

HILL WOMEN OF GARHWAL: A STUDY OF THEIR WORK  
AND HEALTH IN THE CONTEXT OF ECOLOGICAL  
DEGRADATION AND MALE OUT-MIGRATION

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This thesis entitled "Hill Women of Garhwal: A Study of Their WORK and HEALTH in the Context of Ecological Degradation and Male Out-Migration" if submitted for the award of Degree of Doctor of Philosophy of this University. This thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University and is my original work.

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## Glossary

<i>Adhiya</i>	Temporary share- crop land
<i>Agari</i>	Blacksmith
<i>Angan</i>	Courtyard
<i>Angrezi dawa</i>	Allopathic medicine
<i>Assi sal</i>	Traditional village boundary
<i>Atta-chakki</i>	Flour mill
<i>Auji</i>	Tailor and drummer dom caste
<i>Awal</i>	First class
<i>Bacchedani bahar anan</i>	Uterine prolapsed
<i>Bada and pelwora</i>	Plots near the homestead
<i>Badi</i>	Dancer
<i>Bagh</i>	Leopard
<i>Bai</i>	chronic joint pain
<i>Bakki</i>	Local healer-diagnostician
<i>Baman</i>	Brahmin
<i>Banjar</i>	Uncultivated
<i>Banjh'</i>	Barren
<i>Bantha</i>	Copper water pitchers
<i>Barhai</i>	Carpenter
<i>Bari bimari</i>	Big illness
<i>Bhatt</i>	Type of Soyabean
<i>Bhika</i>	Alms received in begging
<i>Bhut</i>	Spirits
<i>Bimari</i>	Illness / disease
<i>Bith – dom</i>	High caste groups - low caste group
<i>Bouri, naav or dikki</i>	Various types of indigenous water storage
<i>Buari</i>	Daughter-in-law
<i>Bukhar</i>	Fever
<i>Butai</i>	Planting
<i>Byah</i>	Midwives
<i>Charpoi</i>	String cot
<i>Chas cholna</i>	Churning buttermilk
<i>Chasma</i>	Natural spring
<i>Chattis rakam aur battis kalam</i>	Thirty six items of royal revenue and thirty two ministerial dues
<i>Chhaul-chhraeta</i>	Attack from evil spirits
<i>Chhaya</i>	Facial skin allergy
<i>Chhaya dosha</i>	Evil spirit affliction
<i>Chhot</i>	Pollution
<i>Chilla</i>	Pith
<i>Chir</i>	Pine tree
<i>Chowka-bhanda</i>	Washing the utensils
<i>Chowkidar</i>	Guard
<i>Chulai</i>	Coarser grams called Amaranth
<i>Chulhas</i>	Stoves
<i>Chunariyas</i>	Makers of wooden churns and utensils
<i>Daad, khujli, phoora</i>	Rashes, boils, ulcers and sores
<i>Dabloos</i>	Large baskets for storage of dry grains

<i>Dadwar</i>	Grain payment received for performance of traditional low caste duties
<i>Dai</i>	Midwives
<i>Dakshina</i>	Donation
<i>Dam Vivah or Tako-ka-vyah</i>	Bride price system of marriage
<i>Dan vivah</i>	Offering of daughter followed by donation
<i>Danda</i>	Clustered hamlets of houses
<i>Darzi</i>	Tailor caste
<i>Das-Dholis or Aujis</i>	Drummers and dancers dom caste
<i>Dastur and phitai</i>	Taxes and customary dues
<i>Devi poojan</i>	Public religious activities
<i>Dharan karna</i>	Clearing the field
<i>Dharati</i>	Sickle
<i>Dhat chinh</i>	White or yellow vaginal discharge
<i>Dihari</i>	Daily wage rate
<i>Dora</i>	Separating saplings
<i>Dosh puja</i>	Refers to several types of religious ceremonies conducted to calm or erase the effect of evil spirits
<i>Dosha</i>	Affliction
<i>Doyan</i>	Second class
<i>Dukaan ka</i>	From the shop
<i>Dukh-dard</i>	Pain
<i>Gad, gadhera ,</i>	Small stream
<i>Gahat</i>	Horse gram
<i>Gaon</i>	Village
<i>Garam</i>	Hot (used in connection with food items that increase body heat)
<i>Gauchar</i>	Wasteland
<i>Gauna</i>	Ritual which marks the sending of the child bride after puberty to her husband's home
<i>Gaunth</i>	Cow's urine
<i>Ghara-bara</i>	A home with a wife
<i>Gharat</i>	Water mill
<i>Ginthia</i>	Condition that afflicts women in the postnatal period - severe pain in the legs accompanied by a painful pulling sensation in the calf
<i>Goath</i>	Traditional almost pastoral system of manuring
<i>Gobar</i>	Manure
<i>Goli</i>	Tablets
<i>Grahas</i>	Stars
<i>Gramin vikas adhikari</i>	Rural development officer
<i>Gul</i>	Diversion mud irrigation channels
<i>Haddi ka bukhar</i>	Fever in the bones
<i>Hal aur patta lagana</i>	Ploughing and levelling
<i>Halias</i>	Ploughmen
<i>Haliya or chorya</i>	Earlier regarded as bonded labour
<i>Hammal</i>	Necklace
<i>Hissedars</i>	Proprietors
<i>Ijran</i>	Inferior terraced land
<i>Isht dosha</i>	Affliction of the family deity
<i>Jaaribootis</i>	Herbs



<i>Jadu bukhaar</i>	Malaria
<i>Jagara</i>	Folk religious practice
<i>Jajmani</i>	Traditional system of labour and grain exchange with rights of inherited patronage
<i>Jati</i>	Traditional caste
<i>Jhangora</i>	Barnyard millet
<i>Jhar phunk</i>	Incantation to drive away evil or bad effects
<i>Jhum</i>	Type of shifting cultivation
<i>Jimidar</i>	Rajputs
<i>Jogai</i>	Group drumming & shouting to scare birds & animals from fields
<i>Kaath</i>	Blood dysentery
<i>Kaini and sirtan</i>	Temporary tenants
<i>Kamzoori</i>	Weakness
<i>Kar</i>	Land tax
<i>Katai</i>	Harvesting
<i>Katil, khil</i>	Shifting cultivation
<i>Kauni</i>	Foxtail millet
<i>Khad dolna</i>	Manuring
<i>Khaikar</i>	Occupancy tenants
<i>Khaliyan</i>	Threshing ground
<i>Khalkiya-gusai</i>	Caste service relationship between upper castes and doms
<i>Khana</i>	Eat produce of the land
<i>Kharanja</i>	Village stone and gravel paths
<i>Kharif</i>	Summer crop
<i>Khasara</i>	Measles
<i>Khasi</i>	Indigenous tribe
<i>Khasra</i>	Land surveys
<i>Khet</i>	Arable land/ fields
<i>Kheti ka kam</i>	Agricultural work
<i>Khitchri</i>	Dal and rice cooked together
<i>Khoon ki kami</i>	Lack of blood / anaemia
<i>Khoon parna</i>	Bleeding
<i>Khorak</i>	Good diet
<i>Kol</i>	Oil press
<i>Kothar</i>	Huge storage baskets
<i>Kudali</i>	Hoe
<i>Kul devta</i>	Family god
<i>Kushta rog</i>	Leprosy
<i>Kutchi ghar</i>	Thatched huts
<i>Kutchi guls</i>	Mud irrigation channels
<i>Lathi</i>	Sticks
<i>Lintern walla makan</i>	Houses with cement roofs
<i>Lipai</i>	Periodic plastering of the mudfloor with mixture of cow dung, fine yellow earth and water
<i>Lohar</i>	Ironsmith
<i>Malikhana</i>	Cess
<i>Mandai</i>	Threshing
<i>Mandua</i>	Finger millet
<i>Masoor</i>	Lentil
<i>Mistri</i>	Artisans

<i>Mungri</i>	Maize
<i>Nas</i>	Veins
<i>Nayabad</i>	Newly cultivated terraces/land
<i>Nazar lagna</i>	Casting of evil eye
<i>Nirai aur gurai</i>	Weeding and hoeing
<i>Nita, tika</i>	Way to honour guests
<i>Oggal</i>	Buckwheat
<i>Orhi</i>	Mason
<i>Paani pe lagna</i>	Purification ceremony performed forty days after the birth of the child
<i>Pacca ghar</i>	Houses with brick / cement walls and cement roofs
<i>Padiyaal</i>	Reciprocal labour exchange
<i>Paharis</i>	Hill people
<i>Pair mein dard</i>	Pain in the leg
<i>Pairwa</i>	Reddish discharge
<i>Paleau</i>	Jhangora cooked in buttermilk
<i>Panchar shera</i>	Irregularly irrigated land
<i>Panchayat ghar</i>	Panchayat room/ community hall in village
<i>Paraal</i>	Haystack
<i>Pareshani</i>	Discomfort
<i>Parki</i>	Basket weavers
<i>Patal</i>	Slate roofs
<i>Patwari</i>	Revenue officer
<i>Pav lachkana</i>	Limping / legs giving way in pregnancy
<i>Perhez</i>	Food restrictions
<i>Pet dolna</i>	Displacement of the womb
<i>Pheriwallas</i>	Hawkers
<i>Pinda</i>	Special cattle feed made by cooking finely chopped fodder leaves, husk, mandua, jhangora, atta etc. on slow fire
<i>Pitra dosha</i>	Ancestral curse
<i>Poyal or parkhunda</i>	Dry paddy/ grass bundles
<i>Pradhan</i>	Village head
<i>Rabi</i>	Winter crop
<i>Raj</i>	Mason
<i>Rathundo</i>	A form of night blindness (especially occurs during pregnancy)
<i>Raula</i>	Rivulet
<i>Ropai</i>	Transplantation of rice
<i>Rotis</i>	chappatis
<i>Safed or laal paani parna</i>	Red or white vaginal discharge
<i>Sanni</i>	Animal shed
<i>Sars</i>	Parts of field
<i>Sarson and rai</i>	Mustard
<i>Sauras</i>	Conjugal family
<i>Shawas ki bimari</i>	Breathlessness
<i>Shikaar</i>	Hunt
<i>Shilpkar</i>	Artisan class
<i>Sirtans</i>	Occupancy tenants
<i>Sonta</i>	Cowpea
<i>Soupe</i>	Winnowing scoop
<i>Sui</i>	Injections

