya	Gauli	Aati	Basan	Kakra	Chunalyia	Lamudiyar	Banthok	Mouni	Maichun	Palyun	Harodi		
Monthly meeting	4.9	4.2	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.6	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.7	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.3	4.9	4.2	4.4	
Articulation of issues	3.9	2.9	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.4	3.7	4.0	3.9	4.2	4.4	4.2	3.8	3.7	3.3	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	
Participation in WVG	2.4	3.5	2.4	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.0	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.8	3.7	3.5	2.6	2.3	2.8	3.3	3.7	3.4	
Health	4.9	4.3	4.2	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.1	4.0	3.5	3.0	3.1	2.7	3.3	2.5	3.9	3.5	
Nutrition	3.9	3.3	4.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	4.5	3.9	4.5	3.9	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.5	3.7	
Equality gender	3.1	2.8	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.4	3.7	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.2	4.0	3.1	3.5	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.7	3.7	
Women	2.0	2.1	3.2	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.9	3.1	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.6	3.8	
Children	3.9	2.1	4.5	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.7	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.6	4.0	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.6	3.8	
Panchayats	2.3	1.4	2.4	2.2	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.0	2.8	2.0	3.5	3.4	1.8	2.1	1.6	2.0	2.1	3.5	2.7	
Reading VLC books	1.2	2.5	2.4	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.7	2.2	2.4	1.9	3.3	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.5	2.8	1.6	3.4	2.3	
Understanding of govt. schemes	2.3	00	3.4	2.2	2.7	2.6	1.7	2.1	2.9	1.9	3.8	3.5	2.6	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	3.3	3.0	
First Grading Average	3.2	3.1	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.4	3.6	3.3	4.1	3.7	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.7	3.5	
Monthly meeting	5.0	4.3	4.9	4.7	4.5	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.9	4.7	4.8	
Articulation of issues	3.9	3.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.9	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.8	4.4	4.3	3.8	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	
Participation in WVG	2.4	3.7	2.4	4.5	4.2	4.5	3.9	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.1	3.3	3.0	3.6	3.7	3.8	4.1	
Health	2.9	4.6	4.2	4.0	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.0	4.5	4.2	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	
Nutrition	3.9	3.6	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.7	5.0	4.8	5.0	4.6	3.6	4.1	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.4	4.3	
Equality gender	3.1	2.8	4.0	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.8	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.7	3.8	4.3	3.7	3.9	4.2	3.5	4.3	
Women	2.0	4.3	3.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.5	4.1	4.3	4.2	3.5	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.2	3.4	4.2	
Children	3.9	2.1	4.5	4.8	4.9	5.0	4.8	5.0	5.0	4.8	5.0	4.5	3.6	4.4	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.4	4.4	
Panchayats	2.3	1.4	2.4	2.3	2.4	3.2	2.2	2.1	4.2	2.0	4.1	3.7	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.7	3.1	3.1	
Reading VLC books	1.2	2.5	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.6	2.0	2.6	3.3	2.2	3.8	2.3	2.9	2.7	3.2	3.5	1.5	3.3	2.7	

Understanding of govt. schemes	2.3	00	3.4	3.0	3.5	3.4	2.0	2.6	3.9	2.1	4.3	3.7	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.2	2.4	3.1	3.5
Second Grading Average	3.0	3.3	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.2	3.8	4.0	4.5	3.9	4.5	4.2	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.7	3.6	3.7	4.0

All the nine indicators used for grading of women are shown in Table 12. The average score for each woman was calculated and this data was used to calculate the score for each village. Taking a step further, the overall performance was calculated across all indicators for the year. The results are shown in table below.

The first phase of grading was carried out during September 2017 and the next phase was held during March 2018. The results show an improvement in performance with a score of 3.5 (grade B) to the score of 4.0 (Grade B) during the year.

Table 12. Final results of grading of women.

Serial number	Indicators	First grading		Second grading	
		Average	Grade	Average	Grade
1	Monthly meetings	4.41	A	4.77	A
2	Articulation of issues	3.91	B	4.48	A
3	Participation in WVG activities	3.42	B	4.06	A
4	Health	3.49	B	4.16	A
5	Nutrition	3.7	B	4.31	A
6	Equality				
6 (i)	By gender	3.69	B	4.32	A
6 (ii)	Among women	3.81	B	4.15	A
6 (iii)	Regarding their children	3.78	B	4.42	A
7	Participation in panchayat	2.73	C	3.12	B
8	Reading books from VLC	2.26	C	2.65	C
9	Understanding of government schemes	2.98	C	3.45	B
Total		3.5	B	4.0	B

4. Kishori Karyakrama (Adolescent Girls Programme)

This year, the adolescent girls programme covered 63 villages involving 1312 girls (Table 13). The programme aims at bringing about a change in perceptions and attitudes of girls, their families and communities about gender and caste-based inequalities, also enabling adolescents and young women to think of, and start action, for personal and social development. A transformative educational approach is used by providing multiple choices and opportunities to girls, especially in the age-group 11-20 years to shed their hesitation/inhibitions and build up confidence to act for their own development.

Table 13. Number of girls involved in kishori karyakrama.

Serial number	Location-cluster	Number of villages involved	Number of girls		
			Total	SC	ST, OBC
1	Danya	10	152	34	0
2	Maichun	6	144	81	0
3	Binta	6	100	28	0
4	Shama	5	127	67	0
5	Pati	7	160	43	0
6	Ganaigangoli	6	127	30	21
7	Ukhimath	6	98	19	0
8	Gopeswar	8	141	13	0
9	Badhani	9	263	44	2
Total		63	1312	359	23

For USNPSS, the first step is to create an enabling environment for adolescent girls to speak up and take part and interest in community matters and at home. Besides providing information on various issues that are of concern to adolescents and young women, USNPSS unfolds the vision of a new world in communities. Girls and their parents, especially women's groups, are encouraged to work towards bringing in equality by parting from practices that may lead to discrimination and inequality by gender and caste in society. Table 14 exhibits the village wise distribution of girls involved in the programme. The programme is spread over six hill districts of the state involving 9 CBOs in different locations.

Table 14. Village-wise distribution of girls involved in kishori karyakrama.

Serial number	Cluster	District	Villages	Number of girls		
				Total	SC	ST, OBC
1	Danya	Almora	Rampur	16	11	00
2			Gauli	25	00	00
3			Dasili	32	12	00
4			Ukal	7	00	00
5			Thali Kulori	20	11	00
6			Munoli	12	00	00
7			AAti	11	00	00
8			Ruwal	8	00	00
9			Padai	9	00	00
10			Basaan	12	10	00
11	Binta	Almora	Parkot	15	8	00
12			Borkhola	15	3	00
13			Almiyagaon	10	4	00
14			Bhataura	20	11	00
15			Surna	25	2	00
16			Binta	15	0	00
17	Shama	Bageswar	Loharkuda	18	18	00
18			Malkadigarcha	24	8	00
19			Namik	35	20	00
20			Liti	20	3	00
21			Ratir	30	18	00
22	Pati	Champawat	Joshyura	13		00
23			Kanikot	30	13	00
24			Harodi	12		00
25			Kimwadi	10		00

26			Raulmel	35	00	00
27			Jankande	35	00	00
28			Dhunaghat	25	10	00
29	Maichun	Almora	Palyun	30	30	00
30			Maniagar	32	32	00
31			Maichun	18	00	00
32			Girchola	25	7	00
33			Banthok	28	12	00
34			Mouni	11	0	00
35	Ganaigangoli	Pithoragarh	Fadiyali	27	27	00
36			Bhaloogara	13	00	00
37			Kakra	10	00	00
38			Rungadi	30	00	00
39			Bhabnyani	21	00	21
40			Gwadi	26	3	00
41	Ukhimath	Rudraprayag	Dungar	16	16	00
42			Saari	16	00	00
43			Kimana	20	00	00
44			Usara	18	00	00
45			Huddu	20	11	00
46			Byolda	8	8	00
47	Gopeswar	Chamoli	Bamiyala	14	0	00
48			Gwar	20	3	00
49			Khalla	17	4	00
50			Koteswar	13	6	00
51			Dogari	20	00	00
52			Bandwara	21	00	00
53			Devaldhar	22	00	00

54			Mandal	14	00	00
55	Badhani	Chamoli	Sundargaon	21	5	00
56			Choundali	31	6	00
57			Jhurkande	26	9	2
58			Diyarkot	45	6	00
59			Pudiyani	36	00	00
60			Bainoli	25	8	00
61			Badhani	22	7	00
62			Jakh	35	3	00
63			Nandasain	22	00	00

4a. Workshops for adolescent girls in Almora

Two workshops for adolescent girls were held in June 2017 in which 97 participants took part (Table 15). To strengthen inter-linkages between the centers and the community and to assist the adolescent girls in their personal and collective development, these workshops addressed issues of self-development, health and education of girls. Capacity-building of adolescent girls' groups is important from the view of community action and development. It is also important that girls do speak up and raise their voices against any kind of discrimination and injustice to them. It is evident that rural girls, though educated now, are very hesitant and avoid talking in public. Also lack of information and low confidence in themselves pushes them into a zone of low esteem.

Workshops are interactive and encourage the participants to talk and share their experiences with each other. Sharing of lived experiences in an informal environment offers an extraordinary learning opportunity where everyone feels involved. In addition, group discussions, role play, question-answer sessions, songs with strong messages for social change, yoga and taekwondo are other methods used during training of adolescent girls.

During training at USNPSS Almora, a professional girl was invited to develop capacity of the participants in personal safety. Every morning, a three-hour session was held to develop skills in taekwondo for self-development and confidence building. The young rural girls found it a very stimulating exercise. Since opportunities of this kind are non-existent in rural areas, girls were eager to learn more.

Table 15. Workshops for adolescent girls at USNPSS.

Serial number	Duration	Number of villages	Participants										
			Total	Age			Educational qualifications					Caste	
				13-17	18-20	>21	9 th	10 th	12 th	BA	MA	SC	General
1	2..6.2017 - 3.6.2017	18	46	20	16	10	4	3	22	13	4	4	42
2	5..6.2017 - 6.6.2017	16	51	27	16	8	0	9	27	12	3	9	42
Total		34	97	47	32	18	4	12	49	25	7	13	84

One of the participants, Suman Negi, village Kandeï Gopeswar, district Chamoli, learnt taekwondo during training at Almora. Back in the village, the school staff was looking for a girl who could teach taekwondo to students. Since, there was no one available in the village/region Suman was invited to take regular sessions for one hour every day for three months for girls studying in classes 6-12th. She also received some honorarium from the Government Intermediate college, Kandeï.

During training Anisha Bisht from Dogari village, district Chamoli, said that she has been attending *kishori* workshops for some years now. She has studied in the village school and scored 82% marks in high school boards exams. She said that had she not got exposure from the workshops she would not have thought of studying seriously for the boards.

Monika Koranga from Shama said that she had been attending the *kishori* workshops since she was young. Earlier she used to like to go there because the facilitators used to teach them songs and games. Much later, she began to understand issues that the participants used to discuss during the workshops.

Pooja, village Banthok, district Almora said that due to these workshops huge change has occurred in villages. Earlier, parents would not permit adolescent girls going anywhere out of the village but girls formed the *kishori sangathan* and started moving out in groups to attend training in Almora and also in nearby villages. Now, girls can move freely without hesitation. She said that some people came to their village and said that they would open a tailoring center. For that every-one interested had to give 350 rupees to them. Some of the families gave the required amount to them and they left promising to visit soon. Almost a year has passed now and they did not visit again. The village residents were feeling cheated. Then a meeting was held in the

village. The women's group and the adolescent girls group discussed the issue. Now everyone is careful and they do not trust people who might visit the village.



Figure 23. During training, adolescent girls were offered a course on personnel safety, taekwondo.



Figure 24. Training of adolescent girls at USNPSS, Almora.

In the end the participants gave feedback on what they had learnt and their likes and dislikes about the workshop. The points that emerged from the feedback are summarized in Table 16. A majority of girls reported that they had learnt new songs and games. In addition, many girls liked the sessions understanding strengths and weaknesses of adolescent girls' groups. Learning

taekwondo has emerged as one of the most liked activities. Equality by gender and caste, value of a human life and life skill building exercise were also reported to be issues of importance to adolescent girls.

Table 16. feedback from girls who had attended workshops in Almora.

Serial number	Issue (what I have learnt)	Number of respondents
1	Life skills and its importance	11
2	Learnt what is good and what is bad in adolescent stages	5
3	Life is precious, committing suicide does not help to solve the problems	12
4	Strengths and weakness of adolescent girl's groups	31
5	How to make your arguments right while talking in public and at home	5
6	Taekwondo	26
7	Songs and games	41
8	Changes in adolescent stages	8
9	New information	10
10	Confidence has improved	8
11	Speak up against violence, teasing by boys	4
12	Equality by caste and gender	12
13	Make your own decisions	7
14	Skits	7
15	Changes in society	5
16	Speak up, listen to others experiences, ideas	9
17	Instead of sitting idle plan for your future	3

4b. Workshops in villages for adolescent girls

This year, a total of 9 workshops were held by USNPSS staff in villages (Table 17). These are in addition to the workshops and monthly meetings conducted by the CBOs in their respective areas. During the workshops, girls from a cluster of villages gathered at one place and shared experiences of working in their respective villages.

Depending on the time available and the specific requirements of a particular area, the USNPSS staff took up issues such as building up life skills, career counselling, reproductive health in adolescent stages, changes occurring in communities, the challenges faced by girls and finding solutions, strengths and weaknesses of adolescent girls' groups etc. Girls who had attended workshops in Almora also shared their experiences of travelling to USNPSS and presented a snapshot of what they had learnt during their stay there.

Table 17. Workshops for adolescent girls held by USNPSS staff in villages.

Serial number	Date	Venue	Duration	Number of participants	Number of villages	Names of villages from where girls had come
1	13.4.2017	Danya Bhavan, Almora district	10am-6pm	50	11	Gauli, Dasili, Danya, Aati, Ukal, Munoli, thali, Basaan, Dharagad, Padai, Bhanar
2	23.6.2017	Panchayat Badhani, Chamoli district	3pm-7pm	14	1	Badhani
3	24.6.2017	Daak bungalow, Nandasain, district Chamoli	9am-1pm	42	4	Malai, Nandasain, Toli, Bainoli
4	24.6.2017	Primary Diyarkot, Chamoli district	2pm-7pm	60	5	Jakh, Sundargaon, Pudiyani, Diyarkot, Choundali
5	25.6.2017	Primary Dogari, Chamoli district	10am-3pm	44	3	Bamiyala, Dogari, Kande
6	26.6.2017	Village learning center, Bandwara, district Chamoli	10am-3pm	47	4	Bandwara, Khalla, Koteswar, Mandal
6	27.6.2017	Primary Devaldhar, Chamoli district	10am-3pm	45	4	Devaldhar, Sagar, Gangolgaon, Gwar
7	17.9.2017	Village learning center Dungar, district Rudraprayag	2pm-6pm	43	3	Dunger, Byolda, Paithali
8	31.1.2018	Dasili bal bhavan, district Almora	11am-4pm	52	4	Dasili, Gauli, ruvaal, Danya
Total				397		

Besides the workshops mentioned above, the USNPSS staff made visits to villages to have slightly informal meetings/discussions with adolescent girls. Table 18 exhibits the details of such meetings. These meetings involved girls from 2-3 villages within a cluster and aimed at discussions on issues specific to that particular cluster. For example, meetings at Maichun cluster focused on starting a sewing and knitting center for adolescent girls. In Shama cluster, discussions were held on the formation of a kishori sangathan whilst in Pati region girls were mobilized to come forward and speak up about issues that concern them the most. Such informal talks with adolescent girls have proven very useful for two reasons. First, girls are able to talk and raise their concerns which would otherwise be intimidating, especially in the presence of their family members or others in the community. Second, mobilizing the girls becomes easier as they speak freely without inhibitions and express their true self during informal talks.

Table 18. Visits by USNPSS staff to villages.

Serial number	Date	Location	Number of villages	Number of girls	Women*	Names of villages from where the girls came
1	29.5.2017	Maichun	2	18	2	Banthok, Girchola
2	15.6.2017	Maichun	2	27	0	Maniagar, Maichun
3	19.8.2017	Binta	1	10	0	Bhatoura
4	8.9.2017	Pati	3	28	4	Ladhon, Kamlekh, Jankande
5	9.9.2017	Pati	1	15	0	Joshyura
6	19.9.2017	Ukhimath	1	10	0	Huddu
7	11.10.2017	Binta	1	15	0	Bhataoura
8	18.11.2017	Shama	1	10	0	Namik
9	25.12.2017	Maichun	1	10	0	Banthok
10	22.2.2018	Maichun	1	15	0	Palyun
11	24.2.2018	Maichun	1	10	0	Banthok
Total			15	168	6	

- women were not invited but they came on their own to extend support

4c. Grading of adolescent girls

Grading of adolescent girls was carried out using the same method as for women. A total of seven indicators were used to assess performance of girls. Grading was carried out twice with a gap of six months during the year. Grades were given on an individual basis by talking to the girls and based on the impressions of her performance during the year.

The USNPSS staff, the supervisors and the facilitators running the village learning centers carried out grading for women as well as for girls. Grading sheets for each hamlet were prepared by USNPSS and sent out for registering progress for girls on an individual basis. Later, all data sheets were brought back to USNPSS for computation and analysis.

This year, performance of a total of 649 girls in 43 villages was recorded. Bhanyani village was totally represented by the OBC community.

Table 19. Village-wise scores of grading of adolescent girls, 2017-2018.

S n	Location	Gopeswar (Chamoli district)										Badhani (Chamoli district)						
		Kandei	Bandwara	Mandal	Kathur	Koteswar	Khalla	Devaldhar	Gwar	Bamiyala	Siroli	Badhani	Pudiyani	Chondali	Bainoli	Diyarkot	Chatoli	Jakh
	Number of girls	14	18	8	15	14	17	20	17	23	21	19	18	13	15	21	16	19
1	Socialization	3.8	2.9	2.9	3.4	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.7	3.5	3.3	2.0	2.7	2.5	3.2	3.1	1.8	2.1
2	Expression	3.2	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	1.8	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.1	2.0	1.8
3	Language	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.0	2.3	2.9	3.3	3.1	2.4	2.8
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	3.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.9	3.0	3.1	2.3	2.7	2.5	3.2	3.0	2.0	2.1
5	Equality by gender, caste	4.0	3.1	3.1	3.7	3.6	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.4	3.6	2.1	2.8	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.1	2.1
6	Life skills	3.0	2.8	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.0	3.0	3.1	2.2	2.3	2.6	2.5	2.1	1.9	1.8
7	Future planning	2.8	2.1	2.1	2.7	2.3	3.1	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.6	2.3	2.1	2.1
	Average First grading	3.3	2.9	2.9	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.2	2.3	2.5	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.0	2.1
1	Socialization	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.7	2.4	3.3	3.1	3.7	3.2	2.1	2.6
2	Expression	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.2	2.3	2.8	3.2	3.7	2.6	2.2	2.5
3	Language	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.2	2.7	3.4	3.7	3.6	2.3	3.3
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.9	3.3	2.1	2.7
5	Equality by gender, caste	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.8	2.2	2.9	3.1	3.5	2.6	2.1	2.8
6	Life skills	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.7	3.8	3.5	3.2	3.5	2.5	2.8	3.0	3.3	2.6	1.9	2.2
7	Future planning	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.2	3.1	2.8	3.1	2.7	2.9	3.4	3.4	2.5	2.1	2.8
	Average second grading	3.5	3.4	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.5	2.6	2.9	3.1	3.6	2.9	2.1	2.7

Table continues.

S n	Location	Danya												Pati	
		Kimana	Ruval	Aati	Padai	Basaan	Munoli	Kulori	Danya	Dharagad	ukal	Dasli	Gauli	Kamlekh	Harodi
	Number of girls	20	12	11	7	10	10	12	18	20	8	18	15	15	9
1	Socialization	2.8	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.1	2.4	2.6
2	Expression	2.6	2.2	3.2	2.9	2.6	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.9	3.4	3.3	3.3	2.2	2.9
3	Language	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.8	3.3	2.9	3.0	3.4	3.4	3.2	2.4	2.8
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	2.8	2.8	3.2	2.7	2.9	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.5	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.9
5	Equality by gender, caste	3.1	2.3	2.7	3.0	2.9	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.3	2.9	3.1	2.5	2.3
6	Life skills	3.2	1.9	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.5	3.0	2.7	3.0	3.3	2.9	3.9	1.9	2.2
7	Future planning	2.9	2.6	3.0	3.1	2.7	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.2
	Average first grading	2.9	2.5	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.3	3.2	3.3	2.5	2.6
1	Socialization	3.0	3.0	3.4	3.3	2.9	3.3	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.9	3.8	3.9	2.3	3.3
2	Expression	3.0	2.3	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.3	4.0	3.9	3.9	2.5	3.1
3	Language	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.0	3.4	3.9	3.7	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.7	2.7	3.3
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	3.2	2.8	3.5	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.0	3.1
5	Equality by gender, caste	3.4	2.3	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.2	3.4	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.5	2.7	3.1
6	Life skills	3.8	2.1	3.0	2.9	2.4	2.5	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.8	3.1	3.5	2.1	3.0
7	Future planning	3.1	2.6	3.9	3.4	2.7	3.0	3.9	3.6	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.0	3.3	2.7
	Average second grading	3.2	2.6	3.4	3.2	2.8	3.1	3.6	3.5	3.4	3.9	3.7	3.7	2.7	3.1

Table continues.

S n	Location	Binta				Maichun				Ganai				Ave rage
	Village	Simalti	Suma	Bhatura	Khakoli	Maichun	Banthok	Maniagar	Moni	Chaunaliya	Kakra	Bhalugara	Bhaniani	
	Number of girls	8	11	16	9	21	19	28	9	13	9	12	21	649
1	Socialization	3.4	3.6	3.4	3.1	2.7	2.8	2.2	2.1	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.4	2.9
2	Expression	3.4	3.0	3.4	2.4	2.6	3.0	2.5	2.2	3.2	3.6	3.1	3.3	2.8
3	Language	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.1	3.2	3.0	3.6	2.9	3.2	3.2
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	3.4	3.1	3.5	3.1	2.6	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.0
5	Equality by gender, caste	3.5	2.6	3.6	2.8	2.3	3.1	2.9	2.6	3.1	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.0
6	Life skills	2.9	3.6	3.1	2.3	2.8	3.1	3.0	3.0	2.4	3.1	2.6	2.6	2.8
7	Future planning	2.6	3.0	2.9	2.1	2.9	3.1	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.8	3.1	3.5	2.8
Average first grading		3.3	3.3	3.4	2.8	2.7	3.1	2.8	2.7	3.0	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.9
1	Socialization	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.1	3.5	3.0	3.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.5
2	Expression	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.4	3.3	3.6	3.3	3.1	3.8	3.9	3.5	3.6	3.3
3	Language	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.2	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.6
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.1	3.4	3.8	3.3	3.9	4.0	3.9	3.9	3.3
5	Equality by gender, caste	4.0	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.2	3.6	3.8	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.3
6	Life skills	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.2	3.2	3.7	3.9	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1
7	Future planning	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.3
Average second grading		3.8	3.8	3.8	3.5	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.3

Table 20 exhibits the results of the overall performance of adolescent girls who are part of the *kishori sangathans*. The first phase of grading carried out during September-October 2017

showed an average score of 2.9. The second phase of grading conducted in March 2018 registered an average score of 3.3. Hence, the adolescent girls registered an improvement from grade B in the first phase to grade A in the end of the year.

Table 20. Overall results of grading of adolescent girls in 43 villages.

Serial number	Total number of villages 43	Total number of girls 649			
	Indicator	First grading		Second grading	
		Score	Grade	Score	Grade
1	Socialization	2.94	B	3.48	A
2	Expression	2.84	B	3.26	A
3	Language	3.23	A	3.6	A
4	Health, nutrition, hygiene	2.95	B	3.31	A
5	Equality by gender, caste	2.97	B	3.33	A
6	Life skills	2.77	B	3.12	A
7	Future planning	2.76	B	3.27	A
Average		2.9	B	3.3	A

0-1	D
1.1-2	C
2.1-3	B
3.1-4	A

5. Tailoring and Knitting Centres

The falling agricultural productivity and the need for cash incomes, whether to pay for the groceries or for cell phone or household electricity bills is evident in villages but there is also a change in women's perceptions of their roles and aspirations. We also find that the disadvantaged groups of the population are eager to learn new skills and get out of their lower social and economic status.

During discussions with communities, especially adolescent girls and young women, an activity that seemed possible was developing skills related to tailoring and knitting. The second viable activity was to install green houses to improve production of vegetables to generate cash income. Hence, the following two activities were started with education and ecosystem resilience as a major component:

- A. Tailoring and knitting centres
- B. Green houses to grow vegetables to generate cash income

Whilst there were traditional ways of hand-knitting, now small knitting machines are also available in the market. It was, therefore, decided to start one such unit in Mani agar village, but within a short time we started getting demands from other villages too. With the experience gained in Mani agar village, we have been able to open centres in 3 other villages and there are further requests.

Installing green houses to grow vegetables has also emerged as a viable activity in other villages where we have been working with communities. Being a cold climate, it is easy to grow off-season vegetables in the hills and to sell locally in the lowlands/valleys where not only the demand is high but also the farmers can sell at a good price.

The criteria for selection of the cluster of these villages was our prior association with communities, especially women and adolescent girls with whom the organization has worked earlier on education, health and women's development programmes. The point of departure from our earlier programmes, however, was to initiate work on a totally different field of "skill development" in the area. During village meetings, women in Mani-agar/Maichun cluster had expressed a strong desire to learn tailoring and knitting. With passing time, the demand grew stronger and stronger. Women wanted to learn stitching, tailoring and knitting for many reasons. First, the young women/girls, no longer interested in agriculture, were exploring some other source of income. Second, young women had time on their hand which they wanted to utilize in some productive activity. Third, getting cloth stitched in the market has become an expensive proposition. Women thought of saving money by stitching and knitting for their families. Fourth, some enterprising women and girls were willing to open their own tailoring joints with the hope of providing service to people from surrounding villages.



Figure 25. A meeting with girls who wanted to learn tailoring was held before starting the center at Maniagar.

Table 21. Tailoring and knitting centers.

Serial number	Village cluster	District	Location of the center - village	Number of trainees	Number of machines given to the center
Tailoring centers					
1	Maichun	Almora	Mani-agar	38	9 (7 new sewing machines + 2 old machines)
2	Binta	Almora	Binta	31	7 new sewing machines
3	Pati	Champawat	Jaulari	30	7 new sewing machines
4	Galla	Nainital	Galla	30	7 new sewing machines
5	Ukhimath	Rudraprayag	Kimana,		
Knitting centers					
1	Maichun	Almora	Mani-agar	21	2 knitting machines
2	Pati	Champawat	Jaulari	35	2 knitting machines
3	Galla	Nainital	Galla	15	2 knitting machines
4	Ukhimath	Rudraprayag	Kimana,		

Each training center has a total of seven sewing machines. Out of these seven machines, six are hand operated and one is foot-pedal operated. Each center is given mattresses/rugs to sit and work on the machines. Simple furniture for use in the centers was made at Almora and sent to all the centers. For example, small desks and large wooden tables are provided for easy handling and convenience at work. Other accessories such as threads, needles, small parts of the machines

which are not available in remote villages are also purchased and distributed in the centers by USNPSS.



Figure 26. During the cold winter months, the trainees sit out and work.

5a. Tailoring and knitting center at Mani agar/Maichun cluster of villages

This center was started on 19th June 2017 and runs in the morning for four hours. A total of 38 women learn tailoring in two batches of two hours each. After 6 months new women are enrolled, but some continue to improve their skills.

Neetu Arya, instructor in the center, belongs to a socially disadvantaged section of the population. A young energetic woman; and a mother of two, she travels about 7 km every day to reach the center. In addition, Neetu has opened her own shop at home. She says that when children go to sleep and my household work is finished, I stitch clothes. There is so much demand that she finds it very difficult to complete the orders. Especially during the wedding seasons and around festivals, people need new clothes. Now that many more girls are learning the skill, they will be able to cater to the villages around.

The journey has not been without challenges. Despite the forces that held them back, the women learn and become competent. Basanti Arya, one of the trainees says, “there is nobody at home to help me out with domestic chores”. During the harvesting of crops, she could not come to the center. When she met Rama, staff member of USNPSS leading this activity, she made a request to her saying “I need more practice. I want to learn it thoroughly. Please do not close the center. I know that the course is for 6 months but I may not be able to learn all the things that I wish for. So, please allow me to continue after six months too. I want to make full use of this facility.”



Figure 27. Tailoring center at Mani agar village, district Almora.



Figure 28. Learners display stitched clothes.

Ganga, another learner, said, “I get up at four in the morning. Till eight I am busy with household work. From eight to eleven in the morning, I work as a laborer. From eleven to one, I attend the center. Then I go home to have lunch. From 3 pm onwards, I again work as a laborer and earn three hundred rupees every day. It is important that I learn tailoring. I sit for two hours and learn. Am not sure how good I will become but I come to the center every day.”

Nestled in the next room, the knitting center at Mani agar hosts two knitting machines. The instructor is a woman of about forty years of age. Eight learners come every day to learn the use

of the machines. The instructor, an enterprising woman, also knits and sells sweaters. Together with the stipend she receives, she is able to look after her daughter. (She is a single mother as her husband has passed away). Another woman has knitted more than forty-five sweaters in the last three months and has sold them in nearby villages and at a town (Haldwani), about 130 km away from the village.

The knitting center was started on 15.8.2017. A total of 20 girls had learnt knitting till March 2018. Out of these, 7 girls knit sweaters for their own use and for their families whereas 13 learners earned money by selling knitted sweaters in nearby villages. 3 girls have their own machines whilst the remaining 10 girls visited the center regularly to use the machine and then sold their products Table offers details of the income earned by each learner.

Besides knitting, women/girls have also learnt maintenance of the knitting machines. After training they can make sweaters of various designs using different patterns and colors. They have also learnt to knit scarves, mufflers and caps for children. A trained girl can finish one sweater in a day whilst hand knitting would take them at least 10-12 days to complete.

Table 22. Girls are earning income by knitting sweaters and selling them locally.

Serial number	Name	Age	Ownership of knitting machine	Income in rupees till March 2018
1	Bhagwati Banaula	42	Yes	9000
2	Pooja Arya	20	No	800
3	Neetu Banaula	23	No	1500
4	Tanuja Joshi	21	No	1000
5	Heera Banaula	36	No	2500
6	Ganga Chamyal	37	Yes	800
7	Chandra Arya	24	No	900
8	Neetu Arya	29	No	700
9	Kala Bagadwal	22	No	1000
10	Krishna Dalakoti	24	No	1000
11	Sonu Banola	23	Yes	1500
12	Garima Mehra	21	No	1800
13	Poonam Arya	25	No	1000
Total				



Figure 29. The knitting center at Mani-agar village.

5b. Tailoring and knitting center at Binta

The center at Binta began functioning on 1st November 2017. The timings are the same as in other centers. The instructor is an experienced tailor. She used to stitch clothes of the village residents, especially women, from her home. Now, she comes to the center every day and teaches the women who attend in two batches.

Each learner pays a fee of rupees 100 each, every month. This money is used for maintenance of the machines and the center.



Figure 30. The center at Binta village. A small amount (rupees 50/ 100, as approved by the learners) is charged as fee. It is used to maintain/repair the machines and, if required, to buy thread, buttons locally.

In addition to attending the centers, the learners engage in other activities as they are part of the women's groups in their respective villages. They attend a meeting of the women's group every

month and share their views regarding community matters and also talk about their experiences in the center.



Figure 31. A village resident gave a room in his newly constructed house to run the center.



Figure 32. In addition to working on the machines, the women learn to stitch hooks, buttons etc.



Figure 33. For use in future each learner keeps a record of the measurements for the types of clothes she had learned to stitch in the center.

5c. Tailoring and knitting centers at Pati and Galla

Tailoring and knitting centers at Pati and Galla have been started in March/April 2018. The center at Galla, district Nainital, was inaugurated by the oldest woman of the village, whilst the block development officer (a government functionary) inaugurated the facility at Pati. Currently, a total of 35 women/girls attend in two batches of two hours each. It has been difficult to find instructors in these villages. So, some of the girls who have become proficient in Mani agar have been sent to these villages to help start the activity. This has been a wonderful experience for them.



Figure 34. Tailoring and knitting center at Pati, district Champawat.

5d. Tailoring and knitting center, Ukhimath

Details of centers in Ukhimath are given under the NMHs programme, later in the report.

5e. Installing green houses to improve vegetable production

In addition to the tailoring and knitting centers for women and girls, another activity that has been promoted through the SVCF support is to install green houses to improve upon the land-based activities. These green houses are constructed with bamboo and polythene sheets. This enables them to grow off-season vegetables and sell in the nearby market. 10 such poly houses have been made in village Banthok and Mani agar. Local youth have been trained in constructing the poly houses. Women have started using it for growing vegetables. This improves their diet and some vegetables are sold in the nearby market to supplement their income.



Figure 35. Local people learn to install green houses for their use.



Figure 36. Young girls volunteer to learn the use of green houses in villages.

5f. Outcome

- a. As more and more girls and young women learn to stitch their clothes, knit for their families and also sell their products, one of the questions that come up frequently is whether this new responsibility has brought in some change in their traditional roles in the household and community levels. The response evokes mixed feelings. A deeper probe into the lives of the learners, however, reveals that the women and girls have earned a lot of respect at home and also in the village.
- b. At home, the learners are now seen as earning members of their families. Intergenerational differences are, however, apparent in their responses. The middle-aged women learners still continue with their work in agricultural fields and develop new skills for tailoring and knitting. The new initiatives have hardly spared them from daily

household and agricultural work. The young women and adolescent girls, however, acquire a totally different domain as they have emerged as an enterprising category, eager to work hard around this newly assumed responsibility. Keen to emerge as entrepreneurs, many girls and young women have now bought their own machines. They are getting demands from surrounding villages and earning money.

- c. In villages where the centres are functional, the women's groups have made a rule that no one shall beat and abuse their family members after drinking liquor. No one is allowed to say abusive words to others in public places. Earlier, men used to drink and shout at people in the village. Also, violence against women and children was prevalent at home. Now, if anyone is caught violating the rules, they are fined up to 500 rupees by the women's group.
- d. A feedback survey involving 34 female respondents from eight villages who were part of the training in Mani agar center revealed that:
 - a. 18 women had a sowing machine at home but had never used it earlier
 - b. 17 women have earned some money after taking lessons at the center
 - c. 16 women reported saving money by stitching clothes themselves
 - d. One respondent said she has not earned anything
- e. Some of the families in Banthok village have already started selling vegetables in the local market

6. National Mission on Himalayan Studies

The project called "Creating communities of Practice and Resilient Village Ecosystems in the Mountain Region of Uttarakhand" was developed and undertaken by Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan (USNPSS), Almora in April 2017, under the National Mission on Himalayan Studies (NMHS) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India. The programme is coordinated by the G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Kosi Katarmal, Almora, as the nodal agency of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, New Delhi.