<i>Suili</i>	Parturient mother
<i>Sujak</i>	Itching in vagina
<i>Sural</i>	Fibre
<i>Sutkia rog</i>	Kind of fever that afflicts parturient women in which her body swells up and she gets very high fever. It is regarded as fatal.
<i>Taloan</i>	Irrigated land
<i>Talon shera</i>	Permanently irrigated land
<i>Tals</i>	Lakes
<i>Tamta</i>	Coppersmith
<i>Thand</i>	Cold
<i>Thokdars or sayanas</i>	Feudal magnates
<i>Thori-thori pareshani</i>	Little problems
<i>Thuljat or asal</i>	Immigrant upper castes
<i>Tibari</i>	Narrow shelf like porch extending the length of the house
<i>Tihari</i>	A system where owner's participation in cultivation process is nil. He neither contributes his labour, nor seeds or manure etc. He only pays the taxes for the land, but the share taken by him is usually one-third.
<i>Tirwa</i>	Sword and knife sharpener
<i>Toonatotka</i>	Magic or witch craft
<i>Tor</i>	Pigeon pea
<i>Ukali</i>	Stone mortar used for pounding
<i>Ulta par jatta</i>	Child in the womb turns over on the wrong side
<i>Uproan or ukhar</i>	Unirrigated terraced land
<i>Urad</i>	Black gram
<i>Vadu</i>	Small platform with umbrella-like cover made of bamboo and leaves erected in the fields for men to stay in to guard the crops.
<i>Vaids</i>	Healers who practice ayurvaida medicine

## **INTRODUCTION**

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## **The Theme Of Research**

The pivotal role of women in Garhwali hill economy and society widely described in ethnographic accounts and vividly portrayed in folk literature, is visible to any visitor to the region. It is now the subject of growing academic investigation. Even so, an understanding of gender relations and of women's societal position - both historical and contemporary - remain as yet obscured by claims and counterclaims of either an egalitarian or a subordinate status. We have, on the one hand, assertions of gender complementarity and relative egalitarianism based on women's highly active participation in traditional hill economy. On the other hand, there is the argument that hill women are mere beasts of burden with no respect or dignity! These different perceptions reflect an inadequate understanding of the context of a political economy of mountain livelihood system that has lost its largely self-sufficient character, witnessing a very high male migration with strong implications on women's position, work and health

The present study focuses its attention on these issues, examining them in a broader context of gendered social structures and ideologies. This theme of the research study derives out of several unanswered questions of an earlier investigation conducted by the researcher that sought to examine the relationship between environment and health within the Himalayan system of Uttar Pradesh. Using environmental health approach, which locates health issues within the natural, social, political and economic system, the research highlighted the critical role of ecological and societal factors in the production of ill-health and disease.

The earlier study brought out that modernisation had come in the form of resource-intensive processes which ignored the socio-economy of the local people. Developmental approach in the region focussing on industrial and political centralisation, extension of law and order machinery, transport and communications and other forms of infrastructure undermine village self-sufficiency and people's relationship with the ecosystem.

Deeply embedded in the economies of the plains, the Garhwali hill economy was found to be witnessing steady erosion of peasant subsistence. The advancement of market forces has led to the depletion of life giving natural resources and the region has for long

been drained of both natural and human resources. Exploitative colonial intervention and statist and interest group oriented post-colonial development policy disrupted the symbiotic relationships between the people and ecology of indigenously developed ecosystems. The region was subjected to environmental and forest degradation and socio-economic transition that changed the relationship between the environment and households, causing people to leave hill villages for new avenues of survival and sustenance.

Degradation of forest and land created a precarious situation drastically reducing areas of land cultivable for subsistence. The indigenous redistributive systems increasingly failed to meet growing needs of the growing population. Deforestation pushed cultivated areas to critical limits. Today the balance between forests and land appears irrevocably destroyed. As numerous studies of hill development have shown, post-colonial development policy has not resulted in any noteworthy improvement for natural resource conservation or sustainable development.

In these circumstances, the study revealed that more and more peasants turned off the land to sustain themselves. Some just sought to bridge the growing gap between household subsistence production exemplified in the low productivity of land and the consumption needs of their families. Since there was no alternative employment locally, they migrated to find supplementary off-farm employment in the cities. Migration in this area was therefore partial, male-dominated and interestingly greater amongst the landed group. It created migration endemic pockets.

The sale of labour power as migrants has now emerged as an inevitable option and a key survival strategy. Out-migration is now a permanent feature and a preferred livelihood option of an increasing number of Garhwali men, leading to a sort of 'money-order economy'. Yet, the processes and patterns of migration and migrant labour exploitation are such that they necessitate the continuation of subsistence agriculture and production of use values via the peasant household economy (Whittaker, 1984; Bora, 1996).

However, despite the dependence on the influx of money from outside, the problem of underdevelopment of the local economy remained. Remittance was largely invested in

consumption and not productive. Moreover it was evident that male migration had incurred the burden on women, who continued to be constrained with their meagre resources. The findings of the study forcefully pointed out the overstated importance of money order in the economy – particularly from the perspective of women and family left behind to eke out a living in the degraded environment.

The earlier research had not looked at the gender differentials systematically, though observations from the field were indicating these differences. Moreover in the course of the fieldwork, the researcher noticed how enormous and important “work” was for these women. These observations made the researcher think about the women’s question and impelled her to explore this dimension of social relations in depth. Hence in the present study, the researcher attempts to locate and understand issues related to women’s health within this transitional hill economy.

The ecological and socio-economic developments mentioned above have had serious consequences for women of the region, who are historically and contemporarily active economic participants. As compared to the declining trend of women’s labour force participation in many parts of the country, women continue to constitute a significant proportion of the labour force as peasant cultivators in this hill region now known as Uttarakhand. According to the 1991 Census, 46 percent of the total workers and 58 percent of cultivators in Garhwal are women. However, it is increasingly apparent that the productive and domestic roles of Garhwali women are carried out in a physical and social landscape marked by the degradation of life sustaining resource of land, water, forests, and the shortage of male labour. Women’s labour now appears to be stretched to its limits, fuelled by a cultural ideology that assigned them multiple roles in social production along with the exclusive responsibility of reproduction. Transgressing traditional gender division of labour patterns, women's labour is treated as elastic and infinitely expandable to meet the ever-increasing demands of their households. Studies of hill women have pointed to heavier demands placed on their labour.

This study examines contemporary changes in women's work and patterns of the gender divisions of labour and their implications and consequences for women's health. Further,

it attempts to decipher the macro-micro connections between patterns of rural transformation and the micro realities of Garhwali women's life. Focussing on issues of their work and health in the context of a rapidly changing ecological, economic and socio-cultural environment, the underlying concern of this research study is to grasp the "true" nature of the contemporary status of Garhwali women. Status is intimately linked to and derives out of the degree of female subordination to male, and to the nature of dominant subordinate relationships within the intermeshing of men's and women's lives in any given society. Moreover understanding women's position and status requires that due account be taken of economic, cultural and ideological factors.

Thus the research attempts to decipher connections between larger forces of transformation, their impact on peasant subsistence and women's work. We are interested in both the economic and socio-cultural questions related to women's work. How are patterns of women's work changing as a result of economic and environmental changes? Why do women do the kinds of work they do and under what conditions? The form and extent of male control over female labour and over the product of labour and the cultural valuation of that labour, the degree of economic ownership that women exercise are key areas of enquiry. Do high cultural valuations of work necessarily translate into high economic, social and cultural power? Can socio-cultural status be ascertained from their position in social production is a key question.

The relationship between women's work and health and the specificities of health issues and problems of Garhwali women constitutes the second area of interest of this research. Health is seen to be defined and determined by a number of conditions and factors - environmental, material and cultural. Health like work is also socially constructed on the basis of pre-existing patterns of power and control (Daykin and Doyal, 1995). We explore in this research, work/occupational health, reproductive health and general health. Women's perceptions of the linkage between environment, work, health and their experience of ill-health and disease and their access to health care are important concerns. We seek to unravel patterns of women's health and the factors that shape them. How is health a product of biological, physical, social, economic and political realities? How women's perception and understanding of health has evolved in the context of their own



lives (Doyal, 1995; Qadeer, 1985). As other peasant societies, traditional Garhwali belief systems of disease/illness causation are governed by spiritual and humoral theories. Bodily illness and disease are traced to supernatural and also to spirit possession, witchcraft and magic. There is very little documented history or contemporary analysis of the health and illness situation in Garhwal and hence answers to these questions become important.

The issues of work and health, we argue, are of key significance, both separately and in conjunction with each other, to understand the nature and forms of gender inequality and for an evaluation of women's status in Garhwali society. Particularly in this historical context of the Chipko movement, which saw strong and sustained protests by Garhwali women against the commercial felling of forests, there is a tremendous need for disentangling myth from the reality of women's lives. In the heated debate over Chipko, the issue of the nature of the movement, whether it was a peasant, ecological or women's movement, and the exact role of women have both been contested. Underlying the arguments, are varied unstated assumptions about the Garhwali women's nature, positions and roles in society and culture. At a related but more fundamental level, Indian eco-feminists see ecologically destructive and displacing development as mal-development and see in the destruction of nature, the death of the feminine principle and the ascendance of patriarchal productivity. It becomes imperative in the light of these debates to examine the linkages between environmental degradation, socio-economic process and women's changing place in their biophysical and social milieu.

This research seeks to investigate these questions with respect to an empirically defined and historically located hill community, viz. Bunga and Daurn villages of Pauri Garhwal district, and the directions they have assumed in contemporary times.

### **The Organisation Of Chapters**

Chapter I lays out the theoretical and conceptual canons that constitute the basis of the research and introduces the theoretical perspectives that guide the study. The effort is to confront major theoretical debates, gain clarity about relevant conceptual issues and concepts in the areas of women's work and health. Secondly the chapter conducts and

provides a review of relevant empirical material and understanding of theoretical analysis of women's work and women's health.

Chapter II conceptualises the research problem and discusses the methodological approach adopted by the study. It also spells out the methods used to conduct the study and acquaints the reader with tools and experiences of data collection. It also discusses the limitations of the study and its methods.

Together, Chapters III and IV set the socio-historic context of our field inquiry, the results of which will be presented in subsequent chapters. Chapter III aims at capturing key aspects of historical change in the social ecology and the politico-economic and social life of the people in Garhwal region from pre-colonial to colonial times. Adopting a broad political economy approach, this chapter attempts a reconstruction of the pre-capitalist past of Garhwal peasant society, with a focus on examining the interrelationship between environment, population, social structure and culture. A central concern is the understanding the traditional position of the peasant women of Garhwal and their location within the social structure. The chapter also traces the history of migration in the region.

Chapter IV further traces these historical processes into the present times. It has a two-fold purpose: (1) to provide an overview of relevant post-colonial transformations in rural Garhwal and (2) to establish the pattern of out-migration in the high migration district of Pauri Garhwal – Yamkeshwar Block. Analysing key aspects of ongoing change in the hill economy the chapter focuses on the continuities and breaks with the colonial past in terms of the nature of post-colonial socio-economic development, unravelling the changes that set the decline of subsistence. It presents in substantiation of the impetus for out-migration in Pauri Garhwal, the findings of our survey of eleven villages of Yamkeshwar Block.