This project is different from the contemporary approach to research and action in Uttarakhand Himalayas for its emphasis on and integration of the household-based research with direct action by communities and the CBOs to develop resilient village ecosystems. Further, this transformative educational approach to change is related to, but distinct from, the approaches of other institutions in the state and beyond because of its regional spread, organic progression and community-based methods of implementation. This transformative educational approach of creating communities of practice and resilient village ecosystems does gain credibility by institutionalizing practices of (a) community ownership, (b) accountability and (c) transparency in execution of the project. Though, it is easier to articulate these three strands than to practice them, it was possible for USNPSS to accomplish these goals because the project was built on the structural and managerial setup that existed in villages or neighboring ones for sometimes now.

One of the elements for practicing and institutionalizing these three elements in the project laid in the core idea of working *with* communities; and not working *for* communities, both in design and implementation stages. The second element is to nurture relationships between USNPSS, the CBOs and communities, especially women. In our experience, the best way to attain a satisfactory level of trust with communities is to promote a nurturing environment where people can think and work without fear; and with a sense of freedom. It is imperative that such a level of trust and confidence in each other (USNPSS, CBOs and the women/community) be cultivated over time, and it cannot be achieved by imposing projects from above. The process for achieving a comfortable level of trust in each other does require careful nurturing of ideas and activities, maintaining systems of both formal meetings and more importantly, informal dialogues with people involved in the project. Interest in the community, in the lives of ordinary people, has enabled USNPSS to learn and build up activities from the ground up. The third element to attain transparency, especially in financial matters, is realized by a careful integration of the level of trust and accountability that has been built with communities and maintaining records at different levels. For USNPSS, communities come first and hence more than 80% of the budget received under NMHS (2017-2018) was spent in the villages.

Another distinctive dimension of this work is its emphasis on bringing into the public domain an understanding of changes occurring in the lives of mountain women, in gendered roles and responsibilities; and how these changes have influenced gender relations at household and community levels. It is important to recognize the changes occurring in women's lives and the project activities must strive to meet the actual and strategic needs in villages with outcomes bringing in direct benefits in their daily life. Undervaluing or ignoring changes that have been occurring in people's lives, even in remote villages, will prove catastrophic for women and their communities because ill-informed actions shall remain in conflict with the basic objectives of ensuring the well-being of people. It is important to have the project design and execution informed by lived-experiences of women and their communities, and it must enhance reciprocity between USNPSS and its partner CBOs.

A glimpse into secondary data shows that irrespective of their proximity to the roads or towns, villages selected for this project are not economically affluent (Census 2011¹). Agriculture is the main source of livelihoods though horticulture and off-farm activities are now taking roots. With the roads reaching all villages, development of small market areas has led to changes in the social composition of communities. Some transformation in traditional caste and class-based relationships has occurred with diversification of livelihoods occurring at all levels. For the young men, driving jeeps has emerged as a popular means of generating cash income. Some men have become shop-owners supplying goods for daily needs in villages. Another noticeable feature is the change from a preoccupation of women in agriculture and forest-based activities

¹ Census 2011. Government of India. District Census Handbook, village and town wise Primary Census Abstract (PCA), Directorate of Census Operations, Uttarakhand

into their engagement in other subsidiary occupations such as dairying, tailoring and in wage labor. Though diversification in livelihoods continues to be gendered in light of the fact that men continue to dominate cash-earning occupations, yet women have broadened their activities from agriculture to other cash generating domains.

A significant change as perceived by women across generations in Uttarakhand is a reduction in the total workload as compared to earlier times. This change is generally attributed to a socio-spatial reduction in chores like hand pounding, cattle rearing, churning of milk to produce butter, grinding grains, fetching fuelwood, water and fodder; and the manner in which these activities were carried out in the past. For example, during the household survey carried out in the summer of 2017 under NMHS, women were reporting a huge diversification in the way fodder was collected for daily consumption by cattle at home. The reduced number of cattle at home, changes in the quality of the resource-base and more cash in hand has led many families to buy fodder from nearby villages and even from within the village. In addition, women's groups have been actively engaged in managing the pastures, forests and the cultivated land to ensure better supply of fodder near home. Hence women are not only spending less time and energy in collecting fodder and fuel wood but also exploring other options to meet their basic needs. With greater mobility and more options available within reach, women's roles and responsibilities re forest-based work have been changing a great deal.

The most important contribution of this socially responsive project is that over the last year ordinary people residing in remote villages have led activities by trying to do something positive and collectively beneficial to their communities. In a liberal and positive environment, rural communities have experimented with new methods of doing agriculture, corrected themselves and successfully brought over innovative ideas to nurture their agro-economic systems. For example, the community in Gwar village has shown how they learnt from their earlier mistakes in installing green-houses and finally came out with better, feasible and cost-effective designs (details in later sections of the report). Similarly, Chaundli village brought into focus the issue of social conditioning that people grapple with whilst estimating the cost of installing a piped water supply to ensure the provision of drinking water for all in the community (details later in the report).

The progress statement of this project finally gives way to an integrated notion of people-centered development. This integrated vision and also its outcomes would be something deeper than a fact-based scientific research finding or from developing indices of quantifiable progressions that trace advancements from point A to point B in income-generation projects in communities. In this work the outcomes would not be statements of a linear progression of achievements but exemplify a complex mixture of socio-economic and environmental development leading to overall well-being of people in villages.

6a. The conceptual framework: an overview

Before venturing into the details of this year's progress, two issues are worth mentioning, especially in light of what constituted the conceptual and yet workable definition of the terms "resilience" and "village ecosystem" and became the guiding principles for this project.

A. Resilience

A considerable body of cross-disciplinary research that surround the narrative of an acceptable definition of the term "resilience" now shows a progressive narrowing down from resilience being defined as a system's ability to return to its original condition to a transformative change to a new and unknown state.

*"...resilience is having the **capacity to persist in the face of change**, to continue to develop with ever changing environments. Resilience thinking is about how periods of gradual changes interact with abrupt changes, and the capacity of people, communities, societies, cultures to adapt or even transform into new development pathways in the face of dynamic change. It is about how to navigate the journey in relation to diverse pathways, and thresholds and tipping points between them. In resilience thinking, adaptation refers to human actions that sustain development on current pathways, while transformation is about shifting development into other emergent pathways and even creating new ones."* (Quote from Carl Folke, September 2016)².

This shift in the definition of resilience from a **system's resistance to change** onto being understood as a **transformative change to a new and unknown state** has witnessed a long journey characterized by the unique evolution of more or less related, yet different and sometimes conflicting ideas and approaches deriving from diverse systems of research and knowledge-building. An analysis of all the literature that now exists around the term "resilience" is beyond the scope of this report. However, it is hoped that the insights from this project would certainly add to the growing body of research and literature on resilience, especially because of the adoption of a unique approach which combines research (household survey and primary data analysis) with direct action in a diverse set of villages spread over five hill districts of the state of Uttarakhand keeping the concept of transformative education as its core theme.

B. Village ecosystem

What is a village ecosystem? What would be the constituents of a village ecosystem in Uttarakhand? How does it work? What would be meant by resilient village ecosystems? If degraded, how could a village ecosystem be restored, rejuvenated and rehabilitated to make it resilient and sustainable? How could sustainability be ensured in the times of climate change and

² Carl Folke, Resilience, Online Publication Date: September 2016, subject: Framing concepts in Environmental Science, the Oxford Research encyclopaedia environmental Science, Oxford University Press USA 2016, downloaded on 11 April 2017

global warming? Answering these questions is not easy. It is difficult because the present times throw at us challenges that were never known before in the hills of Uttarakhand.

For the purpose of this project the conceptual model developed specifically for the hill villages of Uttarakhand (Jackson 2005³) has been taken as a point of entry into discussion on what constitutes a village ecosystem. This conceptual model has widely been used by USNPSS in its various research studies and publications to illustrate interconnections among various components of an ecosystem (USNPSS 1993, 2001, 2009)⁴. Simply put, the model represents a graphical illustration of interdependence between the main components of the village ecosystem identified as the land, water, cattle and human beings. The land, as a main component, can be further identified as the cultivated (agricultural fields), uncultivated (forests, grasslands, pastures) and fallow.

The village ecosystem model is a way of understanding the interdependence of forests, agriculture, water, cattle and human lives and how these components can be the determining factors of how productive (both social and economic) an ecosystem could be. For example, a healthy forest would ensure good supply of fodder for the cattle. This would lead to better agricultural yield because on unirrigated land, manure, and not fertilizers, is used to enrich the soil and so on.

The ecosystem model brings into focus interrelationships between various resources and could be taken as a point of reference in understanding hill agriculture, health of the forests and water sources and dependence of human and cattle population on natural elements. The next section provides more details.

6b. Developing a theoretical and practical framework to improve resilience

In 2011 an ICAR supported study had made it possible for USNPSS to illustrate how the relative health and resilience of the village ecosystem could be calculated and to study how it is affected by climate change (USNPSS 2014). The study also embarked upon developing theoretical and practical ways to improve the health of the village ecosystem to strengthen resilience and sustainability. Health of the village ecosystem was computed by developing and using various indices to achieve an index of resilience; and further onto initiate activities with communities to improve physical, social and economic features of the village ecosystems.

This expanded model of improving ecosystem health and strengthening resilience was further explored with a gender lens in an ICSSR supported research during 2014-2016. The study examined the issue of how energy and human labour that flows through the ecosystem is structured and related to gender roles; and how gendered responsibilities may intensify in

³ Jackson M. G. 2005. The village ecosystem, Mapusa, Goa, India: Other India Press.

⁴ USNPSS 1993, 2001, 2009. Hamari Dharti Hamara Jeevan (Our Land: Our Life): A practical course in Environmental Education and Agriculture for the schools of Uttarakhand. Almora, India

communities experiencing disasters in the current times of climate change, global warming and also experiencing socio-economic transition in society.

Building upon the above-mentioned researches and action, the current project has initiated work in additional villages with a specific approach for (a) analysing resilience of village ecosystems with a gender perspective and (b) initiate action to strengthen pre-existing land-based livelihoods and also develop new possible ways of enhancing income, mostly off-farm.

Theoretically, research from different disciplines has directed thoughts on climate change and resilience towards two main approaches of restoring and rejuvenating village ecosystems. Whilst the earlier trend was to focus on “adaptation” to respond to changes caused by climate change in physical ecosystem, recent literature is more oriented towards thinking of “human interactions with intense and unexpected changes in ecosystems” and of developing methods to strengthen the capacity of people to move into new ways. For example, literature around disaster-risk reduction and adaptation strategies is now increasingly covering ideas which advocate methods that help and empower communities to seek new survival strategies. The intensity of danger, it is said, is so high that mere adaptation strategies would fall short of the desired requirements.

From a practical angle, imagining a new paradigm of resilience-building is a prerequisite for any activity with communities. Changes in physical environment and in socio-economic landscape demand a new way of looking into the process of resilience-building because rapid changes have also led to confusion in rural societies. More so because fragility of the physical environment is exacerbated by rapid changes in climate and socio-economic transition is being aggravated by the first-time entry of roads and shops in villages. Equally important are activities that would bring in some positivity among the village residents, ensuring that migration is not the only option available to them. For USNPSS, “creating communities of practice” has emerged as one of the most promising ways of achieving this goal. Communities who are capable of critical thinking and ready to take actions on issues that confront them currently and continue to do so in the future can generate insights valuable to both-the policy-makers as well as the community itself.



Figure 37. Old houses lie empty and uncared for as people have migrated to the cities.

A crucial feature of this approach to resilience building is an appreciation of the fact that village ecosystems are no longer closed systems that could be self-sufficient or sustain on their own. Constant flow of people from and into the villages is envisioned which also provides the system its dynamic status. In addition, there would always be a flow of services, consumable goods and money from and into the villages and so on. Resilience of the village ecosystem therefore, cannot simply be viewed as something “internal” to the system. Rather it is in flux with the multidimensional flows of energy and human interactions on a daily basis. It is bound to be influenced by externalities. Such externalities can sometimes be beyond the reach and control of the local communities (for example-climate change due to industries and vehicles, global market forces etc.), yet at the same time, some practices can be changed or the new ones could be introduced (for example-land, water management practices) to solve problems of local communities.

6c. Criteria for selection of villages

USNPSS and its partner CBOs already have an experience-based common understanding that gender, caste, ecology and economy are critical forces in shaping the way a village function. The other dimensions, typical of the mountain regions, are the altitudes of villages and also the proximity from the towns and roads. Acting in a complex and interlocking fashion these physical and socio-economic factors determine the texture of the community and hence offer some distinct specificity to each village. Based on these specificities each village could be seen as a unique ecosystem. That been said, it is important to understand that for the purpose of restoration of the environment and resilience-development at micro-level, each village ecosystem would require a slightly different approach from the other. For example, a village situated near the road/town will be different from the village that is inaccessible by road. A mixed-caste village will reflect a different sociology from a village that is inhabited by a single-caste community.

Horticulture-based villages would throw a totally different economic dimension as compared with villages that rely on agriculture and so on.

Taking in to account the above-mentioned specificities and others (for example, the logistics and the time frame of the project), USNPSS developed the following criteria for selection of hamlets for study and action under NMHS:

1. Access

- 1a. Proximity from the town/road
- 1b. Remoteness

2. Location

- 2a. Regional coverage (Garhwal and Kumaon regions)
- 2b. altitude: valley or hill slope

3. Sociological

- 3a. Caste-distribution
- 3b. Occupation (agriculture, horticulture, off-farm work)

4. Disaster affected and hazard prone areas

5. Earlier association with USNPSS

The first point in the list mentioned above is a subjective matter. A village close to the town/road may not be thought of as remote because of its proximity to market space but it could still face inadequate amenities. The reverse could also happen by viewing a village from a geographical lens. Sometimes, long distances that have to be travelled, even by road, to reach from point A to point B, with just jungles in between could also blur the boundaries between proximity from the road/town and ease of access to a place. Further, a difficult of access village may not appear as remote as the others because of its socio-economic history that had brought in relatively more affluence and provisioning of better facilities for the community.

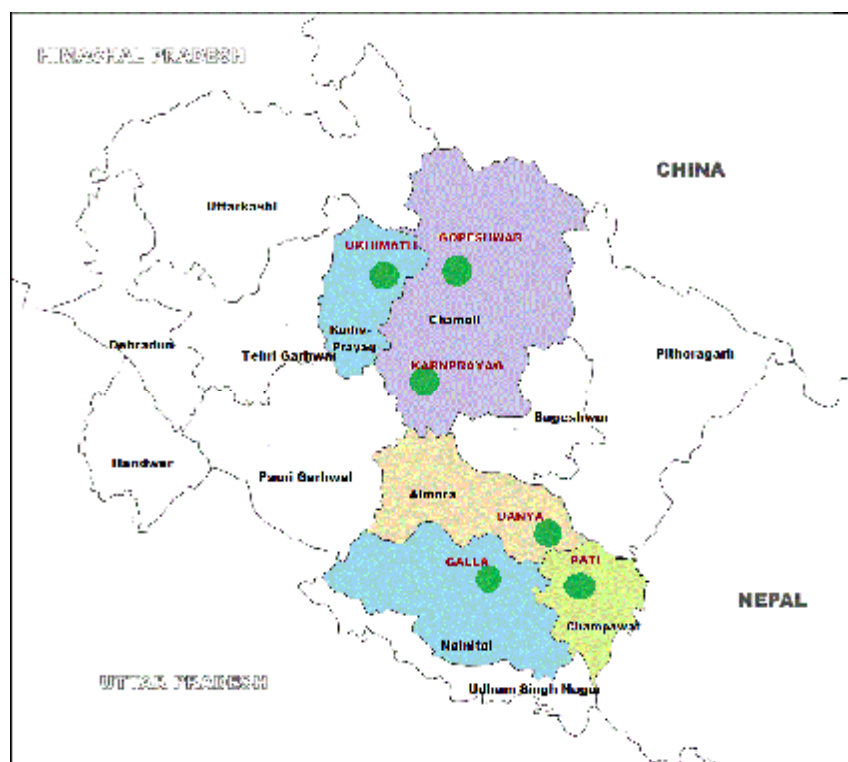


Figure 38. Spread of villages covered under the NMHS project.

The final selection of the villages exhibited in Table 23 reflects a region-wise coverage in the hill slopes and the valleys. During the selection process, considerable thought was given to reach a sample which would represent different castes and economic conditions of communities. Both mixed-caste and single caste villages were chosen to conduct activities to improve livelihoods in communities. Further, villages were representative of agriculture, horticulture and tourism-based economy making the sample representative of diverse livelihood conditions as possible. Kimana and Byolda hamlets in Ukhimath area were taken for their fragility and proneness to disaster. The pilgrim-based economy of this region was severely affected by the Kedarnath floods in 2013. In addition, Byolda is totally inhabited by SC population.

Table 23. Hamlets covered by the project.

Serial number	Cluster	District	Main hamlet	Adjoining hamlets
1	Danya	Almora	Aati	1.Gauli 2. Munoli 3. Ruwal 4. Talli Danya
2	Pati	Champawat	Joshyura	1.Piplati 2.Dunger 3. Kamlekh 4. Bunga 5. Dhunaghat 6.Ladha
3	Galla	Nainital	Pata	1. Galla 2. Satbunga 3. DevSupi 4. Galla 5. Lodh Amodi 6. Kafali 7. Kokilabana
4	Gopeshwar	Chamoli	Gwar	1.Gangol gaon 2.Kathud 3.Khalla 4.Banadwara 5.Sagar 6. Devaldhar
5	Badhani Karnaprayag	Chamoli	Chaundali	1.Jakh 2.Sundargaon 3.Diyarkot 4.Kukdai 5.Pudiyani 6.Sera
6	Ukhimath	Rudraprayag	Kimana Byolda	1.Kantha 2.Bangarali 3. Kanda 4.Huddu-Karndhar 5.Mangoli 6.Dunger-Semala 7.Jakhani

The six project sites selected for the project activities are represented by a main hamlet and its neighboring areas. A total number of 42 hamlets represented by 2424 households are involved in the project.

6d. Methodology

Following the sanction of the project, work began on 1st April 2017. A meeting with the partner CBOs was held at Almora on the 18th April 2017 to discuss the project details and to develop the ideas and logistics of the proposed plans for ecosystem health, resilience-building and livelihood activities. A household survey was also planned. One of the key outcomes of this preliminary meeting was a consensus that data collection should incorporate “community voices” and try to capture experiences of communities re climate change. It was also decided to involve village residents and CBOs in data collection and follow it up with action with communities.

The positivist-inspired approach to research and data collection in which the theoretical understanding guides the nature and types of questions being asked during the household survey was excluded, though given their long-term associations with communities, biases of the researchers/CBOs were bound to have some influence on the quality of the data recorded during the survey.

Table 24. Characteristics of the selected area.

Serial number	Region	Location (Main village)	Access	Main livelihood activities	Recent disasters	Association with USNPSS
1	Kumaon	Aati	Easily accessible by road	Agriculture, recently developing market in Danya	Landslides caused by heavy rain, damage to the fields in 2013 in Danya	About three decades
2		Joshyura	Difficult of access	Agriculture, fisheries	Not much effect on the land	About two and a half decades
3		Pata	Accessible by road but very difficult in rainy season	Horticulture	Not much effect on the land	About one decade
4	Garhwal	Gwar	Accessible by road	Agriculture, vegetables sold in nearby town of Gopeshwar	Roads were blocked for weeks	About three decades
5		Chaundli	Remote-Difficult of access, considerable walking uphill	Agriculture	land and houses washed away in the disaster of 2013 in Karnprayag	About two decades
6		Kimana, Byolda	Accessible by road, some walking required to reach Byolda	Agriculture, pilgrim-based tourism	Severe damage to land and lives (human and animal) in 2013	About six years

Described in literature as Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT)⁵, the methodology of capturing data by talking to each respondent separately and without any prejudices was best suited for our requirements. The researchers had to interact with the village residents with an open-mind and without any partialities (Charmaz K. 2006, 2008), Denzin and Lincoln (2008). The CBOs were

⁵ Charmaz K. 2006. Constructing Grounded theory: A practice guide through Qualitative analysis. London Sage Publications.

Charmaz K 2008. Constructionism and Ground theory Method in J. A. Holstein and j. F. Gubrium (eds.), Handbook of Constructionist Research, pp. 397-412, New York, The Guilford Press accessed at http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Charmaz_2008-a.pdf

Denzin N. and Lincoln Y. (editors) 2008 third edition. Collecting and interpreting Qualitative materials, Sage publications, New Delhi.

repeatedly trained at Almora and in the field to talk to the respondents without any biases and without forcing them to respond in a way that the researcher deemed appropriate.

The first part of the questionnaire was to ascertain quantitative information re demography, occupation, income etc. The later part of the questionnaire that was designed in lines with recording a descriptive capture of people's experiences certainly had its challenges, partly because it dealt with issues of reconstructing people's experiences re climate change and its impacts on village ecosystems and partly due to its narrative approach. Since people might find it difficult to reflect on their experiences of certain events such as disasters and from an ethical point of view it is not right for the researcher to force them to revisit their experiences, this research had captured experiences as fully as it was possible during interviews. This individual information was substantiated with and validated with reflections on such experiences by the community as a whole.



Figure 39. Meeting with the partner CBOs at Almora to introduce the project.

USNPSS began to develop a survey form offering an interactive space between the researcher and the respondent to maintain the impartial character of the survey and data collection. In addition, experience from an earlier ICSSR supported research by USNPSS (July 2016) helped in the questionnaire design, the process of data collection and later on in analyzing the data.

Subsequently, USNPSS planned and developed a questionnaire for household survey and a separate project notebook to record data re the health of our land. In precise terms, the following documents were prepared to start the work:

- a. A detailed questionnaire for household survey to develop hamlet profiles

b. A project notebook to assess the health of the village land

Following the exercise of questionnaire development and pilot testing by USNPSS, the partner CBOs were invited to Almora to take part in a workshop that imparted training in methods of data collection in villages. Subsequently all partner organizations carried out surveys in their respective areas.



Figure 40. Training of CBOs on the methods of data collection for the household survey and of keeping a record in the project notebook.



Figure 41. In each site covered by the project, household survey was carried out to generate primary data.

While awareness generation and capacity building efforts continued, hamlet action plans were started to improve the livelihoods of communities. Soon, the hamlet action plans gained a central focus not only because of the participatory and ground-up approach adopted in the project but also to deepen an understanding of the suitability and viability of livelihood choices induced by

changes in climate and weather patterns. The outcome of such an endeavor was interesting for many reasons.

First, the community-based approach has proved a very useful lens through which to examine the variety of livelihoods people themselves are capable of thinking and implementing for collective and individual benefits. It is all the more interesting to examine these village-level initiatives in the changing scenario of socio-economic structures caused by increasing intergenerational differences in communities. Second, the nuances of strengthening the pre-existing livelihood-base are different from introducing new ones. Who benefits the most from these initiatives is one issue out of many that would unfold over time. However, it is important to mention this in the beginning of this report to underscore the point that the organization is well-aware of such discrepancies and will make efforts to ensure equal distribution of benefits to all in the community. Third, access to resources generated under the project and maintaining them to ensure sustainability would not only require collective understanding and efforts in communities but it also have the potential of reshaping the economic and social relations in villages. For example, the women-run restaurant in Aati village certainly has the potential to reshape gender relation in the community (Details later in the report).

Table 25 offers a brief summary of the objectives and the methodology envisaged for the two-year period of project execution. A note of caution that whilst the objective-wise brief methodology is listed as distinct points, it is the combination of all these pointers put together which would finally be the outcome of the initiative.

Table 25. Objective-wise brief methodology.

Serial number	Objective	Objective-wise brief methodology
1.	Developing hamlet profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a questionnaire • Household survey • Data computation and analysis
2.	Awareness and capacity building re climate change with an intersectionality of gender, location of the village, age, caste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hamlet meetings, both collective and separate on the basis of gender, age etc. • Intra-hamlet meetings • Annual congregations of women • Regional workshops at Almora for CBOs • Regional workshops at Almora for women, youth, adolescents including panchayat members
3.	Hamlet action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing community-centric plans through a network of CBOs and women's groups in Kumaon and Garhwal regions to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Improve the existing livelihoods b. Initiate new activities
4.	Research and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an archive of household data for future research • Analysis of the available data to develop ideas on village ecosystem resilience and also on community practices • Report writing

6e. Developing hamlet profiles

Hamlet profiles are being developed with a set of detailed data source that was collected over a period of about four months in all sites covered by the project. This data-base has systematically been computed and archived at USNPSS. The present report uses some selective quantified information emerging from analysis of this data to reinforce ideas and arguments. It is planned that a very detailed analysis of the data would be presented by the end of the project next year in the final report for NMHS.

This detailed data source could be used as a baseline control for further research and studies around demography, social-ecological status and climate change with a gender lens in Uttarakhand and beyond.

6f. Awareness generation and capability building

Awareness generation and capacity building activities regarding climate change and livelihoods were planned by sourcing leadership from communities; and building competencies of women, men, youth and adolescents with an intersectional view of caste, village location etc. Training of CBOS, women's groups, youth groups and of adolescents and children fell into the realm of conducting separate courses of varying durations for each of these groups; both at Almora and in village settings. The village level training courses were further classified into the following three types of programs:

- a. Intra-village meeting, both collective and separate for women, adolescents etc.
- b. Inter-village meetings to discuss the project, make strategies and to review activities in each cluster
- c. Annual congregations of women (review yearly activities and plan for the next year)

Earlier association with USNPSS is important to the project for two reasons. First, it offers an active and dynamic network of communities and organizations willing to work in villages with an ethos of people-centered development. Second, the process nurtures a philosophy which in literature has been described as the "human capabilities approach" (Nussbaum 2000⁶). That is to say that the project design must recognize the notion of what people are actually able to do and sustain it later. Further, this underlying philosophy of "human capabilities" is informed by the multi-faceted nature of human competencies. For example, the CBOs have a different set of knowledge and skills than those of the community members. Within the community, women have a different set of capabilities than those of men. Capabilities are also differentiated by caste, age and educational background of the village residents.

Yet, there are certain aptitudes and skills shared by all in the community. But then again, a common approach to capabilities would not do justice to the ways communities are organized

⁶ Nussbaum Martha C. 2000. Women and Human Development: The capabilities approach, Kali for Women, New Delhi

and operate in the mountain regions. A right mixture of the two approaches i.e. identification of shared set of capabilities and of informing them with a lens differentiated by gender, caste, age, class and so on is, therefore, obligatory to the process of execution of this project. This philosophy of working with people, keeping the capability approach at central stage, is different from the conventional welfare approach usually adopted by the government and the large funding organizations. The guiding principle is what people can do and what they are capable of doing in socio-economic setting of the mountain regions must be taken in to account and should certainly be the bed-rock on to which activities were built.



Figure 42. Meeting with the partner CBOs at USNPSS, Almora.

Partnership-based mode of working and creating networks of rural citizens has been a prominent feature of this work under NMHS. Table 4 describes the six partner organizations that have been involved in the current project.

Interdependence between human life and ecological processes is one of the key elements that determine the way communities are organized in the mountains. However, the old social order is increasingly being informed and altered by new economic forces leading to a new ecological landscape. Whilst the older outlook on ecology and the natural world was guided by a sense of fear and also of intimacy, the search for cash income has now altered community practices which bring in new values in the village ecosystems. How good and bad this change is a subjective matter; and best left to extensive anthropological, social and ecological studies. The point of concern for this project is the current scenario of the ecological degradation and appearance of new ways in society in the pursuit of money. This section of the report should therefore be seen in the light of aggravated systems of ecosystem degradation; and hence loss in natural resilience and changing social values thereof.



Figure 43. Face to face interaction is the key for developing capabilities of women.

During the year, the following training programmes and workshops were held with the CBOs, women's groups, adolescents and the youth, sometimes as collective events and often separated on the basis of gender, age etc. (Table 26).

The second component of building awareness was executed by locating gender based-leadership in communities and by building capabilities (competencies and skills) to strengthen knowledge and practical work to improve livelihoods. In five of the six sites, women's groups took up responsibility in the execution of activities. Regular monthly meetings were conducted in each village to develop understanding re the choices for livelihoods under the current scenario of climate change and on developing resilience of village ecosystems. Issues emerging in village meetings were shared and reviewed in meetings at Almora.



Figure 44. Mid-year review in October 2017.

Table 26. Workshops/informal meetings with the partner CBOs at Almora till March 31, 2018.

Serial number	Date/duration of the meeting	Number of organizations	Main issue for discussion	Participants
1	18.4.2017	6	Introduction to the project, Selection of villages	8
2	2.5. 2017	1	Selection of villages	1 (Danya)
3	11.5.2017	1	Activities to be carried out	1 (Danya)
4	2-3.6.2017	6	climate change, ecosystem health and resilience	53 adolescent girls
5	5-6. 6.2017	8	climate change, ecosystem health and resilience	47 adolescent girls
6	15.7.2017	1	Activities to be carried out	1 (Galla)
7	2.8.2017	3	Discussion on activities, keeping records to measure ecosystem health using the project notebook	6 (Gopeswar, Karnaprayag, Ukhimath)
8	1-2.9.2017	6	climate change, ecosystem health and resilience	28 members of the women's groups
9	18.9.2017	1	Discussion on activities	1 (Galla)
10	24.10.2017	6	review meeting, action plans for the winters	14
11	20.11.2017	1	Work on a women-run restaurant at Aati village	1 (Danya)
12	17.1.2018	2	Knitting and tailoring centers for women and girls	2 (Galla and Pati)
13	20.1.2018	1	Work on a women-run restaurant at Aati village, keeping records to measure ecosystem health using the project notebook	1 (Danya)
14	13.3.2018	1	Work on a women-run restaurant at Aati village	1 (Danya)
15	26.3.2018	1	Installation of 90 water tanks in Pata village, knitting and tailoring center at Galla	1 (Galla)
16	27.3.2018	1	knitting and tailoring center for women and girls at Pati	1 (Pati)
17	29.3.2018	1	Tailoring center for women at Gauli village, women-run restaurant at Aati village	1 (Danya)

6g. Activities with communities

As mentioned in earlier sections, the philosophical and practical underpinnings of this project were to examine, understand and strengthen the village ecosystem, its health and resilience. Creating a balance between ways in which the anthropological and the natural play out in village settings to ensure that the system is capable of sustaining itself is a challenging task because it must address the question of how the changing human and physical realities led by climate

change and social transition relate to the health of the ecosystem and its resilience. Yet irrespective of how daunting the challenges are, this work has advanced our investigations towards a search for new and better methods of both doing research and carrying out activities with communities.

Today, very different from the landscape a few years ago, small clusters of shops dot the mountain slopes. These areas offer a collective and individual space for interactions with the markets. Life in Aati, Kimana and Gwar hamlets, for example, is greatly influenced by appearance of small market areas that establish new ways of living in communities. For example, the variety and the consumption pattern of food has changed and so have clothes, ornaments etc. In addition, elementary education is almost universal in the hills of Uttarakhand and gender disparity has reduced significantly in higher stages of education.

In view of these changes, and many more, each project-site has come up with different, yet interrelated set of activities. The following sections offer details of such actions in each site. The common set of activities include the household survey, introduction of the NMHS programme in villages, regular monthly meetings of women's groups to discuss their problems and find out solutions, awareness raising on issues of climate change and livelihoods generation, focused discussions to explore possibilities for additional livelihoods, meetings with women's groups and review meetings with partner CBOs in Almora. In addition, the following activities have been carried out in view of livelihoods generation in villages:

a. Land-based livelihoods:

- Developing nurseries of fodder trees, herbs
- plantation of Napier grass to widen the resource base for dairying in Gwad village
- vegetable production (potato, peas, French beans, spinach, cabbage, cauliflower, coriander, ginger, turmeric, radish etc.)
- Fruit processing
- Horticulture: seedlings of fruit trees have been planted
- Renovation of 4 drinking water sources

b. Non-farm livelihoods:

- Tailoring and knitting centers
- A restaurant for women
- 12 Smokeless chulhas at Byolda hamlet

6gi. Kimana-Byolda Cluster, Ukhimath

Located near Ukhimath in Rudraprayag district, Kimana hamlet is represented by 62 households, all of general caste. The male population constitutes 51.7% of the total population in the hamlet. Kimana is surrounded by Dunger Semala, Byolda, Paithali in the west and on the southern sides and to its north east lies the town of Ukhimath and hamlets called Gandhinagar, Painj, Mangoli and Chunni.

In addition to Kimana, Byolda hamlet was selected for the reason of it being totally inhabited by SC population. It is a small hamlet of 15 households near Kimana. While the female population forms 51.4% of the total population, it is interesting to note that no female above the age of 62 years live in the hamlet. The proportion of male population above 62 years of age is also very low, 1.4%.

Despite its close location with Kimana, Byolda embodies distinct socio-economic features. While economic poverty is apparent in the hamlet, the self-reported range of annual income is 5,000-3,90,000 rupees (total number of respondents has been 15). While 71.4% men earn cash through daily wage labour, shop-keeping (7.1%) is another popular source of livelihoods. 6.7% of the population receives remittance from the household members living outside the village. 81.3% women reported themselves as farmers and 18.8% women consider themselves as agriculturalists and homemakers. Income from animal husbandry was reported as a tertiary source by 6.7% of the total population who are involved in dairying and agriculture.

The influence of the town of Ukhimath is more pronounced in Kimana, than in Byolda. About 29% of the households of Kimana have houses in Ukhimath and own shops there. None of the residents of Byolda are employed either in government service or in private sector jobs whilst the share of such employees in these sectors is 6.3% each in Kimana. In addition, about 5% of the households in Kimana work as priests in Kedarnath, Ukhimath and Madmaheswar temples. Further, women from Kimana hamlet have been working with NGOs and some of them have their own tailoring and knitting business. No such activity was found in Byolda hamlet.