Chapter V profiles the study villages of Bunga and Daurn in terms of their location, access, social history and social structure. The chapter examines closely the contemporary socio-economic-demographic profile of village households and analyses key changes in the socio-economic life of the village, which are crucial to understanding women's changing situation.

Chapter VI examines changing patterns of women's work with a focus on changes in the gender division of labour. Contextualising women's work in the nature of subsistence work and labour re-organisation in the villages, the chapter attempts to ascertain the significant departures from the traditional patterns within the spheres of agricultural production, animal husbandry and domestic work. The focus of the chapter is on understanding specific implication of these changing patterns, the emergent new forms and its gendered relations, the impact on gender power and familial relations and implications for women's changing economic and social status. We attempt to understand changes in the character and degree of women's dependence on men and new patterns of authority, autonomy in work and familial life.

Against the conditions of women's work life, we turn to the second substantive area of investigation – the conditions of their health and access to health care. The aim is to gain an indepth understanding through an explication of women's conceptions and experiences regarding health and illnesses through which we attempt to grasp and account for their health status. Exploring the area of reproduction, while Chapter VII focuses on women's health during reproduction, it attempts to articulates women's experiences through the three broad reproduction stages: antenatal, natal and post-natal and their perceptions and experiences of the childbearing process. Chapter VIII explores the general health problems of women. Such separation does not presuppose a compartmentalised approach to women's bodies nor to understanding their health. Rather, the division is only for the convenience of analysis, a device for handling of complex and interlinked data as we advocate a holistic view of women's bodies, illnesses and health.

It addresses the issue of the complex interaction between women's roles in production and human reproduction and its consequences for the ill health or health of hill women.

Chapter VIII is concerned with women's perceptions and experiences of their general health condition, including their mental and emotional state. Locating women's illness and health issues in women's changing material, social and cultural reality, the chapter further explores the health experiences of women. It seeks to understand women's

experiences, definitions and explanations of their physical states, illnesses, pains and sufferings and their ameliorative efforts.

In both chapters the special focus is on understanding the linkages between women's work and health. We also examine the situation of women's access to health services and how they manage their problems. Together the two chapters underscore an effort to see the relationship between reproductive health and general physiological, emotional and mental well being in order to arrive at a holistic understanding of women's experiences of ill health and their health status.

Chapter IX weaves together significant strands of findings, the empirical insights gained and provide our overall analysis of women's position in Garhwal. It serves to relate to theoretical arguments adduced, with our analysis. We argue that woman's perceptions and experiences of work, child-bearing, illness and healthcare are shaped essentially by the wider context of gender inequality, economic processes and patriarchal control of the family and the state. By taking women's experiences and perceptions into account and by demonstrating that a complex of factors determine women's health, this study attempts to document the political economy of Garhwali women's health and establishes rural Garhwal's variant situation which represents nonetheless underdeveloped societies of the world.

**Chapter I**

**REVIEW OF CONCEPTUAL AND EMPIRICAL  
LITERATURE**

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Our examination of issues related to Garhwali women's work and health has drawn upon a wide range of conceptual and empirical work. This chapter discusses the theoretical underpinnings of this research study through an analytical survey of the literature relevant to the themes addressed by it.

We begin with a review of literature on the central theme of this research - women's health. There exist a large number of micro studies which have looked at multiple factors that purportedly contribute to women's health, which have thrown up a large number of "causal" factors and relations. They need to be explored to assess the depth of understanding achieved over time and the degree of clarity regarding causal linkages to health.

Given the centrality of work to peasant's women's lives and the multiple types of work that they do, it is crucial in our view to understand dimensions of women's work participation especially of women peasantry. We undertake an overview of empirical literature on peasant women, with a focus on examining studies on the nature of the work participation and its linkages with health. It is now well recognised that women do not constitute a homogenous category but are shaped by societal divisions, hierarchies and cultural differences. It is therefore necessary to explore the specificities of life of women in hill regions. The next section is thus devoted to specifically review research on hill women. We attempt to provide a focus on the situation of rural and hill peasant women through the available literature.

To bind together the threads of analysis of health and work of women, an understanding of theoretical literature on women's subordinate position in society was necessary. The fourth and final section explores relevant strands of theorisations related to understanding women's work and health. These theoretical approaches have helped formulate the research problem and set out a broader framework encompassing relevant perspectives and concepts that is necessary for in-depth examination of the research questions and research objectives.

## REVIEW OF RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S HEALTH

Women's health was till recently a neglected area of health research. Internationally too it was not until the emergence of international feminist movements in the 1970s, that a critique of existing conceptualisation and policy on women's health and a redefinition of their health occurred (Sen and Grown, 1987). Women's organisations came to realise the importance of women's health concerns and safe reproductive health services. Research on women's health was to a large extent a response to the women's movement and was conducted by feminist activist. For example, the worldwide best seller produced by the Boston Women's Health Collective: 'Our Bodies, Our Selves ' (1978). In India too, over the past two decades a body of literature on women's health has developed.

A review of Indian research on women's health reveals that there has been a focus on assessing women's health situation through quantitative indicators. Macro level demographic studies find a regular place in general report on women's status where health is taken as an indicator of women's status. The statistical analyses have indicated the poor health status of Indian women, the symptoms of which are declining sex ratio, high rates of female mortality from birth right upto the age of 30 and high trends of morbidity. During the past decade, the gap between the mortality rates of young boys and girls has widened. (Gopalan, 2000) Despite their innate biological advantages, more girls than boys die. "Maternal mortality" accounts only for 2.5 percent of all female deaths. If women in reproductive age group are looked at exclusively, deaths due to childbirth increase to 12.5 percent. Maternal mortality in India is a silent killer.

While causes of death related to "maternity" are important in India because of the heavy reproductive burden borne by women, majority of Indian women die due to diseases predominately infectious in nature (Qadeer, 1998). Respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumonia and bronchitis, fevers related to malaria, typhoid, gastroenteric and other infectious diseases are important causes for the deaths of men and women. On the whole, epidemiological studies, surveys and ethnographic studies have pointed out to considerable ill-health among women and also the existence of gender inequalities. Most

rural health surveys record a much higher incidence of illness among women and girls than men and boys.

Existing evidence is again fairly consistent on gender differentials in morbidity and unambiguous on the greater neglect of women in health care and treatment of illness. These are mostly micro level studies, which take one or two variables such as malnutrition, education, occupation etc., which are then examined in relation to health. We cover micro-studies relevant to the health themes and objectives addressed in this research study. Those Indian researches that are shaped by feminist perspectives are attempting to locate women's health in the context of women's social status as well as within the processes of socio-economic development. Others are more concerned with a closer understanding of explanatory factors associated with women's health and in the explanation of their health situation and their health status as well as health services for women.

### **Studies On Social Determinants Of Indian Women's Health And Health Services**

The large body of work on sex differentials in mortality in India (Wyon and Gordon, 1971; Chen and D'souza, 1981; Dasgupta, 1987) ascertains and explains gender differentials and regional variations in mortality rates. Explanations have been largely sought in socio-cultural and economic factors such as kinship and marriage systems, property rights, farming systems, parental gender bias, female labour force participation rates etc. Studies on fertility behaviour of women have focussed on the link between fertility and women's social status.

Studies on gender differential in household food allocation have well established the fact. Ethnographic literature suggests that girls are not fed as well as boys in northern India (Harris 1986; Miller 1981). Khan et al (1989), Dasgupta (1987) found that boys were given more high quality foods, while girls were given more cereals. Even in households which theoretically have enough food, the way it is distributed leaves women inadequately nourished (Jeffery and Lyon, 1989; Caldwell and others, 1989). In fact the gender differences in food intake are apparent in breastfeeding, where a female child is likely to be breastfed less often and for shorter periods than her male siblings and to be



weaned sooner (IIPS 1995; Kahn and others 1989; Ghosh 1987; McNeill 1984; Kumar 1983; Das, Danoha and Cowan 1982; Levinson 1974). From these studies then we can infer that the under-nutrition that is prevalent in a significant proportion of adult Indian women can be attributed primarily to inadequate food intake during adulthood.

A review of Indian statistics in the area shows that given the nutritional demands of childbearing and lactation, the lack of nourishment puts women at particular risk during their childbearing years. Even when they have enough food, Indian women may be malnourished because of the poor nutritive quality of what is available or because their systems are unable to absorb iron effectively owing to intestinal parasites or malaria. Anaemia affects over 60 percent of Indian women, lowering their work performance both directly or indirectly, through increased morbidity. It is also well-established that anaemia complicates pregnancies; the result is maternal deaths, low birth weight infants and lower child survival (Chatterjee, 1996).

Women's reproductive health has been quite extensively researched. Most studies in the area have attempted to establish the incidence and nature of reproductive illness. Several studies have established the significance of RTI and gynaecological morbidities among women in India (Bang et al 1989, Bhatia et al 1997; Oommen 1996; Koenig et al 1998). The researchers have been majorly concerned with diagnosis. They have relied upon variable criteria of clinical diagnosis hence the variations in the levels of morbidities. Women's self-reported illnesses are used and wide range of reproductive health symptoms are found. Menstrual problems and abnormal vaginal discharge are most frequently mentioned along with prolapse, lower abdominal pain and lower backache. There has been a debate whether clinical, laboratory or self-report provide a better assessment, and it has been concluded that certain types of RTI require clinical or laboratory tests and others may be assessed from self - reports and considerable body of qualitative studies have used this methodology. As reported by Oomen (2000) eight qualitative studies have shed light on RTIs and five of them found that vaginal discharge was a major complaint. Women found it a most severe illness and linked it to weakness and backache and may even use these terms as euphemisms to report discharge.

Studies have examined sexual factors (George and Jaswal, 1995); iatrogenic factors, abortion related factors; obstetric practices as determinants of gynaecological morbidity (Jeejebhoy and Koenig 2002). There is no evidence in India on vaginal infections; however there is some evidence that menstrual hygiene and personal hygiene are associated with RTIs. Several studies have described women's perceptions of linkages between lack of food and illness. On the whole, the evidence is suggestive rather than conclusive (Oomen, 2000; Amin and Bentley, 2002; Klienman 1980; 1986; Shatruguna etal 1993).