Percentage of those performing forest related labour to total population in Byolda is 21.43% whilst 20.6% residents in Kimana have reported strong dependence on forests. A deeper probe into women's perceptions regarding their forests and dependence on forest-based lifestyle reveals a strong intergenerational change. About half of the total women in Byolda (46.67%) and Kimana (54.8%) felt that forests are no longer a special place for women. Young girls report that forests are not necessary for their needs and do not suit the current lifestyle. The popular slogan of "*jungle tou hamada maika hai*" (the forest is our parental home) which became famous in the mid-1970s during the Chipko movement in Uttarakhand seems to have lost its relevance in the current times when girls are educated and aspire for a life in the cities and not in the village. 80% of young girls in Byolda and 54.8% in Kimana reported a reduced sense of ownership of forests and felt that societal value placed on forests has declined.

Activities during the year

During the year, the following activities were carried out in Kimana and Byolda hamlets:

A. Byolda hamlet

As developed for Kimana, the same methodology was used in Byolda but a different range of activities emerged in the hamlet. As mentioned before, Byolda is a small hamlet totally inhabited by SC population. The village residents are relatively poor and exhibit limited levels of exposure. Meetings and informal discussions with the village residents revealed the dynamics of how caste would influence life of the people and give shape to realities that are subjects of contemporary social science research. For example, the question of how the mountain women are placed in society specially when they are subjected to double marginalization, firstly due to their geographical location and secondly by virtue of their gender and how this relegates into the community, unfolded during discussions in Byolda. Informal talks with women also helped us to understand the nuances of gender-based intra-household relations and division of labour and responsibilities.

Whilst the meetings and talks in the community helped USNPSS build the programme on the current socio-economic realities, environmental context and aspirations of the people, it also helped it to evolve in a people-centric manner.



Figure 45. Women gather for an awareness generation meeting at Ukhimath.

One of the features evident in the village was large stretches of fields lying un-ploughed and uncultivated for many years now. Discussions with the community indicated their reluctance in doing agriculture; partly owing to menace caused by wild animals and partly due to climate change related issues. In addition, caste and fragility of economic situations had influenced their mobility and access to and control over resources and opportunities. As mentioned in earlier

sections of this report, the residents at Byolda had relatively limited livelihood opportunities. Yet agricultural land was lying fallow and people were disenchanted with production from the fields.

While a detailed analysis of the inter-household and intra-household relations in the village and in the region would be offered in the final report, it is imperative to take note of the interventions that the NMHS had carried out re livelihoods in Byolda. These initiatives can be viewed at two levels, tangible impacts visible immediately and intangible outcomes that unfold over a longer period of time. One of the most tangible outcomes of the initiative at Byolda has been the conversion of uncultivated fields into cultivated lands. Fields that were lying fallow for many years were ploughed this winter (December 2017, January 2018) and potatoes were sown. It is for the first time in the village that the people have cultivated potatoes.

A closer look in the activity of “first time potato cultivation in Byolda” would reflect the hard work that the representative of the local partner organization had put in mobilizing the community, motivating men and women to plough their fields and sow potatoes in time.



Figure 46. Land that was uncultivated for many years has now been ploughed at Byolda. It is for the first time in the village that the community is growing potatoes in their fields.

In view of encouraging poultry farming, a total of 204 baby chicken were offered to three families who either constructed a new barn or renovated the old set up. In addition, twelve smokeless chulhas were given to poor families who were found to be at high risk of catching respiratory ailments.

In response to demands from village residents, the CBO purchased seeds of potatoes, beans, peas, radish, green vegetables, ginger and turmeric from the Horticulture Department at Ukhimath. These seeds were distributed among the village residents of Byolda, Kimana and Dunger Semla.

About 600 seedlings of plum, peach, guava, apricot, pomegranate and citrus trees are planted in the fields. In cooperation with the local administration, the CBO organized two training programmes on fruit processing, each of a week duration in December 2017 and February 2018. A total of 82 participants attended these trainings. The CBO at Ukhimath also wrote slogans on rocks and walls to raise awareness about environmental protection and livelihood generation in villages.

Another tangible impact of the programme emphasizes effects that very poor people could experience owing to the ability of the local organizations to listen to their plight. Listening to people is valuable in its own account because of its potential power of being able to capture the lived realities of life that cannot be apprehended in quantified research and evaluations. Figure10 shows a poor woman resident of Byolda who earns her livelihood by breaking stones into smaller sizes. Along with her husband and a son, she lives in a “house” that seems a structure of stones stacked over each other. The edges of a field constitute a wall whilst a loose tin sheet forms the door. She said that despite her sending many applications to the local administration for a house under various government schemes, nothing had happened. It is in this context that USNPSS staff and the partner CBO from Ukhimath promised her to look into the issue.

The CBO took a lead and during a meeting at Ukhimath urged the District Magistrate of Rudraprayag to visit the village. The District Magistrate accepted the request of the CBO and made a visit to Byolda. During the visit, the CBO brought the issue of having a livable house for the woman to the notice of the District Magistrate. As a result, the local administration is now taking interest in the matter and the woman is likely to receive financial help for construction of the house.



Figure 47a. A poor woman in Byolda breaks pebbles into smaller pieces to earn her livelihoods. Without any wall, the back side of her tiny one-room house lay on a field and her belongings spread in the open.



Figure 47b. The District Magistrate of Rudraprayag made a visit to Byolda hamlet to see potato cultivation. During discussions, he also ordered the local administration to release funds for construction of a house for the woman shown before.

B. Kimana hamlet

The community at Kimana was hit by a disaster in 2013 in more than one way. Firstly, the hamlet itself had experienced heavy water flows and mud slides that destroyed crops, fields and property in 2013. Secondly, to a large extent, the economy of Kimana depends on the pilgrimage to Kedarnath shrine and Madmaheswar temple. The men earn their livelihoods working as priests, mule-keepers and palanquin bearers taking the pilgrims to various shrines. Few of them work for the airline companies that ferry the pilgrims to Kedarnath in a helicopter. Further, during the yatra season, men and young boys work in hotels/lodges and run shops along the pilgrimage routes. Some of the families were hit hard by floods in Kedarnath in 2013. Men and young boys employed in hotels/lodges and working in shops were washed away with the flood waters. Women and young girls were left behind at home. The shock of so many deaths in their own families, in the community and in the region brought trauma and agony. For several months, unable to sleep at night, mothers and wives would wait for their sons and husbands to come home. At that point of crisis, the members of the women's group supported each other.

During discussions on livelihoods generation, the members of the women's group expressed their desire to strengthen fodder-base in the forest. The women felt that the diversity of trees has

dwindled in the region and fodder and water shortage were becoming problems that required some solutions. In addition, the community aspired for a nursery of herbal plants in the village. After several rounds of discussions, one of the families gave a part of their cultivated fields to maintain a nursery of fodder trees and herbs. The family also volunteered to take up the responsibility of watering the saplings and overall maintenance of the nursery.



Figure 48. A plant nursery at Kimana.



Figure 49. Nursery of fodder trees and herbs in Kimana.

Some of the households took initiatives towards livelihood generation by growing vegetables for the first time.



Figure 50. For the first-time cabbage is cultivated in Kimana. Seeds were provided under NMHS programme.

In addition to contributing to better access and availability of more choices for land-based livelihoods to the community, the initiative also equipped the CBO and members of the women's group with knowledge and skills to initiate off-farm activities to generate income. Responding to the requests made by women and young girls, a tailoring and knitting center has been started at Kimana. The center runs for four hours, six days a week. Two batches of ten women each are taken for tailoring. Further, women trainees learn knitting in machines provided under the project.



Figure 51. The community in Kimana takes a lot of interest in the center.

The tailoring and knitting center at Kimana has locally become a source of inspiration. The local administration has brought several groups of women and girls to visit and learn from women in the center. In addition, during their exposure tour to Ukhimath, a group of ten men and women from Pata/Galla have also made a visit to the center.



Figure 52. Tailoring and knitting center at Kimana hamlet.

6gii. Pata Cluster, Galla

With a total population of 353, Pata village is inhabited by 79.2% general caste and 20.8% residents belonging to the scheduled caste category. Pata is situated in the fruit-belt of Nainital district and the landscape seems different from the rest of the agriculture-based villages covered by this project. Fruit trees such as peach, apple, apricot, pears etc. cover the terraced fields with houses spread over the land. Unlike agriculture-based villages that are characterized by rows of homes constructed together (bakhali), houses lay scattered amidst orchards in Pata. In addition, in contrast to other villages under study, men (53.8%) outnumber women (46.2%) indicating less migration to the cities. 85.5% men reported horticulture as their main occupation. Just 2.2% men earn their livelihoods through wage labour which again is a difference from agriculture-based villages under study.



Figure 53. Birds eye view of Pata village, district Nainital.

Table 27 exhibits a brief overview of the nature and the themes of the meetings held at Pata and Galla. The table is prepared with an intention of providing a representation of awareness generation and capacity building activities in the hamlets covered by the study. Though hamlets always show some variations in the nature and texture of these meetings, the aim is to demonstrate the chronological details of a hamlet to keep the reader abreast of the developments during the year.

The meetings described below aimed at promoting livelihoods by establishing the fact that the natural resources such as the forests, grasslands, water, biomass and compost are essential for any viable and sustainable effort. Each village ecosystem has a threshold limit beyond which it cannot support the needs of the population therein. Hence, a balance between ecological, social and economic domains is required for a land-based livelihood to become viable and sustainable.

Table 27. An overview of awareness generation and capacity building initiatives at Pata-Galla villages, district Nainital.

Serial number	Date	Hamlet	Theme for discussion	Participants		
				Male	Female	Total
1	15.7.2017	Satbunga	Problems in the village ecosystem due to climate change, horticulture	22	0	22
2	16.7.2017	Galla	Changes in the village ecosystem due to climate change, horticulture, water conservation	66	2	68
3	27.7.2017	Supi Silangair	Market value of the local fruits, problems with vegetable growing	4	18	22
4	6.8.2017	Pata	Introduction to the details of activities with the community,	20	28	48
5	15.8.2017	Galla	Strengthening the women's group, village cleanliness, computer center, livelihood activities for women	16	8	24
6	19.8.2017	Lodhalmori	Introduction to the project, local rights on the forests and water sources, damage caused by wild animals, improvement in old livelihood activities	19	9	28
7	20.8.2017	Kokilabana	Impact of climate change on women, skill development for adolescents to improve their livelihood-base, dependence of Supi and Sunakiya villages on the van panchayat	13	8	21
8	21.8.2017	Dev tanda	Reduced total annual income of the local orchardists, climate change and methods to deal with the shift in livelihood strategies, vegetable growing, water conservation, plant nursey, health and nutrition	20	7	27
9	21.8.2017	Pata, Satbunga	Marketing of the local fruits, damage caused by wild animals, water shortage, use of the new agricultural tools to improve production, possibilities of tourism-based livelihoods, local methods to remove/reduce pests on crops	16	24	40
10	22.8.2017	Supi, Kafali, Bhateliya	Polythene-lined tanks to conserve water, agricultural tools, fruit processing to improve the livelihood-base	21	15	36
11	6.9.2017	Pata, Satbunga	Beginning of a campaign "apne jungle ko jaano" (to understand your forest), initial talks, appreciation of the work of women, cleanliness and maintenance of the village paths,	2	18	20
12	7.9.2017	Pata	Bringing women to the forefront of decision making on community matters, skill development of adolescents for future activities	2	15	17
13	23.10.2017	Pata	Water conservation, installation of tanks, seeds and agricultural tools to improve production, renovation of the old water springs, organic farming and local tourism-based livelihoods	6	21	27
14	6.11.2017	Pata	A managing committee was formed to supervise, assess the work re installation of tanks, seed distribution, light traps to capture kurmula	19	26	45
15	19.11.2017	Galla	Ensuring participation of the village residents in all project-activities, power tiller demonstration, kurmula grub traps, organizing a congregation of women	23	13	36
16	6.12.2017	Pata	"Understand your forest" campaign, water conservation, organic farming, nutrition, need of cooperation to ensure sharing of water, appreciation of the work of women and the management committee during the campaign	9	23	32
17	21.12.2017	Galla	Work of the orchardists and their problems, impact of climate change, fruit processing and household consumption of fruits and processed products to enhance nutrition	34	28	62
18	28.12.2017	Galla	Collective initiatives to save the forests, water conservation tanks, skill development to improve upon the choices for livelihoods, unity	26	57	83
19	2.1.2018	Pata	Technical, managerial inputs from USNPSS re installation of tanks			
20	5.1.2018	Supi talla Dev tanda	Impact of climate change on women's roles and responsibilities at home and in the village, adaptation strategies, Visit of an NGO representative from Pati	8	26	34
21	6.1.2018	Pata	"Understand your forest" campaign: selection of five teams to visit the forest, observe changes and report to the community, water conservation, tailoring and knitting center, computer center, trap to catch kurmula grub, effects of climate change on jal, jungle, jameen	28	47	75
22	7.1.2018	Pata	Distribution of sheets and net for installation of water tanks			
23	8.1.2018	Pata	Mud-plastering of tanks (4-5 times to ensure long life)	Household visits		
24	20.1.2018	Pata	"Understand your forest" campaign: presentation by five teams in the	36	72	108

		Satbunga	community			
25	27.1.2018	Pata	Visit by USNPSS	Household Visits		
26	6.2.2018	Pata	Distribution of tools, nutrition, plantation of locally useful trees in the forest			44
27	7.2.2018	Supi Talla	Enhancing decision making: women's groups	2	16	18
28	8.2.2018	Kaafli	Talks with the horticulture department, potato seed production unit	Visits to the offices		
29	9.2.2018	Pata	Computer center, tailoring and knitting center: selection of the instructors,	Household visits, informal conversations		
30	10.2.2018	Galla	Mahila Sammelan (congregation of women)	33	101	134
31	6.3.2018	Pata	90 tanks have been installed, about thirty old tanks were put to use again, planning an exposure visit to Garhwal	16	39	55

Apne jungle ko jaano

Apne jungle ko jaano the campaign was organized with the specific aim of enabling the village residents to understand and assess their forests and water sources with a two-pronged approach for ecological restoration. The first step was to observe and develop insights on the status of natural resources vis-a-vi the changes occurring in the forest. The second step of the campaign was to present those lessons in a village meeting to draw up plans for better management and conservation of the forests and water sources. Alongside, the process had promoted integration of indigenous knowledge with inputs from the partner organization and USNPSS.



Figure 54. The community at Galla is sensitive to the issue of decline in numbers of sparrows and takes care of them.

For the purpose of visiting the forest to observe and understand the changes, five teams were formed. Each team was represented by men and women of different castes, age and educational backgrounds. These teams were sent to five different location in the forest so that a representative sample of the changes occurring could be integrated in the village plan.

Connections between observations of the five teams were drawn in a village meeting where everyone shared his/her experience. In brief, the following observations were made:

- Degradation of the forest over time
- Accentuating shortage of water in the village

- c. The old oak and rhododendron landscape is now dotted with Pine trees
- d. Significant loss of biodiversity in the forest
- e. Local tubers such as Tairu, once abundant, were missing from places where the elderly people used to collect them from
- f. Reduced availability of a variety of ferns and edible fungi (mushrooms) in the forest
- g. Invasion of wild animals viz. monkeys, apes, wild boar, porcupine in the village

Subsequently, the process led to the emergence of a forest conservation plan. In the coming year, the community intends to put some tubers and other indigenous seeds in the forest to enhance the food basket for wild animals and also with an aim of restoring biodiversity in the region. In addition, a consensus has emerged in the community for planting mulberry trees. The criteria for selection of mulberry fruit trees relies on the fact that it grows very fast, bears fruit early and is fodder for cattle.



Figure 55. In a village meeting at Pata, women report the findings of their respective teams re the campaign on “apne jungle ko jaano”.

Installation of water tanks

The process of awareness generation and capacity building led to the beginning of collective action in the community. Each household agreed to install one individual tank. In addition, the community agreed that some old tanks which had become non-functional due to lack of repairs would also be covered with plastic sheets so that water could be conserved there too.

Meanwhile, USNPSS began a process of purchasing good quality plastic sheets which could be used for collection of water in the proposed tanks. After a lot of research, tarpaulin GSM-250 was purchased and taken to the village. In all, 89 tanks were dug by the community. No payment was made for digging the reservoirs. It was considered a contribution of the community. However, such was the enthusiasm of the community that all families volunteered and did their best. Both men and women took on the responsibility of digging the tanks. Similarly, plastering

of those tanks was carried out jointly by men and women, mostly young people in the community.



Figure 56. Proposed dimensions of the water tanks at Pata.



Figure 57. Before putting in the sheets, tanks were plastered by mud several times.



Figure 58. Installation of water tanks at Pata.



Figure 59. Old cracked, abandoned tanks were put into reuse by covering them by plastic sheets.

Sharing of water

The residents of Pata, who had shown remarkable unity by offering help to each other during installation of tanks, took to saving water by sharing it among themselves. Realizing that installation of borewells or pumping groundwater could lead to problems in future, the community thought of conserving water in small tanks. Turning to a suitable water harvesting system, the community began to collect and conserve spring water that used to go waste as overflow in some places. The idea has been to conserve every drop of water in the tanks and use it for cultivation of vegetables and other domestic use.

The efforts of the women's group have had tremendous impact on strengthening solidarity in the community. As a result, all village residents co-operate and share water. The community has developed a system of water distribution in the village. Once the tank of a particular household is filled, it would give water to the next household and so on.



Figure 60. Visit of the officials from the Ministry of Environment Forests and Climate Change.

Exposure tour

An exposure tour for the women and men of Pata hamlet was conducted during 28.3.2018 to 31.3.2018. A jeep-load of 11 participants (6 women, 5 men) from Nainital district in Kumaon made a visit to Ukhimath, district Rudraprayag, Mandal area, Gopeswar and Badhani near Karnprayag, district Chamoli in Garhwal.