The influence of social, economic and cultural factors on the biomedical determinants of gynaecological morbidity has not been adequately studied. A few studies exist on women's perception of risk factors (Gittleson etal 1994; Oomen 1996). Some works in the area points to poverty, inequalities, cultural norms and their interaction as crucial factors in the creation of gynaecological morbidity (Oomen 1996; Madiwalla and Jesani, 1997; Gittleson etal, 1994; George 1997; Ramasubban 1995; Ravindran 1995; Unnithan Kumar, 1999; Sharma and Vanjani, 1993; Jeffery and Jeffery, 1989).

An understanding of women's mental health can be gained from Davar's (1995) re-analysis of relevant gender data from community studies, from a gender perspective. She finds a higher prevalence of mental disorders for women as compared to men, and that for severe mental disorder (such as psychosis, organic brain syndrome, epilepsy) there is no significant difference in prevalence between the two sexes. However with respect to common mental disorder (viz. all forms of neurosis) the prevalence is found to be much higher among women. Hysteria and depression are both found to be more prevalent among women.

Somatisation is a common neurotic disorder among women wherein bodily complaints such as aches and pains, headaches, dizziness have no discernible physical basis. Issac and Kapur (1980), Carstairs and Kapur (1976), Chakraborty (1990) all found a great number of somatisers among women in their community surveys. These disorders do not necessarily imply that they are mild or cause very little personal suffering. Infact they can cause enormous suffering, irreparable social alienation, violence, loss and damage, even

self - destruction. Davar also stresses that the greater prevalence of mental illness among women is not because of greater reporting of illnesses by women - there is commensurability between distress and reported severity of symptom. "Higher female predominance of depression is therefore not an artefact of treatment seeking" (Linderstein, 1993). Davar's work is of importance, though it is only a secondary analysis. However it cannot be treated as a substitute for full-fledged empirical work.

On the whole, it is suggested by the above reviewed studies that rural women's health depends critically on economic structures and patterns of caste, class and gender inequality, on socio-cultural structures such as kinship and household structures as well as on gender cultural / ideological forces. However, there are very few studies, which consciously take a more theoretical approach that links structural variables and women's productive and reproductive roles to health. These studies have approached the socio-cultural context of women's health from two overlapping and equally important perspectives. The first is the ethno-medical aspects of illness including belief about diet, body and health, systems of healing, beliefs about symptoms, cause and consequences. Several of these studies in India on women's perceptions of health and disease have been grounded in this approach. The second approach is located in studying structural elements such as family and community power positions and relationships in particularly gender power relations as important factors in shaping illness and health. The ability to control one's physical environment and to control, receive and understand information vital for well-being.

We review below the few studies where attempts have been made to understand at least some of the intricacies of women's health in a holistic manner. These studies have attempted to study the influence of social, economic and cultural factors on women's health and morbidity. Only a few studies exist on women's perception of health and its associated risk factors (Gittleson et al 1994; Oomen 1996). Researchers in the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health, New Delhi have conducted many of these studies. A few of the relevant ones we will detail below (Sagar, 2000; Soman, 1992; Gopalan, 1997). Besides this there are a small number of other such studies as well.

Work in this area points to poverty, inequalities, cultural norms and their interaction as crucial factors in the creation of women's poor health. Studies have also found an association between livelihood, work and reproductive health (Oomen, 1996; Madiwalla and Jesani, 1997). Gender based inequality in sexuality make women vulnerable to infections (George and Jaswal, 1995).

Moreover, the literature on gender and reproductive health highlights the importance of women's work, childbearing roles, lack of access to resources, socialisation, norms related to shame and sexuality, all of which directly or indirectly influence their physical, mental or social well-being. (George 1997; Jeejebhoy and Koenig 2002; Ramasubban 1995; Shatruguna et al 1993; Ravindran 1995)

A study in Tamil Nadu investigated the extent to which the exercise of women's rights in employment contributed to their sexual and reproductive health. This investigation revealed that household work, such as the work involved in carrying wood for fuel, water over long distances, cooking and other domestic chores, affects women's health negatively. Additionally, it pointed out that women in agricultural labour, involved in the processes of rice transplanting, weeding and harvesting led formidably hazardous reproductive lives (Swaminathan, 1998).

Another study, also carried out in Tamil Nadu, studied the beedi industry in Tirunelveli District. This study examines that labour process and its impact on the lives of women workers. The analysis revealed that merely giving women some form of employment without changing their socio-economic institutions or cultural practices did not empower them. In fact, it further demonstrated that the women's employment in rolling beedis, which theoretically should have provided economic security and thus helped in improving their health status, actually created ill health for them (Gopal 1997).

This finding is strengthened by data from a study in Bardham District in West Bengal. This study examining the lives of women in selected villages demonstrates that women's health (including their reproductive health) is a direct offshoot of the social dynamics of their inter and intra household relationships (Soman, 1992).

Sagar (2000) in her study in slums of Delhi focuses on understanding the health behaviour and socio-economic and cultural basis of the experience of pregnancy among the economically disadvantaged women. Using women's own perceptions of morbidity in pregnancy, she compared the profile of women's morbidity in pregnancy and when not in pregnancy and she also studied their health behaviour within a broader socio-cultural context.

Gupte and Borkar's study (1987), looks at women's work, fertility and access to health care in two villages in Pune District. Their findings show that most of the work done by rural women, like housework and child bearing is invisible because they are considered private and are accepted as normal duties, which creates conditions for exploitation both inside and outside home. Apart from resulting in gross inequality between sexes, there is also an adverse effect on women's health in terms of nutrition, maternity and access to health services.

Amin and Bentley's study (2002) conducted in six villages in Panchamal district of Gujarat found that several discriminatory norms related to work, marriage, sexual behaviour, fertility and seclusion were related to reproductive ill-health. The study also revealed poor psychological and mental well-being which exists as a manifestation of the physical and social stresses they are subjected to. Other studies have also shown similar reproductive symptoms (Nichter, 1981; Patel & Oomen 1999).

Unnithan Kumar (1999) situated her analysis of the reproductive health of women of the rural Nagori Sunni Community in Jaipur district in the context of their perceptions and experiences in general as well as in terms of the material, ideological and political dynamics of household, kin and gender relations. In another ethnographic study of rural Muslim and low Hindu caste women in Rajasthan, Unnithan Kumar (2000), found that complaints about menstrual disorder, pelvic inflammation and inability to conceive (usually secondary sterility) were women's self - stated main reproductive complaints. Anaemia, nutritional deficiency, vaginal discharge, uteral or rectal prolapses were so widely prevalent that women regarded them as normal experience.

An indepth study of reproductive historic and experience of a group of rural women in Alwar district of Rajasthan was conducted by Sharma and Vanjani (1993). The study revealed that health had a definite class and caste bias - the poorest, untouchable women were worst off as far as reproductive ill-health is concerned. The researchers concluded that the political economy of reproduction must be understood within women's situation of life, work and general well-being (or lack thereof).

Jefferey and Jefferey's study (1989) of women's experiences of childbearing in rural north India has given important insights into the structural location of women in her conjugal home as wife and worker and the culturally discriminatory experience of process of child bearing. They show how cultural norms and practices of pregnancy have consequences in terms of mishap and how the indigenous methods of labour management have in-built risks. Another set of studies deals with access to healthcare services and their utilisation. A review of this literature shows that a large chunk of studies are concerned with studying factors associated with women's access to healthcare services and the medical attention that they receive. Research unravels an interplay of multiple factors which derive out of patterns of gender inequality and cultural valuations, belief systems and attitudes and socialisation patterns of women into them, nature, quality and structure of state public health systems, class and ethnic factors. (Navaneethan and Dharmalingam, 2001; Bhatia et al, 1995; Raghupathy, 1996; Appasamy et al, 1995; Soman (1982)

Gender bias is evident in a number of social processes that operates at the level of household or at the level of medical services (Minturn, 1984; Pettigrew, 1989; Batliwala, 1988; Basu 1990; Jeffery, Jeffery, and Lyon 1989; Koenig, Gillian and Joshi, 2000; Unnithan - Kumar based, 2000). From the household side there is a marked tendency to ignore or devalue women's health problems (Khan and others 1989; Miller, 1981; Chatterjee, 1988), systematically allocate lower resources to their medical attention and provide treatment only when conditions are serious. (Dandekar, 1975; Dasgupta, 1987, Basu 1989b, studies done by IIPS in 1995-96);

Hospital systems and processes are not conducive for independent access by women and they have to depend on the assistance of male kin. Studies of hospital records corroborate

these trends by revealing lower female admission (Kynch and Sen 1983; Navaneethan et al, 2001; Rajeshwari 1996; Ramalingaswamy, 1987), lower rates of medical service utilisation and hospitalisation and higher rates of fatalities and mortalities of women as compared to men (Das, Dhanoa, and Cowan 1982; Miller 1981; Klienman and Taylor 1983; Dandekar 1975; Soman, 1992, Unnithan-Kumar, 2000).

### **Critical Appraisal of Women's Health Research**

The above review of Indian literature on women's health shows that conceptually the trend of women's health studies is to adopt a broad definition of health, and test out women's actual health situation focussing on a few indicators. Yet, it may be pointed out that the debate around the concept of health does not get reflected in research. Though the conventional biomedical approach to defining and dealing with health has come under severe attack and the social perspective, which sees health as rooted in people's material reality and shaped by social, political or cultural realities is advocated, women's health research shows a lack of comprehensive conceptualisations and discrete handling of detriments –especially in social, economic and cultural domains.

The available literature on women's health also reveals that there is considerable emphasis on prevalence in particular of women's maternal and reproductive health. Few studies attempt to look at women's health in its totality in terms of the material, ideological and political dynamics of household, kin and gender relations. Reproductive health problems are important but are only one set of health problems faced by women. Even studies in this area tend to deal with only women's reproductive tract infection (RTI). Studies have shown that women are more concerned about illnesses other than RTIs. It is this uneven emphasis on reproductive aspects of health and discrete analysis of social detriments in most of the studies that compels us to take forward the integrative view of health. Thus, to build on studies that use political economy framework, we move to review literature on women's work and health. This would help strengthen our framework.

## **STUDIES ON PEASANT WOMEN'S WORK AND THE WORK-HEALTH LINK**

Women's work became the subject of intensive research after the publication in the mid seventies of a national report on the status of women in India, the most striking finding of which was an alarming decline in women's work force participation. Since then a number of studies have focussed on ascertaining, explaining and assessing the implications of this decline. A most important task has been the unravelling of conceptual biases in defining work. Feminist economists have critiqued the gender bias of economic concepts and developed gender sensitive notions, indicators and measures to make women's work more visible and get it official recognition and inclusion. They emphasise the need to enumerate women's domestic labour and realise its significance (Banerjee, 1989; Agarwal, 1985; Duvvury, 1989). Concurrently, there have been attempts at qualitatively and quantitatively examining women's work in various domains of the rural agrarian economy and the industrial-tertiary sectors both organised and unorganised of the urban economy. The studies have examined how women's work is structured in relation to poverty and hierarchy, inequalities in work options, in remuneration, in access to the means and opportunities for better work and in the organised bargaining capacity to change. The central question is how patriarchy combines with caste and class hierarchy, to influence women's access to means and resources for work. Studies have also examined the relationship between work participation, women's economically productive work and their status (Bardhan, 1985).