6giii. Aati Cluster, Danya

Located about 50 km NE of the district headquarters of Almora, Aati hamlet falls under the administrative block of Dhaula Devi. This administrative block has long been known as one of the most backward areas of the district where female literacy rates have been the lowest. For the residents of Aati, the nearby market is at a distance of about 2 km in Danya.

Aati hamlet hosts a total population of 248 with 87.7% belonging to the general caste, 5.3% scheduled caste and 7% representing the other backward caste. The share of female population is 48.4%. The total number of households is 57 and 71.9% of the village residents report agriculture as their primary occupation.

Whilst the village economy fairly relied on agriculture in the past, lower rates of production have increasingly forced the residents to seek some non-farm activities. About 20% of the residents (16.7% men and 4.1% women) now consider daily wage earning as their primary source of income. Damage to crops by wild boar and monkeys is a pressing problem but the genetic base of the local varieties of crops is also dwindling. Deforestation and soil erosion have been issues that the women's group of Aati has long been concerned about. With initiatives taken up by the women's group, the forest is protected, yet road construction and other activities related to development of infrastructure in the region take their toll on natural resources. Also, members of the women's group are active and articulate citizens who aspire for more than just living their lives as farmers. Need for income generation activities is apparent in the community as women leaders aspire to widen their horizons to achieve something more, to accomplish something new and extraordinary.



Figure 61. Village map prepared by the women's group of Aati hamlet.

A restaurant run by rural women

Ordinary experiences in life can sometimes be the inspiration for some extraordinary ideas to emerge. The idea of running a women-led restaurant in a rural area, probably for the first time in the hills of Uttarakhand, evolved following a visit of the director of USNPSS to Leh, Ladakh. Building on our own experiences of working with women's groups of Danya area, this initiative has spoken to us at USNPSS in the most radical levels.

First, the idea of women running a restaurant in a village-setting is in itself a radical proposition. More so, because the area is well-known for its religious traditions and revered rituals. In a rural setting, it is inevitable that certain traditions continue to thrive within the nexus of caste and gender-based polarization in society. For example, the most commonly expressed comment on the initiative has been to the effect that a woman from an upper caste family cannot and should not serve food to people in a restaurant. This act of running a restaurant and serving food to unknown travelers was thought to be demeaning to the community.

Second, while the success of this endeavor lies in women taking full responsibility in overall management and execution of daily activities, the undercurrent was to streamline a process of change in society. It was to redefine gender relations at home and in the community. It was to satisfy a growing demand in villages for opportunities to do some non-farm activities to generate cash income.

Third, the very nature of this project at Aati is radical because at one level it gratifies the growing need of income generation for women in the community but the next level anchors them to their land. Physical, economic and emotional connection with the land is increased by the fact that the restaurant will offer local cuisine. It is to serve breakfast and lunch, all dishes celebrating the grandeur of the local foods satisfying local taste. Local food that is more nutritious will be cooked and served fresh to the customers. The restaurant will be closed in the evenings and dinner will not be served.

Fourth, the restaurant is not a cement-concrete building but has been planned in congruence with the surrounding environment that is dotted by forests, grasslands and the village itself. Along the side of the road, a bamboo structure with tin roof unfolds as an un-intruding formation with a sense of continuity and belonging to the place. The architecture is such that more of sunlight, both as a source of illumination and warmth, is received by the bamboo-based structure.

Fifth, there will also be space for women to sell their produce like fruits, vegetables, dals etc.



Figure 62. The site under construction at Aati hamlet.

6giv. Joshyura Cluster, Pati

Nestled in Pati block in Champawat district, Joshyura is a small hamlet consisting of 35 households. The total population of the hamlet is 277, all families belonging to general caste. Age-wise composition of the total population reveals an interesting gender-based break-up of the community which signifies low percentage of girls below the age of 21. However, the percentage of men above the age of 21 falls down in a significant way till we reach the age bar of 62 years. The missing number of men in the age-range of 21-62 probably indicates their migration to the cities and towns in search of some paid employment. Yet, 64.5% of men reported their main occupation as farmers. 16.1% of the men said that they work as daily wage labours.

Crop depredation by wild animals was reported as the main reason for decline in agricultural production. In addition, 28.4% of the village residents cited climate change as a reason for change in agricultural practices leading to lower yields in the fields.

Activities during the year

Awareness generation and capacity building programmes in Joshyura and the surrounding five hamlets were followed by several activities to improve the local livelihoods in the region. One of the most interesting strands of discussions during meetings in villages was the recognition of the fact that agriculture alone was no longer a viable option that families could depend on. In recognition of this fact, communities were already doing some supplementary activities. For example, the region is well known for its pioneering work in fisheries. Cultivated in tanks in the fields, fish is sold locally to generate cash income.

During meetings with the village residents, vegetable growing and horticulture-based livelihoods had emerged as popular themes that everyone agreed upon to propagate in the region. People were familiar with the activity of vegetable growing for sale but seemed to be constrained by non-availability of seeds. In addition, irrigation of saplings/plants had emerged as a pressing issue that demanded immediate attention.

More discussion on issues of making horticulture and vegetable growing as resilient and secure sources of livelihood generation brought the issue of water shortage experienced by some households in Piplati and almost the whole community in Joshyura hamlet. Since water supply is vital to the viability of vegetable growing and horticulture, the project partner began to look into the issue of availability and distribution patterns of water in the region. Contrary to the mainstream efforts that have aimed at exploiting water and other natural resources to its maximum threshold, discussions under this project highlighted the limits of the local ecosystem in provisioning of daily life essentials to communities. Developing a holistic approach in villages to envision inter-relationships of natural resources and of human needs therein, the project offered an opportunity to work simultaneously on rejuvenation of natural resources, livelihoods generation and unequal distribution of water by promoting collective thinking and action to solve problems experienced by people in their daily lives.

Ecological restoration and better management of water in the uplands required a range of collective efforts from the local governing bodies, village institutions, the CBO and the community. Since unequal water distribution had emerged as one of the important problems of the people of Piplati and Joshyura hamlets, collaboration with the panchayati raj representatives was sought. In particular, the gram Pradhan and the sarpanch of the van panchayat were involved in all discussions aimed at integrating livelihood priorities; and further in execution stages, particularly during the process of provisioning of water to Joshyura hamlet.

In partnership with *Jan Maitri Sangathan* in Galla, district Nainital, the CBO developed a collaborative process of learning from each other particularly the methods of raising fruit-bearing trees and care after planting them in the fields. Apple, peach and apricot saplings/cuttings were purchased from Galla for distribution in villages covered by the programme.



Figure 63. The CBO representative from Pati, district Champawat visited Galla, district Nainital to purchase fruit-tree plants from the nursery.

Protection of saplings and plants from wild animals had emerged as the most tenacious issue in all hamlets. Communities were motivated to take care of their fruit-bearing plant saplings but efforts moved further to orient and assist panchayats to raise the issue of menace caused by wild animals with various government departments and the local representatives of the legislative assembly and parliament.



Figure 64. Peach trees are planted in view of inadequate rain fall during winter months which affects wheat production particularly in unirrigated land.



Figure 65. Farmers are in the process of switching to a livelihood strategy that combines agriculture with horticulture. Erratic rainfall patterns are cited as the most common reasons for this shift in land-based practices. These farmers were provided with good variety of fruit trees.

Saplings of Kiwi were purchased from The National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, a unit of ICAR, Government of India, Niglat, near Bhowali). In addition, vegetable seeds were distributed to secure agro-economic base of communities.



Figure 66. Kiwi has been introduced in Piplati hamlet.

In order to respond to the demand of the community in Joshyura, a pipeline was laid up to the hamlet. Since the old pipeline supplying drinking water which came from a common source to Piplati and Joshyura was not enough for both hamlets, discussions with both communities resulted in a strong resolve to undertake activities regarding provisioning of two separate pipelines for them. With a positive bias to ensure regular supply of drinking water to relatively poor families that invariably reside in the edges of the hamlets, the initiative has worked out in the direction of providing equal access to water to all in the community.

6gv. Gwar Cluster, Gopeswar

Gwar hamlet is situated about five km from the town of Gopeswar, on the Mandal Chopta road. With a total of 135 households and a population of 577 (52 % women) Gwar is the largest hamlet covered by this project. About 69% of the total population represents general caste and the remaining 31% belongs to the scheduled caste population. From a sample of 135 respondents, 34.8% said that their first source of income was agriculture. For 20% of the respondents, dairying, and for 2.2% animal husbandry, was the primary source of income.

Data on the distribution of labour patterns show that 50.48% women perform agriculture related labour whilst the share of men was reported to be 36.42%. Women outperform men in all activities related to livestock rearing (56.83% women and 30.26% men) and forest-based work (74% women and 13.02% men).

Activities during the year

Considering centrality of vegetable production as a source of livelihoods in Gwar hamlet, work under NMHS was built towards strengthening physical setup, ecology and social skills of the community to improve production from the land. Given the high level of awareness among women re conservation of forests and ecological restoration, the village perspective plans focused on issues of integration of livelihoods security on a sustainable basis and also on improving ecological as well as social resilience in the region.

Another dimension of meetings and discussions in the region was a focus on building up perspectives of communities, the panchayat representatives, officials of the block and district administration on connecting agricultural activities with the rest of the village ecosystem. This attempt had involved looking at agriculture as a system, and not an isolated activity, that elaborated on issues of dependence of farming on the status of the forest, water sources and willingness of communities to generate cash from a land-based economy.

During meetings in Gwar and neighboring hamlets, the issue of shortage of seeds came up very frequently. In addition, reduced size of fruits on old malta trees in Gwar had become a pressing issue for the community. The women complained that fruit production has gone down and old trees were drying up. In view of these concerns in the community, the local partner organization collaborated with the block headquarters and the district panchayat enabling the community to receive seeds of seasonal vegetables such as peas, cabbage, cauliflower and capsicum. The produce was sold locally in the town of Gopeswar. Fruit trees such as malta, oranges, lemon and lime were distributed in communities with women taking up the responsibility of care of the plants.



Figure 67. Good production of coriander and peas was achieved during winters in Gwar hamlet.

A positive aspect of the marketing pattern in Gwar is farmer's direct access to the town of Gopeswar. Since the village is located at a convenient distance from the town, the community does not depend on intermediaries for selling their produce. As a consequence, the village residents have developed capabilities to directly sell their produce.

A total of 25 green-houses (21 bamboo and 4 iron framework) were installed in Gwar hamlet enabling the community to grow vegetable saplings during the winter months. Use of green-houses also made it possible for the community to grow off-season vegetables and to earn premium during the lean months.

The learning curve of installation of green-houses was remarkably interesting for the community and the partner organization. Since there was a huge poly-house installed under a government scheme in Gwar, people aspired for the same model for themselves. The basic framework of this proto-type was made of iron rods and its large size had inflated its cost to a level that it would have been impossible for the small farmers to install it; especially when the size of their fields was much smaller than the area covered by the large green house.

During the meeting with the partner organizations at Almora, the issue of installing cheap poly-houses with a bamboo framework was discussed. The partner organizations had preferred the bamboo framework because experience had revealed that such structures work just fine. In addition, such structures were easy to maintain and in case of any damage the poles could be replaced easily by the farmers themselves. However, the community in Gwar insisted on having an iron-rod structure and the first few green-houses were installed in a way that the community wanted. Later, a bamboo framework was installed as a demonstration piece. Soon, the village residents became familiar with the advantages of such structures and began enquiring about it. As a consequence, 21 bamboo-based green-houses were installed in Gwar.



Figure 68. Bamboo-based framework of green houses had reduced the cost to about one tenth of the iron-based structures.

Nursery: A village resident has donated 3 nalis of land to raise a nursery and 3 kg of tejpatta seeds were sown.

6gvi. Chaundli Cluster, Badhani-Karnprayag

Chaundli has 60 households and a population of 227 (61.7% women and 38.3% men) and is nestled about a km uphill from the road that connects Karnprayag to Nandasain. The hamlet consists of 81.7% general caste and 18.3% scheduled caste population.

Agriculture and daily wage labour are reported as the main occupations for both men and women in the community. 41% men and 30% women earn cash income by working as daily wage workers. In addition, a fairly high percentage of the population depends on remittances and pensions both as retired personnel and under welfare schemes (old age, widow, disabled etc.).

Availability of a good forest around the hamlet has made it possible for the residents to rear buffaloes. 72% of women as well as men reported working on livestock rearing, while fetching fodder and dry leaves for animal-bedding continues to be a responsibility of women. 91.18% women and 1.5% girls reported that they provide labour for all forest-based chores while the share of men in this domain was 5.88% adults and 1.47% boys. Percentage of that performing forest labour to total population of the hamlet was 29.96%. In view of the total working population, 55.74% residents reported their involvement in forest related labour.

Despite low production in the fields, the community has not lost interest in agriculture. Though crop depredation is a major problem, local solutions such as fencing by tying up sarees across the fields, (21.7%), creation of noise/sound at night (11.7%) have been tried to provide relief. The members of the women's group discuss the issue in village meetings. During the year, 18.3% meetings were totally devoted to discussing the issue and find solutions to the problem. Consequentially, 93.3% of the village residents have regularly participated in all activities related to shooing away animals from the fields. In particular, women take up the responsibility of shooing away monkeys during the day whilst at night men and young boys stay in fields to keep wild boar, porcupines away from the hamlet.

Invasion of wild animals into the fields has far reaching repercussions on environmental and economic issues. Detailed interviews with 60 young women and girls indicated that because of the fear of wild animals, 21.7% of girls consider forests as a scary place. While 98.3% of the girls said that they were interested in village life but the much-acclaimed notion of the "forest being women's parental home" has lost its relevance in current times. From the sample of 60 young women 43.3% were of the view that forests are not special places for women and 23.3% believed that forests are not necessary for their needs and current lifestyle. 25% girls said that forest-based chores were boring and they disliked those activities. In terms of household amenities, Chaundli hamlet exhibits the highest percentage of LPG connections. 98.3% of the households have gas connections and every household owns at least one cell phone.

Activities during the year

During village mapping and also in meetings with members of the women's group, the issue of water shortage cropped up very frequently at Chaundali. Construction of roads to link villages

with each other and with major market areas has become a priority of development in the state of Uttarakhand. In their haste to develop road networks, often the contractors dump the debris on the hill slopes. This unregulated dumping of rubble onto the steep slopes has not only aggravated mudflows and landslides but also disturbed water flows from old naulas (springs) and seepages. The recent road construction in Chaundali has disturbed the flow from an old spring above the hamlet. In addition, distribution from the main water supply was problematic and the households down the line were continuously facing shortage.



Figure 69. Members of women's group preparing a village map at Chaundli, district Chamoli.

As a follow up of awareness generation and capacity building meetings in Chaundli hamlet, activities under NMHS focused on ensuring provision of equal share of water to all village residents. In addition, the people in Chaundli and the surrounding villages of Pudiyani, Kukdai, Diyarkot, Jakh and Sundergaon agreed upon initiating activities re plantation of mulberry trees in the region. Further, vegetable production was thought of as a viable means of generating cash income on an immediate basis in the region.

A 1.14 km long pipeline to supply drinking water to Chaundli hamlet was laid connecting the old water source called "*choura mangaraa*" with a chamber, tank and a series of stand posts in the hamlet. The capacity of the newly constructed tank is ten thousand litres. Geeta Devi, a resident of the village donated a part of her fields for construction of the tank. With a dimension of 2 x 3 x 1.70 meters this tank has become the main source of drinking water to about fifty households. The whole initiative has been gender-sensitive and constant talks with women have made it possible for the local organization to install stand-posts in places that they had identified valuable for them. For example, a stand-post was installed at "*dunkhil dhaar*", on the way to the forest from the hamlet. Women wished for such a facility because uphill for about a kilometer drinking water was not available. With this facility in place women now report immediate relief especially during the summers when they need to trudge even longer distances to the forest to collect green fodder.



Figure 70. Members of the women's group of Chaundali hamlet gather for a meeting.

Another off-shoot of the initiative in provision of water has been cleanliness in the hamlet. Earlier, shortage of water would deter the village residents to use toilets. However, the situation changed as soon as water became available to all households in the hamlet. Further, some families are using water for irrigation purposes.

During the year, women's groups of Chaundali and Jakh hamlets took the lead to develop plant nurseries to raise seedlings of cauliflower. Seeds were grown in a collective place and when ready the seedlings were distributed to all in the community. A total of 50 households in Chaundali and 35 households in Jakh grew cauliflower in their fields. The village residents now plan to expand the activity next year.



Figure 71. Communities in Chaundali and Jakh raised cauliflower plants for the first time in the history of these hamlets.

A total of 5000 cuttings of mulberry trees were planted in Bhagaan tok, Paatal tok and Badhani hamlet. Since mulberry is a fast-growing tree and provides fodder, the women were enthusiastic about having a fodder source near the village which would save their time and energy in the future. The community also plans to prepare baskets from the stems of mulberry trees and sell

those en route Badrinath and other pilgrimage sites in the region to generate cash income. On a long-term basis, the community plans to rear silk-worms in mulberry trees.



Figure 72. Women talk about their experiences during a congregation in Badhaani village.

Strengths and weaknesses

We were able to refine our ideas about resilience and village communities. How to respond to change, not only to survive but also to evolve. This applies to the staff in our organization and in the village communities. Further, to build the capacity of a socio-ecological system (our village communities and the individuals which make it) with ideas of diversity, openness, feedbacks, monitoring, trust and leadership. This has given us a great deal to reflect upon and continue to work with the aim of improving the well-being of people.