Most studies of women in agriculture have been primarily engaged in describing the changing situation of agricultural labour. The body of literature on women's work is large. Therefore given our focus on peasant women, we only look at studies dealing with their work. Peasant women's studies have been comparatively fewer than those of female agricultural labour. Though following Boserup's seminal work (1970), efforts have been continuously made to analyse women's contribution to and status in agrarian economy, particularly under the impact of modern economic developmental processes on traditional economies. The studies have explored issues of gender division of labour, women's autonomy, authority and power, their access to resources, indirect power and decision-making.



The studies reveal that in agricultural households the fieldwork participation of women has increased. Small farms can maintain their competitive edge only by greater exploitation and self-exploitation of women. Moreover, women may be withdrawn from visible to invisible work with changes that are negative to status. Women's status and role in agricultural decision-making is a debated issue. As far as 'status' is concerned, women may have decision-making roles but little control of cash and little respite from work intensity. Indeed, Bardhan's (1985) detailed review of Indian women's work, welfare and status speaks of peasant women's productive labour and domestic labour as an overlapping continuum. Studies have begun to take cognisance of the range of extremely labour and skill intensive operations that are crucial to crop production and processing. There are several such studies from Bengal, North and West India and on South India (cited in Bardhan, 1985; Duvvury, 1989; see also Mencher and Saradmoni, 1982).

Examining caste differences in women's lives in a Punjab village mainly occupied by a middle-ranking peasant caste of Sikhs (the Jats), and the scheduled castes (low status groups), Horowitz and Kishwar (1984) found that in spite of differences in economic status between Jat women (who tend to be married to men who own land) and other women, there are similarities in their lives. Both groups of women work anything up to a 15-16 hours a day in the fields and at home. Women's work includes care of cattle. The opportunities for landless women to work for money are fewer than for landless men.

Studies of the sexual division of labour in agriculture have pointed out that it is necessary to more carefully examine regional variation and the temporal variation due to changes in technology and due to other structural factors (Chatterjee, 1984; Saradmoni, 1987). Most of these studies have been conducted in the southern regions but here too sharp regional variations are found in patterns of work.

Harris (1979) found that peasant women's withdrawal from 'visible' to 'invisible' work has negatively affected their role and status in decision making. But there are studies which show that with agricultural modernisation and new technology, peasant women are consulted in agricultural decision-making. However their role in decision-making

declines with the rise in the position of the household in social hierarchy (Devadas, 1975; Sisodia, 1985; Sharma, 1983 cited from Duvvury, 1989). Studies have also shown that peasant women may have little actual control of cash and therefore cannot demand expenditure on facilities that may reduce housework such as paying for grain milling; general sanitation etc (Epstein, 1976; Chakravorty, 1975 cited in Duvvury, 1989).

### **Women's Work And Health**

Considering that work, whether paid or unpaid is central to most women's lives, the association between work and health has been poorly addressed and understood. We have little information on how women's daily work activities influence their health. In the Indian context, feminist scholars have rightly warned against any simple or straightforward association between women's work and their health (Bardhan, 1985; Swaminathan, 1997). To quote Bardhan:

*"The rate of workforce participation may have a role in determining women's status, but that role is qualified by questions of work quality, the class variation in the double burden and whether productive labour is a sufficient condition for autonomy and voice, whether it is even a necessary condition in a class-and-hierarchy-ridden society. Aside from these components of women's status, on which differential work participation may have some intermediate effect, there is the bottom-line component of the value and care accorded to female life. (Bardhan, 1985)*



Overall there is an absence of ethnographic and epidemiological studies linking household structures, nature of domestic and non-domestic work that will help make connections between work, mortality and morbidity in India (Swaminathan, 1997).

The Shramshakti report (1988) on labouring women documented health hazards in various occupations in the informal sector. Health problems for agricultural workers arise out of postural problems, exposure to dusts and chemicals, use of unguarded implements and working barefoot. Women suffer a number of general gynaecological health problems, injuries and toxicities. Physically strenuous domestic works such as carrying water, lifting heavy weights were also seen to bring great physical strain and general and reproductive health problems (Shramshakti, 1988).

In the agriculture sector, women were found to suffer from generalised body aches, cough, respiratory allergies, fungal infections, injuries, toxicity and so on. There are several additional gender specific dimensions in agricultural work which affect women's health situation. The nature of agricultural work exposes women to particular health hazards (Agarwal, 1990). An association between working in rice fields and gynaecological infections has been noted in rural Asia (UNDP, 1980). Micro study evidence on women's agricultural work and health is mainly from the South, viz. for women of Tamil Nadu (Swaminathan, 1998) and for women agricultural labourers of Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal (Mencher and Saradmoni, 1982).

Examining the importance of seasonal variation in health, it is found that malnutrition, morbidity and mortality peak in the wet season of agricultural production. Women and children are especially vulnerable to hardship, malnutrition, sickness and death. The extensive and often strenuous physical labour that women perform combines with male preference in household allocation of food to account in good measure for malnutrition among Indian women. One study estimated that when women's physical activity, including field and domestic labour, was taken into account, women had a higher daily expenditure of calories than men in the same households (Batliwala 1982)

Productive responsibilities are hardest on young women in their childbearing years. Typically, women work until late in their pregnancies; no special provisions are made for rest or additional food, and most women resume work before they have fully recovered from childbirth. The conditions set in a cycle of "maternal depletion" that can have devastating consequences for a woman's health and undermine her ability to carry out her responsibilities, both productive and reproductive. A woman whose physical reserves are already exhausted by childbearing, lactation, anaemia, and heavy agricultural labour has no reserves to ensure that another pregnancy will be safe and healthy. Continued physical activity until late in pregnancy and a lack of adequate rest not only negatively affect women's health but also contribute to excessive rates of stillbirths, premature births, and intrauterine growth retardation (Khan, Ghosh and Singh 1982; ICMR 1977).

## **Environment, Work and Women's Health**

Environmental factors have been one of the many the leading causes or exacerbators of death in the developing countries (Dankelman et al, 1988; Kettel, 1993). The natural and constructed 'life space' within which women carry out their various gender-based involvements as domestic workers, producers and income-earners impact significantly on women's health (Kettel, 1996). Domestic chores are much more labour and energy intensive in the typical Indian rural setting. The range of back-breaking domestic activities - fuel and water collection in particular carry with them a number of different health problems. The increased time and energy required to collect fuel cannot but be detrimental to women's health. (Basu, 1993).

Exposure to domestic pollutants continue to increase women's and girls' exposure to serious and fatal diseases. Caldwell and Caldwell (1990) reported that long hours spent by them in dark smoke-filled secluded kitchens led to appreciable increase in bronchitis and asthma. Crude stoves, biomass fuels and poor ventilation had a detrimental impact on the respiratory health of women and children. Infections and accidents, not childbirth, are the leading killers of women even during the reproductive age. Poor quality housing means poor heating, lack of space, damp living conditions, lack of hot water and inadequate furnishings. Separately and in combination, these difficult conditions have an ongoing impact on the women's health (Bhatt, 1989).

To conclude, studies of rural, agrarian economy based women tend to suggest that despite a significant role in agricultural productivity and a high level of involvement, there is no unambiguous link between their work and status. Patterns of gender division of labour show that women are not on equal terms with men. One the whole, few studies have looked at larger implications of work for women, in particular for their subordinate position in society. The key question is which type of work is harmful or beneficial for women, under what conditions. An important area to examine effects of status and work would be health, but as the review has shown, the work-health link is inadequately addressed.

## HILL WOMEN'S WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF ECOLOGICAL DEGRADATION AND MALE MIGRATION

In the ecologically degraded hills of Garhwal and Kumaon and other Himalayan regions, women's work has undergone an enormous increase. As highlighted in the introduction, common property resources became privatised and state controlled, thus scarcer and inaccessible to dependent people. A high rate of male migration has made women's burden all the more disproportionate. Studies examining aspects of changing economy and ecology throw light on the contemporary milieu in which hill women live and work.

Many studies have brought out the migration endemic character of the region with men migrating as far as the cities of Delhi and Mumbai (Dhobal, 1977; Bisht, 1994; Rana, 1995; Bora, 1996). Examining the structural characteristics of sedentary hill agriculture, the historical development of migration and the causes of migration, Whittaker (1984) found that contrary to the view of labour migration as an instrument of economic development, the transference of labour from a subsistence agricultural sector of low productivity to high productivity capitalist, industrial sector, Himalayan migration and agrarian change have brought about mixed, including many negative, consequences. Male migration is a response to decline in per capita production levels in the agricultural sector. The purpose of migration is therefore to provide cash support through remittances and pensions earned outside the hill area, for a resident population (usually women, children and old people) which operates an agricultural system that is unable to meet its subsistence requirement and which possesses a weak facility for structural transformation (Ibid, 1984). The majority of moves undertaken by hill labour are circular in nature, not extending beyond the duration of an individual's working life.

Bora's (1996), recent study of two districts viz. Tehri Garhwal and Pithoragarh in the hill region of Uttar Pradesh reiterated some of the factors which accelerated out-migration. These are pressures of population on land, scarce resources, small landholdings, landlessness, degrading subsistence agriculture, unemployment and backwardness of the regional economy. At present, the increase in male education and the lack of commensurate job opportunities in the hill regions are further propelling men to migrate

(Guha, 1989; Bisht, 1994; Mehta, 1997; Pathak, 1997; Bora, 1996; Rana, 1998 and so on). Studies have also brought out that the poorest and lowest caste groups, had a lower propensity to migrate than high status groups (Bora, 1996; Bisht, 1994).

Contrary to beliefs of the economic benefit of migration, Bora's study shows that annual benefits to an average migrant household in the form of remittances and pensions were lower than earnings forgone due to out-migration. Thus net-benefit due to out-migration is negative. Only in households having out-migration as well as return migrants, was the net-benefit per household due to out migration positive. Return male migrants were available to households to earn some income locally and are not surplus to the local economy (Bora, 1996).