Since we are looking for a change to a new state of being -- a state which is unknown -- it is a challenge for both our staff as well as the communities. People like well-defined results, and that leads to a reluctance to change. This involves both social arenas, like caste and gender, and a different relationship with the components of the village ecosystem. The little experience gained so far indicates that it is worth pursuing for a longer time.

In conclusion, it is important to emphasize the distinct conceptual and practical approach undertaken by USNPSS to improve livelihoods of rural communities in six different locations of Uttarakhand. The core strength of activities derives from connections that have been established between environmental and livelihood issues. This connect has enabled people to look at the work in a positive manner, rather than get into a conservation vs development debate. The well-being of people residing in the hill villages assumes paramount importance. One of the elements that strongly deviate from the mainstream approaches to income generation is the recognition of the fact that while market-oriented NGOs and government agencies tend to own and control supply of produce from villages to metro cities or export-focused businesses, almost all farmers in the hills of Uttarakhand are women. This large percentage of women farmers neither have contacts nor do they have knowledge and skills regarding marketing of produce. These small-scale women producers not only receive little money or subsistence wages when NGOs or

government agencies take up marketing responsibilities; but also face the consequences of the global changes in prices of agricultural inputs/produce. The additional challenge is the sheer lack of interest among young women and men in continuing with agriculture-based life style.

In the face of these challenges, this work under NMHS has thrown up a new gender-sensitive paradigm which promotes (a) women's access to resources (vegetable seeds, fruit trees, provision of irrigation facilities, knowledge and skills to cope with climate change issues) and (b) emphasizes sale of produce in the local markets. In all the six sites chosen under NMHS for livelihoods generation, vegetable production has gone up. People have been growing off-season vegetables in green-houses and in the fields because provision of irrigation facilities (plastic-lined tanks, piped water supply from a local source, renovation of *naulas*) has improved yields. The aim is to sell the produce locally which rural people can do by themselves. In addition, a women-owned restaurant and marketing space has been developed along the roadside in Aati village Danya.

Activities with rural communities have brought into fore an improved understanding of inter relationships between village ecosystems, resilience, livelihoods and climate change. In the next phase, the village residents are planning to improve water yield by digging trenches uphill on the slopes. The community in Pata, Badhani, Gwar, Aati is also planning to take more action to protect and regenerate the forest.

7. Environment Education in Schools

Our Land Our Life, workbooks developed by USNPSS continued to be a part of the regular school curriculum in 2017-2018. These workbooks are used to teach environmental education in classes 6,7, and 8th in government schools.

At the policy level, there have been reports of the state government planning to introduce books developed by NCERT (CBSE curriculum) in Uttarakhand. What will happen to environment education programme is not clear because NCERT promotes the infusion approach to the subject while the state has so far adopted the "separate subject" approach developed by USNPSS.

8. Research and Publications

8a. Research

The ICSSR supported research till 2016 had provided USNPSS an opportunity to collect extensive household data from villages in Uttarakhand. This data was analyzed and the final report was submitted in 2017. Later, USNPSS decided to continue with the process of primary data collection and analysis to (a) enrich the existing data-base with incorporating more villages in it and (b) use the data for work under NMHS programme.

The ICSSR report was reviewed and comments were sent to USNPSS for modification/changes. These comments/suggestions were incorporated by USNPSS and the final report was submitted

to the ICSSR. The reviewers have recommended it for publication as a book by ICSSR, New Delhi.

During 2017-2018, primary household level data was collected, analyzed and archived in USNPSS. A preliminary report has already been prepared as a part of the annual report and submitted to the NMHS. A more detailed analysis of the data is underway.

8b. Publications

This year a total of 1500 copies of Nanda were printed and distributed in villages. This is the 16 issue of Nanda, the yearly magazine that UMP brings out documenting the work of CBOs, women's groups in villages. The CBOs, adolescent girls, facilitators running the VLCs are encouraged to reflect on and document their work and experiences. Such articles and poems-songs are assembled at Almora for editing and publication every year.

One of the features that sets Nanda as a different magazine from others on gender and development issues in the State of Uttarakhand is its authorship and distribution methods. It is for the first time in the state that articles written by young rural women, girls and CBOs are published on a regular basis. Whilst the mainstream publications share articles written by academicians, journalists and writers in the cities, Nanda concentrates in villages, especially on women from rural areas who never ever get a chance to write and publish their thoughts and activities. The printed copies of Nanda are distributed during women's congregations every year. This method of reaching out not only ensures wider readership but also saves on postage and mailing charges. Further, women feel proud to show their published articles in a large gathering of women and their communities involving men, panchayat representatives and school teachers etc.

160 copies of Muskaan were printed and distributed during the year. Muskaan, the newsletter, is published every year, mostly twice, to share the work of children attending VLCs. Children and sometimes facilitators write articles, stories, poems and draw pictures for the newsletter which is distributed to all centers.



Figure 73. Adolescent girls exhibit a lot of interest in reading articles published in Nanda.

9. Collaboration with Other Organizations

USNPSS collaborates with various government and non-government organizations to promote education, gender equality and development in Uttarakhand. Collaboration with government institutions continued with execution of the NMHS programme supported by the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change. In addition, collaboration with the local administration continued on various fronts such as in organizing *samvaad* that involved the municipal corporation of Almora. Representatives from the district Panchayat also came to attend congregations of women in various locations. USNPSS served as a venue for a workshop on “Daishik Shastra” (Indigenous Knowledge) organized by the Uttaranchal Utthan Parishad Dehradun during 4-5 November 2017.

9a. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi

For the last eight years now, USNPSS is promoting vocational training for rural girls. Since 2011, a small batch of 3-5 adolescent girls have been sent to Delhi to learn some vocational skills. In addition, tailoring and knitting courses were started in villages to train adolescent girls and women with the perspectives of developing entrepreneurial skills.

This year, Ms. Renu Jina, 18 years old, was sent to Sri Aurobindo Ashram, New Delhi to learn tailoring. A resident of Chausali village, district Almora, Renu wanted to learn tailoring but did not know any place where she could go. She had no idea of any vocational training institutes either. With the help of USNPSS, she joined the tailoring course during October 2017-March 2018. After returning to her village, she started stitching clothes for women as well as men. Currently, she earns a decent regular income from this enterprise. Her parents want her to get married but she is delaying it by saying that first she would like to earn some money and save it for future.

9b. Scholarship to girls

Mr. K. J. S. Chatrath, a retired government officer, has offered a scholarship to support studies of girls in school/college in memory of his late wife Alka Dhawan Chatrath. This year, the scholarship was given to Mitali Pande and Daya Jaraut.

- i. Mitali (Pandekhola) studies in Beersheba Senior Secondary School, Almora and the scholarship was offered to support her studies in class 9th.
- ii. Daya (village Supai) is pursuing her graduation from the Kumaon University, Almora campus as a regular student in college. She is studying economics, geography and political science.

10. Library and Resource Centre

USNPSS has maintained a library which is used by local students and PhD scholars in relation to their research or dissertation work.

This year, the water supply system to the training center was repaired. Further, repair and polishing of office furniture was done. The land in front of the office building which had sunk due to inappropriate construction nearby was restored by building a stone wall and putting in a wire fencing to mark the boundary. In addition, levelling of the field was carried out.

A new EPBAX system for the office was installed during the year. In addition, a CCTV system was installed in view of safety of the building and the land around it. An old desktop computer and printer were replaced by a new set.

11. Samvaad

Samvaad was held during 26-27 November 2017 at USNPSS Almora. Convened by the citizens committee of the town Samvaad is held every year in memory of the late B D Pande, ICS. The event offers a forum to common people, the administration, civil society organizations, lawyers, activists and journalists to interact and discuss issues of development in the town as well as the state with the aim of achieving a consensus on solutions to problems that the citizens face in their daily life. The following themes were selected to facilitate discussions:

- a. Drug addiction in youth: causes and solution
- b. Unplanned and irregular construction in the hills of Uttarakhand: in the context of roads, buildings and dams



Figure 74. Samvaad 2017 was attended by the residents of the town, the MP, the MLA, the SP Almora, the chairman Municipal Corporation of Almora, professors, lawyers and village residents from different parts of the state.

12. Staff at USNPSS

A consultant was appointed to work under the NMHS programme, especially for computation of data and report writing.

13. Meetings of the Governing Body

The meetings of the governing Body were held in Almora on 25.3.2017 and 26.12.2017. Owing to the resignation of Mr. Arun Singh in lieu of his personal reasons, Dr. Lalit Pande was appointed as the CEO and the Chairman of USNPSS.

14. Audited Accounts

An audited statement of accounts is attached.

15. Visitors

Ms. Neelakshi Joshi, research scholar Dresden University Germany visited on 1.4.2017. A meeting on urban planning and the architectural problems of Almora was held. 32 people from the town of Almora participated in the meeting

Mr. Ajay Prasad Slikaon Majkhali, Ranikhet visited on 9.4.2017

Dr. G P Pande, Almora and Mr. Sunil Pathak Kashipur made a visit to USNPSS on 9.4.2017

Mr. Mohan Kandpal and H. C. Joshi Binta visited on 14.4.2107 to discuss the future of the programme at Sunadi

Mr. Suraj Tewari from Rauna village Dwarahat stayed on 14. 4. 2017

Ms. Shalini Pathak, Almora Campus, Kumaon University visited to use the library on 15.4.2017, 10.6.2017, 29.6.2017, 6.1.2018

Mr. J. Tewari (rtd.) Rasstriya Shabdavali Aayog, Delhi visited on 24.4.2017

Mr. Ramesh Sachdeva and Chandrakala Sachdeva, Delhi-Dwarka, visited on 1.5.2017

Ms. Neha Upreti, Pantnagar university, Education extension branch visited on 8.5.2017 in connection with her research on alternative education

Mr. Dobhal, RISE visited on 12.5.2017 to discuss work re community learning programmes and also attended training of facilitators of the village learning centers

Mr. Rupesh Kumar and his wife from ONGC Dehradun visited on 16.5.2017 to discuss and see the computer learning programme. He made a visit to Girchola village to see the center

Mr. Ashok Bhatt from Bhowali visited on 24.5.2017 in relation to consult Dr. OPL Srivastava

Mr. Raju Bisht, Ganai-gangoli, made a visit to USNPSS to discuss issues of assessment and grading of children, adolescent girls and women in villages

Mr. Ashutosh Bhakuni, Pratham Delhi visited on 31.5.2017 to meet the director

Mr. Shukla from Dainik Jagaran, Almora made a visit to USNPSS on 5.6.2017. He did an interview with the Director on environmental education in Uttarakhand

Ms. Shailly and her two colleagues from Healing home, New Delhi visited on 7.6.2017 to discuss *Pranik* Healing techniques

Mr. Mohan Kandpal, Maya Joshi and Harish Joshi came on 10.6.2017 to discuss the programme run by SEED in Dwarahat, Bhikiyasen and Binta clusters

Ms. Manini Chatterjee, Mr. Deb Mukherjee and their friends from Delhi visited on 13.6.2017

Mr. Gopal Prasad Jan Shikshan Sansthan Bhimtal visited on 16.6.2017, 24.8.2017, 18.11.2017

Ms. Radha Tewari, Tyunara Almora visited on 17.6.2017 to discuss the idea of running tailoring and knitting centers for young women in villages

Ms. Bhumika Joshi, Lucknow came on 20.6.2017 in relation to her research in Kumaon

Mr. Manoj Pant and Piyali Pant, Mumbai, visited during 27.6.2017-29.6.2017

Mr. Ravindra Shukla from Kausani and two students from Georgia USA came to discuss the nature and the role of NGOs in Uttarakhand, 4.7.2017

Ms. Shsahi Prabha Rawat, Kotdwar, district Pauri Garhwal stayed over the night of 6.7.2017

Mr. Mahesh Galiya, Galla, district Nainital came on the 15.7.2017 to discuss activities carried out by Jan Maitri Sangathan in Pata

Mr. Deepak Bhatt from Haldwani came over to meet the director on 26.7.2017

Ms. Chitra Shah and Rajesh Shah visited on 27.7.2017

Mr. Yogesh, an assistant to the auditor from Nainital visited during 1.8.2017-5.8.2017

Mr. Rajneesh from Ranikhet and Ranjan Joshi visited on 19.8.2017 to discuss the possibilities of a seminar on development issues at USNPSS

Mr. Vivek Joshi, Nainital visited on 22.8.2017 on recommendations from Dr. Kusum Arunachalam of the Doon university Dehradun to talk about the NMHS programme

Ms. Prema Joshi, Talla Joshi Khola came to use the library on 30.8.2017

Mr. Vinod Kumar from Khola, district Almora visited on 30.8.2017

Ms. Neetu Arya and Sonu Banaula from Maichun visited on 31.8.2017 to discuss the possibilities of work for girls and young women by running tailoring and knitting centers.

A group of 15 students and a teacher from the School of Planning and Architecture New Delhi came over to study the hill architecture by looking into the office of USNPSS, 1.9.2017

Mrs. P. Chatterjee, Kausani visited on 6.9.2017, stayed over-night during 21.12.2017-23.12.2017,

Col C S Pant, Mrs. Gita Pant, Mrs. Saral Tandon, Ranjan and Amita Joshi visited on 9.9.2017 to discuss the future work of USNPSSs and its financial issues

Dr. H. C. Pande, Lucknow visited during 13.9.2017-15.9.2017

A group of 4 students from the School of Architecture, Jamia Malia College, Delhi university visited on 19.9.2107 to study traditional houses

Mr. Mahesh Galiya visited on 18.9.2017 to discuss the NMHS programme and activities in Pata, district Nainital

Ms. Ritu from Faridabad visited on 21.9.2017

Mr. Mahesh Chandra Sharma Jharkhand and Mr. Suresh Suyal Haridwar came on 26.9.2017 to discuss the possibilities of organizing a workshop on 4-5 November 2017 at USNPSS

Mr. Mukul Sanwal (IAS ret'd.), Ms. Poonam Sanwal and Mr. Arvind Tewari visited during 28.9.2017-1.10.2017

Mr. Ricki Suri, USA, came on the 2.10.2017 to meet the Director

Mr. Yogesh came from Naintal in relation to accounts-audit during 4.10.2018-5.10.2018

Mr. Manish Khanna, Nainital, came on the 6.10.2017 to finalize the audit report

Ms. Ritu, Faridabad visited during 9.10.2017-14.10.2017 in relation to data collection under NMHS programme and to follow up work under ICSSR

Prof. Bhandari, Chemistry Department Kumaon University Almora visited on 17.10.2017

Representatives of the Dayal Trust, New Delhi visited on 23.10.2017 to discuss and review the work supported by the Trust

Mr. Raju Bisht, Ganaigangoli, district Pithoragarh, visited on 26.10.2017

Mr. Vinod Kumar, Khola, visited on 26.10.2017

Ms. Maya Joshi, Kiran Arya and Kiran Adhikari came on 27.10.2017 to see the work carried out at Mani-agar tailoring and knitting center

A workshop on “Daishik Shastra” (Indigenous Knowledge) was organized by the Uttaranchal Utthan Parishad Dehradun during 4-5 November 2017.