Studies ascertaining the quantum and nature of women's work in changing hill economies have all established the enormous work contribution of women in family farms. Bhatti and Singh (1987) acquaint us with women's contribution to agricultural economy in the hills of Northwest India. The study estimates the household's total labour inputs and examines how the division of labour is organised in 120 marginal, small and other farm households located in 10 villages in Himachal Pradesh. They take into account labour inputs in direct production during the entire twelve month agricultural cycle, accounting for the actual number of days of agricultural work performed by different household members. The study showed that about 77 to 80 percent of family workforce was engaged in agriculture and women's labour accounted for 62 percent of the total familial agricultural workforce. Women performed 61 percent of total farm work, greater in animal husbandry than crop production. There is a tendency towards sexual division of labour in both tasks and women's work rarely finds a reduction in working hours. Bhat et al (1987) studying the agricultural role of Kashmiri women show that the rate of female labour participation was higher than male labour for all farm-size classes and farms, based on diverse cropping patterns and irrigation facilities. A household survey in Una district of Himachal Pradesh during the agricultural year also showed higher female than male labour participation. However, wages for women were much lower.

Similarly, Vir Singh (1987) showed greater work quantum of women in Almora. Ploughing and levelling operations are done by men while women perform inter-culturing, irrigation, manure transportation and its application in the fields, harvesting and threshing. Three-fourths of the total work in agriculture is performed by female workers of the family. But majority of decisions with respect to agricultural operations is taken solely by men. A comparative study of women-managed farmholds in the hills with those in the plains of rural Uttar Pradesh, showed that the participation of the former was greater (Singh, 1988).

Aggarwal's study has drawn attention to how environmental degradation has made conditions of women's subsistence work more arduous and less productive. Village commons and forests have traditionally provided and continue to provide (although decreasingly) a wide variety of essential items – food, fuel, fodder, fibre, small timber, manure, bamboo, medicinal herbal oil, material for household buildings and handicrafts, resin, gum, honey, spices etc. – for personal use and sale. Many of these products have also been critical for tiding poor families over periods of seasonal or acute food shortages (Aggarwal, 1989). In the hills, deforestation has made the task of fodder fuel and water collection more arduous (Agarwal, 1992). Male-migration makes women workers and managers of farms. Caste-class hierarchy in the hills is less marked as compared to the plains, which reduces availability of hired labour (Chen, 1989).

Soil degradation and erosion have compounded problems of crop production. Studies have focussed on the escalating ecological degradation and food insecurity, which are tied with the fragmentation of village communities on one hand, and women's "primary but subordinate status" on the other. With rapid commercialisation, the best land is devoted to cash crop resulting in shortfall in food grain production. Gender inequalities and declining access to land and food have disturbing consequences for the well being of the local ecology and household food security (Agarwal, 1987; Mehta, 1996). In the Himalayan region of Nepal too, farmers have to cope with food insecurity. The majority of mountain population is severely undernourished and for increasing proportion of village people, survival has become a permanent crisis (Bhole, 1998).

Women's role as invisible water managers, responsible for supplying the water needs of the household, domestic animals and agriculture have been highlighted (Davidson, 1993). Decreasing water bodies and eutrophication has been observed in the entire Himalayas (Afroz et al, 1989). Natural springs are drying up due to the indiscriminate lopping of native broad-leafed tree species like oak and alder (Afroz, 1991). This decline in water tables due to deforestation has compounded the problem of drinking water. Women trek for hours to fetch water, the situation worsening considerably in the summer months (Bisht, 2002). Women's time and energy are further exhausted with the decline in common grazing land and acute fodder shortage in the region. More than 40 percent of rural households in Kumaon district in Central Himalayas have to trek a distance of three to eight km (one way) to obtain fodder and fuelwood (Pandey, 1986, Debnath, 1987).

The gendered nature of agrarian communities is reflected in access to resources and control over environmental decisions and technologies in a study of Tehri Garhwal conducted by Manjari Mehta. The adoption of commercially oriented agricultural practices (developed in the plains) are intensifying ecological vulnerability. Traditional genetic diversity is being eroded and then is a gradual loss and devaluation of the wide repertoire of indigenous knowledge on which the sustainable use of resources has traditionally drawn. Male migration leaves women to bear the brunt of agricultural production and maintenance of households. Remittance leads to the household's improved standard of living upto a point, and women do get a share. But money is rarely made available to women to hire labour for highly labour-intensive tasks such as collecting fodder and fuelwood. The study also found that households now keep buffaloes instead of cows as a result of declining forest and field fodder resources and changing household demography. Even though female literacy rates are higher for hill women as compared to plains women, they can expect little more than a life confined to the parameters of the village (Mehta, 1996).

Ursula Sharma's study of village Chaili in Himachal Pradesh also shows conditions of depressed agriculture, in small underdeveloped villages, where peasants use traditional methods of cultivation. Moreover women shouldered more work in order to release men for urban wage labour, without gaining autonomy, decision-making powers,



entrepreneurship or access to family resources. It strongly reiterated the devolution of additional agricultural work upon women. Male control of virtually all productive assets shows that women's increase in labour is disconnected to their "de-facto" powers, better work options or even the perennial hazards of dependence. Moreover in many villages of Himachal Pradesh, which earlier practised bride price, the shift from bride price to dowry is near total and dowry amounts have increased manifold (Sharma, 1980; 1979).

*The Chipko Andolan* initiated at gaining control over forests brought hill women into national and international focus. Women were actively involved in *Chipko* Movement and displayed remarkable ability to organise and protest, not only against the commercial exploitation of forests, but often against men of their own community. *Chipko* history is replete with examples of women protesting against commercial forestation, anti-alcohol protest and so on. The movement clearly highlighted the ways in which environmental degradation has made conditions of women's subsistence work more arduous and less productive. (Bandyopadhyay, and Shiva, 1988; Haigh, 1988; Mehta, 1991; Guha, 1991; Agarwal, 1992).

There is a dismal lack of research on hill women's health. Most available studies are conducted by NGOs with a narrow fact-finding approach.

A study of Tehri Garhwal hill women assessed the reproductive health status. The study findings indicated that overwhelming majority of women had some gynaecological problem indicating poor reproductive status: anaemia, leucorrhoea, abdominal pain and painful menstruation. The study also established considerable reproductive wastage in women, due to foetal loss, complications during child birth and early infant death. The study stated that there were difference among the six districts but these differences do not lend themselves to any meaningful interpretation. Based on this it is ambiguously said that "this leads us to think that where reproductive health status is concerned, habitat is more important than differences in life styles, levels of exposure to tourism, male migration and cultural peculiarities". The statement is not further explained (Dhri Bhuvaneshwari Mahila Ashram, 1999).

Rawat (1998) is one of the five studies which looks at the social impact of deforestation on peasant women of Uttaranchal hills. Two hundred women (aged 20 – 40 years) from Hawalbach and Takula block (Almora district) were surveyed and medically examined. The study revealed prevalence of leucorrhoea, anaemia, worm infestation and backaches. Other studies conducted in the hill region including Garhwal also indicate high prevalence of reproductive morbidity (Rachna, 1999; Samta, 1997, Ram et al, 1998).

On the whole, literature available on the status of women in this hill economy has highlighted the enormous work loads that women bear, examined the socio-economic imperatives which compel households to participate in external economy and how this in turn effects the organisation of agricultural activities. There is however, a need for a more consciously systemic level analysis to understand women, the hill household and their relationship to the wider political economy. A better and more fuller understanding of how the sexes are positioned within the domestic economy needs to be developed that will provide an understanding of gender relations and women's status. As described in the introduction, this study is an attempt in this direction through linking women's status, work and health.

A systematic analysis of this linkage requires a conceptual framework. The conceptual review of theoretical writings undertaken in the next section aims to develop this framework.

## **CONCEPTUALISING WOMEN'S WORK AND HEALTH**

Given the centrality of labour and work in Marxian theory, theoretical perspectives on women's labour have come to be grounded in Marxist political economy and dominated by Marxist feminist debates. Following Engel's classic formulations on the origin of patriarchy, the materialist school raises questions about how men's and women's relations to the means of production create different social relations among them and create complex and multifaceted structures of patriarchy which do not reflect universal gender based essences. Rooted in Marxist political economy that emphasises the inter-relationship of economic, political, social and cultural structures and processes, feminists have theorised on women's domestic and wage labour, paid and unpaid labour, under

different modes of production taking account of family/household relationships. These have broadened and enriched our understanding and provided the framework for analysing women's labour and its processes in the peasant economy. While the study of "what women do" has been the major thrust of this work, symbolic and cultural valuations of work and gender ideologies have also been realised as crucial for a comprehensive understanding (Moore, 1988).

Like work, our conceptualisation of women's health issue as drawn from and are guided by (1) the political economy approach which is informed by Marxist critique and (2) materialist feminist approaches that seek to locate women's health in the wider context of women's subordination. We discuss in this section ideas of some key theorists (including materialist feminist). Theoretical perspectives especially relevant to analysis of women's work, role and status in the rural social system are also incorporated..

### **Conceptualising Women's Work: Production, Reproduction And The Sexual Division Of Labour**

The theoretical nature of the understanding of the relationship between women's work and her subordination has been considerably advanced by feminist debates over the concepts of production and reproduction and their linkages and the nature of the gender division of labour. Taking into account public and family production systems and relationships, they have provided the framework for analysing women's labour.

The relations between production and reproduction are central questions for anyone concerned to analyse women's oppression today (Beechey, 1987). According to Beechey the separation of reproduction (or patriarchy) from other aspects of mode of production leaves the Marxist analysis of production untouched. She favours an approach which links the spheres of production and reproduction and analyses the ways in which gender is constructed and used as a structuring principle in both. Of particular relevance to this study would be the conceptualisations of the political economy of gender relations in pre-capitalist formulation which would help in understanding the nature of gender structuring and relationships within Garhwal society. These are briefly reviewed in the following section.

The path breaking work in historically understanding link between production and reproduction was that of Mellaisoux (1981) who set out to analyse the social relations of production within domestic agricultural community. His key contribution lies in highlighting that in agricultural societies control over labour is central in defining relations of production as compared to control over means of production. Kinship structure is the key mechanism of control. Under pre-capitalist productive regime, labour is produced and reproduced and allocated through differing kinship forms. According to Mellaisoux, the control of reproduction is more important than production and he shows this in his analysis of social relations of production within the domestic community. He shows how the dependency of sex and age are crucial to understand social reproduction of societies. However, Mellaisoux did not specify or analyse the forms of women's subordination.

Critiquing Mellaisoux, Harris and Young (1981), argue that it is the relationship within which women are implicated that must form the basis of analysis. Thus the importance of focussing on concepts such as reproduction and production rather than women as such. They wish to emphasise how and in what ways gender relations are incorporated in conditions of total reproduction.

It would be important to consider in some detail, Harris and Young's (1981) formulation about pre-capitalist societies because some of them may be modified to apply to Indian feudal pre-capitalist formations (including that of Garhwal) and the way women are constituted in them. According to them it is important to distinguish control over women's labour and the product of that labour and control over women's capacity for biological reproduction. The latter again involves – (1) control exercised over the children borne by women and over their capacity for labour, (2) the control exerted over categories of men especially young men by restricting access to women as sexual beings, (3) control over rate and conditions of biological reproduction and by whom it is exercised.