Mr. Ramavatar, Tilonia Ajmer, Rajasthan made a visit to USNPSSs on 18.11.2017

Mr. Basant Pande, Anila Pant and Pushpa Punetha came on 20.11.2017

Mr. Neeraj Pangty and Bhuvan Joshi, All India Radio Almora visited on 21.11.2017

Ms. Sweta Joshi, Azim Prem ji University, Bangalore came on the 21.11.2017 to discuss government and NGO interventions to conserve *naulas* (water springs) and other water sources in Uttarakhand in relation to her research

Mr. Shambhu Joshi, Hiltron Calc almora came on 25.11.2017, 29.11.2017. 2.12.2017 in relation to the printing of Nanda

Samvaad 2017 was held during 26.11.2017-27.11.2017. about 75 people, both government officials and non-government organizations; mostly from the town of Almora, participated each day

A group of 5 young girls and their instructor came on 7.12.2017. 4 girls stayed over at USNPSS till 24.12.2017 as they sat for their examinations conducted by IGNOU

Mr. Manish Khanna from Nainital visited on 22.12.2017

The governing body meeting was held at USNPSS Almora on 26.12.2017

Mr. Vinod Kumar Maichun visited on 29 .12.2017 to discuss the logistics and planning for the bal-mela

Ms. Sonu Banaula and Uma Gaira visited during 29.12.2017-30.12.2017 in relation to their exposure to NGOs in Garhwal region

Dr. G. C. Pant, Bageswar, visited on 6.1.2018

Mr. Mahesh Galiya came on 17.1.2018 to discuss opening of a computer center and tailoring-knitting center at Galla, district Nainital

Mr. Pitamber Gahtori visited on 17.1.2018 to discuss opening of a computer center and tailoring-knitting center at Pati, district Champawat

Mr. Basant Pande Ccame from Danya on 20.1.2018

Mr. Ishwari Dutt Joshi came from Basauli on 24.1.2018 to discuss issues around the Binsar Sanctuary and sarpanch sangathan in Uttarakhand

Ms. Hema Negi and Ms. Pushpa Rawat from Bhikyasain visited during 5.2.2018-7.2.2018

Mr. Naresh and his colleague from Ranibagh visited on 5.2.2018 in connection to preservation of the old manuscripts and books at USNPSS

Mr. Anand Pande and Ishwar Iyer visited during 13.2.2018-15.2.2018

Mr. Mahesh Galia and Mr. Pitamber Gahtori came along with 9 rural girls and boys for an orientation meeting and to discuss details of computer and tailoring-knitting centers

Mr. Vinod Kumar from Maichun visited on 26.2.2018 to discuss the outcomes of children's fairs and to plan for the women's congregation

Mr. Roop Singh Mehta, Bindukhatta came on 9.3.2018 and stayed over till 12.3.2018

Mr. Basant Pande came on 13.3.2018 in relation to his work on constructing a restaurant using bamboo framework

Mr. Malik and his doctor friend came from Kasar Devi on 12.3.2018

Mr. Amit Pande and Ms. Sandhya Pande, Noida visited during 25.3.2018-26.3.2018

Mr. Mahesh Galia, Galla, came on 26.3.2018 to discuss activities under NMHS project. Following this, Mr. Pitamber Gahtori, Pati, came on the 27.3.2018 and Ms. Anila Pant, Basant Pande and Ms. Pushpa Punetha, Danya, came on 29.3.2018

Mr. Devendra and Mr. Malik visited on 30.3.2018 to review computer maintenance at USNPSS and also in villages

Mr. Keshav Desiraju (IAS ret'd.) came on 31. 3.2018

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora

List of Governing Body members for year 2017-18

Sl.	Name	Occupation	Address
1	Dr. Lalit Pande (Chairman and Chief Executive)	Social work	Manorath Sadan, Champanaula, Almora 263601
2	Dr. H. C. Pande (Member)	Former Vice Chancellor	1/97 Vijay Khand Gomti Nagar, Lucknow
3	Dr. B. K. Joshi (Member)	Former Vice Chancellor	217, Indira Nagar, Phase 1, P.O. New Forest, Dehradun
4	Shri Suman Dubey (Member)	Former Editor	N-125, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi- 110017
5	Ms.Ratna Sudarshan (Member)	Advisor, ISST, New Delhi	C-96 (third Floor), Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 11017
6	Mr Ranjan Joshi (Member)	Former IT consultant	Belvedere, Brighton Corner, Almora 263601

Special Invitees:

7	Shri Arun Singh	Former M.P. and Union Minister	MA 1/3-2D Garden Estate, MG Road, Gurgaon.
8	Ms. Manini Chatterjee	Editor	B-27, Press Enclave, New Delhi - 110017
9	Prof K. S. Valdiya, F.N.A.	Scientist	Shubhangan, Longview Compound, Nainital
10	Dr. M. G Jackson	Former Professor	Flat no H-1101, Pioneer Park Sector 61, Gurgaon 122001
11	Shri K.S. Mallick	Retd Civil Servant	Ganga Niwas, Kasar Devi, Almora 263601
12	Smti Anuradha Pande	Social worker	USNPSS, Almora
13	Shri Vikram Mehta	Brookings, Delhi	Binsar, Almora
14	Col C.S. Pant (Retd)	Consultant Radiologist	Green Park, New Delhi
15	Shri Deb Mukharji	IFS Retd, former Ambassador	C-71 IFS Apartments, Mayur Vihar-1, Delhi -91
16	Dr O.P. Yadava	CEO, National Heart Institute	Kasar Devi, Almora

USNPSS Almora

Staff 2017-18

SNo	Name	Sex	Qualifications	Work exp in USNPSS
1.	Dr Lalit Pande Director	M	Ph.D.in Mechanical Engineering, Purdue University S.M.in Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. USA B.Tech (with distinction) Indian Institute of Technology Delhi Awarded <i>Padma Shri</i> by the President of India IITDelhi Distinguished Alumni Award 2014 Outstanding Mechanical Engineer OME Award Purdue University (2017)	31 years
2.	Ms.Anuradha Pande	F	MSc. (Geology), Kumaun University Nainital, Post Graduate diploma in environmental management, Lucknow	25
3.	Ms. Rama Joshi	F	Intermediate, U. P. Board	24
4.	Sri Kamal K. Joshi	M	M. A. (History), Kumaon University, Almora campus	24
5	Sri Jeevan C Joshi	M	Inter science	29
6	Sri Suresh Bisht	M	Intermediate	24
7	Sri Kailash Papne	M	MA (Education), MA (Political Science). Kumaon University	10
8	Ms. Ritu (PT)	F	MA (TISS, Mumbai), MPhil, IIFM, Bhopal	4
9	Sri D. S. Latwal	M	B.A. Kumaon University	13
10.	Sri Divan Matiyani	M	Class 11	18
11	Sri Mohan Singh	M	Class 8	9

मनीश खन्ना एण्ड क.
सनदी लेखाकार

Manish Khanna & Co

Chartered Accountants

30, 1st Floor, Pichari Bazaar, Mallital, Nainital 263001, Uttarakhand

Telefax: +91 5942 238757

email: Manish@mkca.net

website: www.mkca.net

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To The Members of Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryawaran Shiksha Sansthan

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of **Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryawaran Shiksha Sansthan** which comprise the Balance Sheet as at March 31, 2018, the Income and Expenditure Account and the Receipts and Payments Account for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of these financial statements. This responsibility includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with the Standards on Auditing issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India. Those Standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error.

In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the Company's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of the accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Un qualified Opinion:

In our opinion and to the best of our information and according to the explanations given to us, the accounts, read together with the Statement on Accounting Policies and Notes to Accounts attached thereto give a true and fair view in conformity with the accounting principles generally accepted in India:

- in the case of Balance Sheet, of the state of affairs of the entity as at the end of its financial year; and
- in the case of the Income and Expenditure Account, the surplus for its financial year.
- In the case of the Receipts and Payments Account, the receipts and payments reflected therein

For Manish Khanna & Co.

Chartered Accountants

Firm Registration Number : 008584C

Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICAI)

Partner

Membership Nos 077858

Dated: August 22, 2018

Place: Camp Almora



Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora
Balance sheet as at 31 March 2018

<u>Sources of funds</u>			
Corpus Fund			
Opening balance	4,272,921.97	Previous Year	4,097,604.47
Add: Corpus donations	2,491,283.00		175,317.50
Total corpus fund	6,764,204.97		4,272,921.97
Reserves			
General Reserves			
Opening Balance	3,075,000.40		2,820,706.45
Less: Effect of grant Received from			
Aid treated as donation in previous			
year			
Add: Current year's appropriation	318,964.50	3,075,000.40	
		254,293.95	
Specific Reserves			
Opening Balance	6,921,736.03		6,746,938.45
Less: Expenditure met from reserves	(778,242.64)		(1,193,985.47)
Add: Current year's appropriation	1,781,161.29	6,921,736.03	
Total reserves	11,318,619.58		9,996,736.43
Total sources of funds	18,082,824.55		14,269,658.40
<u>Utilization of funds</u>			
Net current assets			
Current assets			
Cash in hand	485.00		70.00
Cash in bank	5,700,027.47		4,316,600.25
Balance in bank in fixed deposits	13,392,460.00		11,200,830.00
Accrued Interest	345,990.00		84,343.00
Advances	21,000.00		
Income tax deducted at source	509,995.00		401,933.00
Total current assets	19,969,957.47	16,003,776.25	
Less Current liabilities			
Unspent grants in aid (Annexure A)	1,887,132.92	1,734,117.85	
Net current assets	18,082,824.55		14,269,658.40
Total utilization of funds	18,082,824.55		14,269,658.40
Notes to accounts and significant accounting policies - Annexure - "B"			

This is the balance sheet referred

to in our report of even date

For Manish Khanna & Co.

ICAI FRN 008584C

Chartered Accountants



Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICAI)

Partner

Membership Nos 077658

Dated: August 22, 2018

Camp Almora

For Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan

Jeewan C. Joshi

Jeewan C. Joshi

Accountant

Dr. Lalit Pande

Dr. Lalit Pande

Chairman

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora
Income and Expenditure Account
for year ended 31 March 2018

<u>Income</u>	<u>Current Year</u> Amount [Rs]	<u>Previous Year</u> Amount [Rs]
Administrative charges	270,000.00	346,400.00
Receipts from imparting training workshops	300,400.00	143,250.00
Donations	392,529.00	256,500.00
Interest on bank deposits	1,161,751.00	937,643.00
Miscellaneous Income- Sansthan	1,750.00	11,500.00
	<u>2,126,430.00</u>	<u>1,695,293.00</u>
Total Income	<u>2,126,430.00</u>	<u>1,695,293.00</u>

<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>Current Year</u> Amount [Rs]	<u>Previous Year</u> Amount [Rs]
Bank Charges	1,160.21	-
Boarding and lodging	-	-
Books	3,578.00	12,448.00
Electricity & Water	-	25,442.00
Insurance	7,890.00	12,536.00
Miscellaneous expenses	10,526.00	7,800.00
Postage & Telephone	-	3,000.00
Printing	3,150.00	7,790.00
Scholarship	-	3,200.00
Total expenditure	<u>26,304.21</u>	<u>72,216.00</u>

Current year's surplus appropriated

a. General Reserves	<u>2,100,125.79</u>	<u>1,623,077.00</u>
b. Specific Reserves	318,964.50	254,293.95
	<u>1,781,161.29</u>	<u>1,368,783.05</u>
	<u>2,100,125.79</u>	<u>1,623,077.00</u>

For Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan

This is the income and expenditure
account referred to in our report
of even date

For Manish Khanna & Co.

FRN : 008584C

Chartered Accountants



Jeewan C. Joshi

Jeewan C. Joshi
Accountant

Dr. Lalit Pande

Dr. Lalit Pande
Chairman

Manish Khanna

Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICAI)
Partner
Membership Number 077858
Dated: August 22, 2018
Camp Almora

Receipts		Current Year		Previous Year		Payments	Current Year		Previous Year	
	Amounts [Rs.]		Amounts [Rs.]		Amounts [Rs.]			Amounts [Rs.]		Amounts [Rs.]
Opening balances										
Cash in hand	70.00		154.00			Utilization of grants	2,157,360.75		3,083,027.76	
Cash in bank	4,316,600.25		3,850,875.97			1. Rajeshwar Sushree Dayal Charitable Trust	-		1,034,859.00	
Fixed Deposits	11,200,830.00	15,517,500.25	10,955,551.00	14,806,180.97		2. Indian Council of Social Science Research	-		39,203.00	
						3. SAMVADUCOST	1,112,500.02		1,064,951.25	
Grants Received (including interest earned on grant funds)						4. Hari Krishna Kamta Trivedi Memorial Trust	302,876.00		678,927.00	
1. Rajeshwar Sushree Dayal Charitable Trust	2,448,812.00		2,958,582.00			5. Association for India's Development	1,281,305.00		303,828.75	
2. Indian Council of Social Science Research	823,811.00		3,590.00			6. Silicon Valley Community Foundation - 1	2,389,406.50		-	
3. SAMVADUCOST	5,000.00		55,000.00			7. Silicon Valley Community Foundation - 2	591,837.75		-	
4. Hari Krishna Kamta Trivedi Memorial Trust	1,315,059.00		895,527.00			8- ONGC	4,315,536.75	12,170,854.77	6,204,806.75	
5. Association for India's Development	381,240.00		-			9- NMHS	-	-	-	
6. Silicon Valley Community Foundation - 1	638,178.00		-			Revenue Payments related to Sarasthan				
7- Silicon Valley Community Foundation - 2	1,602,353.84		659,775.00			Bank Charges	1,160.21		-	
(Eric and Leila D'Casta Fund)						Boarding and lodging	-		12,448.00	
8- ONGC	581,500.00	12,323,889.84	1,835,947.00	6,408,824.00		Books	3,578.00		25,442.00	
9- NMHS	4,548,086.00					Electricity & Water	-		12,536.00	
						Insurance	7,890.00		3,000.00	
Revenue Receipts						Miscellaneous expenses	10,526.00		7,790.00	
Administrative charges	270,000.00		345,400.00			Postage & Telephone	-		3,200.00	
Receipts from imparting training workshops	300,400.00		143,250.00			Printing	3,150.00	26,304.21	7,800.00	72,216.00
Donations	382,529.00		256,500.00			Meeting expenses	-		-	
Interest on bank deposits	1,181,751.00		853,300.00			Payments from reserves	-		35,000.00	
Miscellaneous income- Sarasthan	1,750.00	2,126,430.00	11,500.00	1,810,950.00		Audit Fee	-		249.40	
						Bank Charges	193,604.64		143,395.02	
Capital Receipts						Boarding and lodging	-		41,014.00	
Corporate donations	2,491,283.00			175,317.50		Environmental Education	323,952.00		94,238.00	
						Maintenance	26,000.00		24,000.00	
						Scholarship	-		46,000.00	
						Travel	-		29,868.00	
						Workshop	11,397.00		690,300.00	
						Village Learning Center Program	223,289.00		81,112.05	
						Other program expenses including rural Asset Purchased	-		-	
						Re-investment of interest in FDR (Accrued)	776,242.64		1,193,985.47	
						Advances	261,647.00		-	
						Income tax payments	21,000.00		-	
						Tax deducted at source (net of refund)	108,062.00		-	
						Closing balances	-		-	
						Cash in hand	485.00		70.00	
						Cash in bank	5,700,027.47		4,316,600.25	
						Fixed Deposit receipts	13,382,460.00		11,200	

This is the balance sheet referred to in our report of even date.
For Manish Khanna & Co.,
Chartered Accountants
(FRN 008184C)

Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICA)
[Membership Nos 077858]
Partner
Dated: August 22, 2018

For Ultrakhand Sava Nichi Parvavaran Shiksha Sansthan


Jeevan C. Joshi
Accountant


Dr. Lalit Pande
Chairman

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora

Financial Year ended 31 March 2018

Annexure "A" to Balance sheet - Grants-in-aid

Name of the grant	Receipt Current Year				Balance as on 31.3.2018
	Balance as at 1.4.2017	Amount received during	Interest credited to grant	Total grant funds available	Amount spent/ Adjusted
1. Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust	370,300.01	2,400,000.00	48,612.00	2,818,912.01	2,167,388.75
2. Indian Council of Social Science Research	-823,811.00	823,811.00	-	-	-
3. SAMVAD/UCOST	-5,000.00	5,000.00	-	-	-
4. Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust	732.59	1,291,000.00	24,089.00	1,315,821.59	1,112,500.02
5. Association for India's Development	-	381,240.00	-	381,240.00	302,876.00
6-Silicon Valley Community Foundation -1 (Eric and Leila D'Casta Fund)	659,778.00	638,178.00	-	1,297,956.00	1,281,309.00
7-Silicon Valley Community Foundation -2 (Eric and Leila D'Casta Fund)	1,532,118.25	1,602,353.84	-	3,134,472.09	2,399,406.50
8- ONGC	-	561,500.00	-	561,500.00	591,837.75
9- NMHS	-	4,451,200.00	96,886.00	4,548,086.00	4,315,536.75
Total	1,734,117.85	12,154,282.84	169,587.00	14,057,987.69	12,170,854.77
					1,887,132.92

Name of the grant	Receipts during previous the year				Balance as on 31.3.2017
	Balance as at 1.4.2016	Amount received during the year	Interest credited to grant	Total grant funds available	Amount spent/ Adjusted
1. Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust	494,745.76	2,900,000.00	58,582.00	3,453,327.76	3,083,027.75
2. Indian Council of Social Science Research	207,068.00	-	3,990.00	211,058.00	1,034,869.00
3. SAMVAD/UCOST	-20,797.00	55,000.00	-	34,203.00	39,203.00
4. Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust	170,156.84	885,000.00	10,527.00	1,065,683.84	1,064,951.25
5. Association for India's Development	678,927.00	-	-	678,927.00	678,927.00
6-Silicon Valley Community Foundation -1 (Eric and Leila D'Casta Fund)	-	659,778.00	-	659,778.00	-
7-Silicon Valley Community Foundation -2 (Eric and Leila D'Casta Fund)	-	1,691,146.00	144,801.00	1,835,947.00	303,828.75
Total	1,530,100.60	6,190,924.00	217,900.00	7,938,924.60	6,204,806.75
					1,532,118.25
					1,734,117.85



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SCHEDULE NO. "B"

Financial year 2017-18

(a) SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Assets are stated at cost , as reduced by amounts that have been met by persons other USNPSS. Those assets which are funded wholly put of grant funds and are not returnable to the donor at the time of completion of the project are stated at a nominal value of Rupee One.
2. Assets acquired by USNPSS are treated as application of income for charitable purpose and charged to revenue in the year of acquisition.
3. Amounts received by way of Grants are reflected in the Balance Sheet until utilized and upon utilization, the balance if any, is transferred to the Income and Expenditure Account. Unutilized grant is considered as income if not refundable and conversely, excess expenditure on grant if not recoverable is treated as expenditure.
4. Investments, if any, are stated at lower of cost or realizable value.
5. Cash basis of accounting is followed in preparing the statements except interest on time deposits with banks on which income tax has been deducted at source which is accounted on accrual basis

(b) NOTES TO ACCOUNTS

(i) Assets acquired by Sansthan till 31 March 2018 out of grant funds and own funds are :

Description of asset	Amount
Office Equipment	6,46,174.96
Vehicle	7,08,852.00
Furniture and Furnishing	1,05,505.00
Library	437,178.50
Solar Water Heating System	23938.00
Multifunction system	88,200.00
Portable hard drive	5,600.00
Inverter with battery	29,900.00
Computer, printer, scanner	1,91,923.00
Total	22,37,271.46

These assets are carried at nil value.

[Signature]