Marriage is one of the ways by which access to means of production (and to labour) is allocated in many pre-capitalist societies. No concept of private individualised ownership

exists but concepts of use rights does. These usufruct rights are transmitted through birth but access may be gained through clientage and slavery. In societies where commodity exchange or market does not dominate, the control over exchange including that of women, is a major factor in overall allocation and control over labour. Women are objects of exchange and gender relations are defined by kinship structure.

Women occupy clearly defined and significant positions in (1) the reproduction of individuals within class position viz. the function of allocation to class positions, (2) reproduction of socialised labour, viz. the function of ideological reproduction and (3) day to day maintenance and material reproduction. With respect to the allocation function, marriage regulates women's capacity to bear and also their relation to production and means of production. They lose rights to property. For the ideological function, women are assigned the task of early socialisation of the following generation into ideological structures. Ideology is understood as set of ideas and material practices embodied within patterns of behaviour and social institutions. The third function of reproduction of labour is achieved through the daily performance of domestic labour. Further, according to Harris and Young, in pre-capitalist systems like the feudal, ruling classes assigned labour by gender, age and rank (such as age-grade-system and caste systems of India).

### **The Production- Reproduction Continuum**

Dualism arises out of reproduction and production as two analytically separable aspects of life. The social relations of reproduction or the sex gender system are a set of relations that reproduce human groups from generation to generation and which include ways of conceptualising and organising such things as sex, gender, procreation or domestic labour and consumption. These social relations of reproduction are located in the family household – and although they have impact on organisation of production, they are distinct from economic relations of production which are the subject of traditional Marxist analysts (Vogel, 1983).

However, the understanding has been contested that production relates to economically productive activity and reproduction to biological reproduction and domestic labour and

that there is a marked separation between the two. Further, there are varying views on whether production or reproduction is the critical domain of woman's subordination. It has been held that conceptual dichotomies such as production vs reproduction or public vs private spheres have helped obscure women's economic role. This is so particularly in agrarian economies where the division between production and reproduction is conceptually artificial.

The distinction was influenced by the domestic vs. public model of anthropology because it provided a way of linking cultural valuations to the organisation of gender activities in society. How Moore sees it is that women's reproductive role has not stood in the way of public production, taking women's role beyond public and domestic hierarchy. Both their categorical separation and relative relationship are open to question (Moore, 1988).

The concepts themselves have been narrowly or broadly used. Reproduction is usually used to include biological / human reproduction and the servicing of labour. Beneria and Sen (1986) include social reproduction i.e. perpetuation of social systems – though inheritance systems for which societies have developed different forms of control over female sexuality and fertility. This control is the root of women's subordination along with control of other people's, including women's labour.

Further, according to Beneria and Sen, the form, extent and significance of domestic work vary according to society's stage of economic transformation. In a subsistence economy, materials used for domestic economic consumption are not bought in the market, they are transformed in such a way that households and non-household production are closely linked so that it is hard to draw a line. Domestic work for eg. extends to activities such as gathering wood, growing vegetables. It also becomes part of agricultural process. Production is carried into reproduction when agricultural goods are processed in home for consumption. Process of reproduction includes large numbers of productive tasks geared to household's own consumption such as animal care, agricultural work along with food preparation and water collection.

Maria Mies (1980) finds little analytical value in distinguishing between subsistence production and reproduction especially in realm of use-value production. One may talk

of a continuum of activities - subsistence work or subsistence reproduction. Only under capitalism are separations valid. Mies follows Engels in terming production of means of subsistence and production of new life or procreation both as “production”. Both are dependent on human co-operation. Both these processes are interlinked, as Marx noted:

*“The production of life, both of one’s own in labour and of fresh life in procreation, now appears as a double relationship: on the one hand as a natural, and on the other as a social relationship. By social, we understand the co-operation of several individuals no matter under what conditions, in what manner and to what end. It follows that a certain mode of production, or industrial stage, is always combined with a certain mode of co-operation, or social stage, and this mode of co-operation is itself a productive force” (cited in Mies, 1980).*

In so far as the production of life and of living working capacity are the necessary preconditions of all modes and forms of production, Mies prefers to call this the subsistence production and reproduction.

Subsistence reproduction thus defined involves a variety of human activities ranging from pregnancy, the birth of children, to production, processing and preparation of food, clothing, making a home, cleaning as well as satisfaction of emotional and sexual needs. In all these activities, human energy is spent to transform ‘nature’ into human life. Therefore Mies calls this activity subsistence work.

### **The Gender Division Of Labour**

The gender division of labour connotes the actual system of allocation of agents to positions within the labour process on the basis of sex and lastly a system of social construction of gender (Eldholm, Harris and Young, 1977). Culturally legitimised ways of defining women and men in a particular historical period contribute to gender division of labour. Mostly it gives advantages to men irrespective of class (Mackintosh, 1981). In this view the social construction of women (and men) and the roles, attitudes and behaviours assigned to them have to be analysed as a process. The gender division of labour should not be confused with division of labour between production and reproduction activities (Deere and deLeal, 1981). The former is heterogeneous and responsive to material conditions of production and the latter is homogenous.

The feminist argument is that understanding gender division of labour is crucial to understand women's social position. Gender division of labour is important because it appears to express, embody and furthermore perpetuate female subordination. Women workers are placed in certain sectors and tasks. New categories of women's work come to be established creating and recreating the gender division of labour. It exists in all categories of work. Further, it is not the work per se but meagre share of benefits and rewards in return for it that matters; women are forced to work longer hours to achieve a lower standard of living (Mackintosh, 1981). As cash economy spreads it is reorganised and strengthened to women's detriment.

The sexual division of labour has existed historically and certainly predated capitalism. If we wish to understand male dominance we have to analyse social processes of the creation of two unequal genders of which the gender division of labour is a crucial part. The tasks tied closest to human reproductions are rigidly and strictly allocated to women and tied to gender identity also. Why? Gender typing is most rigid in social relations of human reproduction - i.e. of marriage, filiation and procreation. Household has become a mediating institution of two sets of social relations, marriage and filiation and the wider social relations (Eldholm et. al. 1977).

Beneria (1982) raises the question of whether allocation of women to production is conditioned by narrowly defined role in reproduction. While there is high degree of integration she emphasises importance of reproductive role in determining the gender division of labour. Conversely however, it has also been suggested that reproductive biology may be shaped by culturally determined productive activities (e.g. hunting/gathering) and women's sustained work input as food providers influences fertility levels, child spacing and infanticide. Deere and DeLeal (1981) feel that human reproduction does not determine productive activity.

All this suggests that it is not really possible to talk of any precise and unchanging nature of gender division of labour, or allocation of production and reproduction, outside a consideration of patterns of rural transformation, processes of differentiation among peasant households and impact of such processes on structures, ideologies and internal



dynamics of households. One would agree with Deere and DeLeal that gender divisions of labour are subject to change and situations must be specifically investigated, a task that this research has set for itself.

### **Land And The Gender Structuring Of Production**

Davison (1980) is specifically interested in women's relation to land and how it affects the political economy of women's lives. However, she rightly holds that looking at land alone will not explain what is happening to women's role in agricultural production. Nor she suggests will it explain how women's reproductive role as perceived by different societies and shapes women's productive potential. Davison has developed the concept of gender relations of production in an ongoing construct that encompasses both social and economic relations. Economic relations of production, including the division of labour and allocation of resources, subsume social relations of production and reproduction, including gender relations.

By gender relations of production are meant socio-economic relations between men and women that are characterised by differential assignment of labour tasks, control over decision making and differential access to and control over the allocation of resources, including land and income. Labour tasks refer to both productive and procreating aspects of labour. Connecting this idea to our earlier discussion, it seems to be the overarching explicit or implicit position of the analysis of women's work today and there seems to be a consensus.

Thus gender structuring is defined as a process through which a society structures relation between female and male sexes – including productive and procreative relations – it is not biological but socially imposed (Davison, 1980). The way gender is defined in any society is related to historically prevailing system of organising social production. Often relations of production translate into relations of power. All people work, but only some enjoy power. Embedded in relations of production are implicit relations of power. Relations of production exist between husbands as holders of power and their wives as also between older people and younger dependants. Davison's conceptualisations move beyond separate enquiries into production-reproduction and the gender division of labour

and they help grasp the total reality of gender structuring. It is useful as a perspective to look at both women's work and health.

In conclusion this section on work has reviewed efforts to interweave gender relations within production relations. In fact, following Harris and Young (1981), Beechey (1981), Beneria and Sen (1986) and Davison (1980), this study will consider productive systems as gendered fundamentally structured by gender.

### **Theoretical Perspectives On Women's Health**

Understanding women's health in a larger sense and not linked to women's reproductive function or bio-medical models requires its exploration from a number of perspectives that are currently available. Conceptually and methodologically, our study draws on perspectives and postulates on health from political economy, material feminism, social constructionism and critical anthropology.

The political economy critique of health focuses on identification of the political, economic and historical factors that shape health, disease and treatment. It questions the whole bio-medical approach to diagnosis and treatment and suggests that causes of ill health are more complex and related to socio-economic factors and results of development processes. Health is seen socially rather than biologically determined and cannot be viewed independently from the society in which it is studied. This insight lays the foundation of a materialist or radical epidemiology which has gained support (Kelman, 1975). Similarly, Doyal places issues of health within a wider context and considers relationship between biological and social, between health, illness and society. She focuses without crude attribution on the possible effects of capitalist development (Doyal, 1979). Turshen's approach seeks to combine political economy and feminist work on women's subordination. It sees women's subordination as located within gender relations and male dominance and within the economic organisation of society. The concept is dynamic and historically specific. Women's health status is reflected by gender and economic relations, viz. gender division of labour, forms of productions, changing conditions of reproduction (Turshen, 1989).

Doyal's work has been particularly influential in combining political economy health research and feminist health research. She propounds that the first question that needs to be considered is the relationship between the biological and social, viz. health, illness and society. Social and economic factors including gender have critical importance. There is an argument that this has nothing to do with capitalism or economic system but according to Doyal, health needs of populations conflict with requirements of capital accumulation and cause historical changes in patterns of mortality and morbidity (Doyal, 1979, 1995).

The following materialist feminist work on women's health is located in gender ideology and gender relations of production and reproduction. Reproduction in the sense of child bearing/birthing process as well as reproductive tasks and productive work form part of the material base on which health is constructed. Feminist work researching health perceives illness as a product of the gender/patriarchal system, rather than biology or environment. Patriarchal ideology and relations breed gender discrimination and oppression in production and reproduction (Stacey, 1988; Turshen, 1989; Doyal, 1979, 1995).

Feminist perspectives draw attention to patriarchal belief systems, practices and institutions in the domain of illness diagnosis and treatment. Ideologies and dominant discourses of reproduction inscribe women's bodies. Relations of power are exercised and reproduced in daily life, women are subject to these conditions of dominance and exploitation and lack of power relative to men in critical areas of their well being. Women are exposed to dangerous health hazards and treatments that create health risks. Women's reproductive and general health is thus ideologically determined and their physiological symptoms are subject to ideological interpretation and diagnosis.

Dominant patriarchal ideology controls which health problems of women are officially recognised and who is ultimately is designated sick or healthy. They affect health policies which in turn adversely affect women. Natures of treatment regimes and rehabilitation programs, as well as decisions regarding their applicability, are determined by patriarchal values. Since class and racial groups are also subject to conditions of dominance and exploitation, poor women experience double jeopardy. Women lack power relative to

men in these critical areas. A predominantly male medical establishment fails to question or investigate in depth any of these aspects.

There has been a constant tension in feminism about “the body and medicine” viz. between recognising the uniqueness of women's embodied experience and the desire to deny that such uniqueness exists. Biomedicine has supported hegemonic ideologies of gender roles. Yet, feminists today recognise that medical systems have also contributed to women's liberation. Ehrenreich and English have lucidly articulated the difficulties of feminist standpoint on biology and have pointed out the real dangers of either understating or exaggerating our needs as women. Women's biology has underlined their patriarchal subordination but not patriarchal exclusion from hard labour (Ehrenreich and English, 1978).

From the foregoing perspectives, it is clear that there is the social nature of the definition of “problem” in health has a social dimension. Health in any society is socially determined. The materialist approach to the study of health can begin with the axiom that human beings are the basis of both the forces of production (physical ingredients of production such as labour, resources, equipment) and the relations of production (division of labour, legal property and social institutions and practices) in any society. Therefore appropriate organismic condition (i.e. health) can only be understood in the concrete context of the particular mode of organisation of production and the dialectical relationship between the productive forces and relations (Kelman, 1975).

Finally we need to consider the social constructionist and critical anthropological perspectives that illuminate theoretical efforts to fully comprehend health. Social constructionism does not call into question the reality of disease or bodily experience but holds that these states and experiences are known and interpreted via social activity and therefore should be examined using cultural and social analysis. The approach can descend into relativism - that all knowledge forms are social products and any one knowledge like the bio-medical, is not necessarily more valid or reasonable. Yet as Lupton suggests, the approach need not be uncompromisingly relativist - experiences

such as pain and death exist as biological realities but they must always be understood through social processes (Lupton, 1994).

Medical anthropologists have been traditionally concerned with interpretation and lived experience of illness. Culture influences illness experience. Recently political economy and social constructionism has influenced medical anthropology and led to field of critical medical anthropology. The areas of concern include the social production of medical knowledge, social control in medicine and public health and the relation of health and medicine to power. Equally important are issues of consciousness and agency in health related behaviour and belief, the identification and labelling of disease, the contestable nature of medicine and disease as biomedical realities and the meaning of illness experience. Recent critical approaches are interdisciplinary, incorporating political economy concerns with structural economic features and how they impinge upon health status and process with a social constructionist interest in epistemology and use of language (Lupton, 1994).

The review highlights the empirical nature of health and health service studies where causal linkages are explored by very few researchers. The problem with the literature is that though comprehensive approaches put up theoretical proposition, actual empirical evidence is lacking. On the other hand those who look at social determinants select only few dimensions that leave out some key social determinants like work or migration. Thus literature when seen against the studies of women work status and social relations compels us to look at theoretical formulations that explains the secondary status of women and shows that gendered social and economic relations are at the core of women's health status. This is the essential frame that helps us articulate the research problem in the next chapter.

**Chapter II**

**METHODOLOGY**

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## **CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Following the theoretical perspectives we have outlined in the previous chapter, we view women's health and work as socially produced and complexly constituted by economic processes and relations, structures of gender division of labour and unequal gender relations and their cultural and ideological legitimisations.

The health status of Garhwali women constitutes the key substantive area of inquiry of this research. Health is examined here as a complex concept encompassing biological, physiological, social and cultural dimensions. It is both an effect and an indicator of women's status. Determined by a number of conditions and factors - environmental, material and cultural, it bears emphasis that health like work is also socially constructed on the basis of pre-existing patterns of power and control. Political and economic forces, and patriarchal structures are important to understand women's bodily / material and mental emotional states. Health shaped by ideology is crucially linked to women's roles in the processes of production and reproduction.

As our conceptual review has shown, the analysis of women's work has been central to feminist theorisation on gender power relations and women's subordination. It is feminist scholarship that has brought women as actors in a previously genderless consideration of links between peasant production and subsistence sector (Kandiyoti, 1985). The study examines the gender division of labour as a key form and expression of Garhwali women's subordination and investigates its importance in ascertaining the status and value of their work. Further, it examines the context of and relationship between women's productive and reproductive labour, the cultural meanings of these labours and the ideological legitimisations and the position accorded to women in power relations of production.

This study addresses but also goes beyond issue of quantum and loads. It attempts an exploration of changes and shifts in the gendered structures of production systems, the gendered processes of production and reproduction, and patterns of gender division of labour. It examines the implications of all these changes for gender relations and women's position. This research will address the issue of complementarity or gender

inequality work relations by exploring the inequalities and equalities in work domain. It examines the conditions and control of labour process, resources, production and consumption. In the context of migration, household change and declining economy and changing labour patterns, do women function as dependants or as agents of control ?

At a wider lever the study attempts an exploration of the connections between developmental changes in economy, migration, class formation and changes in household economies and relationships, gender relations. It attempts to understand the changing material basis of women's productive and reproductive work, the gender division of labour and their implications for gender power relations within the complex interweaving of women's men's lives. Does high participation in and cultural celebration of work necessarily translate into higher levels of economic, social and cultural power or greater economic and social control for women? In what ways and to what extent are women subordinated?

Given the agrarian crisis and their work burden, we further examine the relationship between Garhwali women's work and health, how patterns of health and illness are shaped by evolving modes of economic and patriarchal organisation and the gender division of labour. The specificities of women's health experiences, issues and problems in women's access to healthcare constitute the main scope of our investigation. The effort is to search out linkages by attempting to identify characteristics and features of societies, households and work lives that seem to affect women's health and the care that they receive in response to their ill health. What are the processes that shape women's health realities - how is their ill health created and sustained?

In hill society where notions of women's inherent biological inferiority have not operated to bring about their patriarchal exclusion from hard labour, it would be important to examine the specific connections between labour and health under the impact of structural changes in sexual divisions of labour and labour process. The dominant value system and gender ideology enjoin women to be mothers alongwith workers. Like the overwhelming majority of women in India, it is considered natural and important for Garhwali women to reproduce children. It would be crucial to see how reproduction



mediates production and reproductive ideology affects the relationship between work and health. The reproductive realities of women's lives and economic and social conditions - does it translate into the more obvious manifestations of reproduction related ill health. As our review has indicated, very little work has been done on relationship between the changing sexual division of labour and changing health status. In the context of the impact of economic and environment factors highlighted above, the understanding of Garhwali women's health leads one to consider the relationship between biological, social, cultural, economic and environmental.

As our review of literature has also shown, despite its obvious links to environmental degradation, work quantum, and declining food security, health is a neglected area of study in post independence scholarship of the hill region. In the light of studies that suggest that women's ill health is bound up with environmental and environment-linked material conditions, how and to what extent have the processes of development been illness producing for Garhwali women and how specifically have they been affected?

Women's own conceptions and perceptions regarding their illness and ill being, their whole approach to diagnosis and treatment and their lived experiences of illness constitutes the core of our enquiry. We attempt an examination of health and illness from women's perspective, privileging how they experience bodily symptoms and how they deal with them. What are women's relationship with healthcare givers and experiences of treatment. How does society respond to women's illness? And we explore how does culture influence illness experiences and their meanings. How do women exercise their agency or are they mere victims of the power of male dominant households, indigenous or modern medical systems. The concern is with unravelling social and cultural constraints to health as experienced by women as gendered, labouring subjects. As Doyal (1995) pertinently asks: How do their lives make them sick? Equally important is the issue of how women's perceptions and understanding of health has evolved in the context of their own lives (Qadeer, 1985; Banerjee, 1992).

Finally, a word on the conceptualisation of women's status. The concept of status is a vexed one in sociology and anthropology. Most researchers have attempted to develop

unitary constructs or spoken broadly of “high” or “low” status (Quinn, 1977). The approach taken here is to derive notions of women’s status through understanding their conditions in the two domains of work and health, and through this understand the nature of gender relations that operate and the degree of female subordination.

Broadly this study aims at understanding how the hill women’s status, economic role, her work and health are affected under the impact of ecological degradation, male out-migration, shifts in labour process, changing gender division of labour and family dynamics within the cultural ideology of gender and the socio-economic hierarchy of caste and class.

More specifically, the objectives of the study are :

1. To socio-historically trace the linkages between ecological destruction, decline of peasant subsistence economy and male migration in the hill region.
2. To examine changes in household economy of the study villages and household structures and composition under the impact of socio-economic processes, in particular male migration.
3. To explore the impact of these changes on the gender division of labour and on the nature, quantum, conditions and valuations of women’s work.
4. To explore women’s perceptions and lived experiences of ill health and health and ascertain the linkages between environment, work and health.
5. To ascertain the conditions of women’s access to healthcare and identify the changes and constraints of women’s dealings with illness.
6. To examine the relationship between women’s work and health and its implications for women’s status in household and society.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design addresses the stated objective using a range of strategies and methods. The study is conceived in two phases. The first phase constitutes a baseline survey of sample villages in the area. Keeping with the complexity of the research in mind, the second phase is an in-depth exploration of the problem in two villages. A systematic analysis of documentary sources and secondary materials forms an important component for providing the background and contextual understanding. It not only preceded the baseline survey, but also has been an ongoing process.

## THE RESEARCH SETTING

The study is set in hill villages of Yamkeshwar block in Pauri Garhwal district of the newly formed Uttaranchal State<sup>1</sup>. Based on criteria like low agricultural productivity, low level of industrial and social services development, inadequate infrastructure etc. Pauri Garhwal is regarded as one of the extremely backward districts representing the general backwardness of the Hill Region<sup>2</sup>. This backward hilly district provides very little opportunity for local work and income-generation, leading to high rates of out-migration. Census Reports since 1961 onwards have shown Pauri Garhwal as a district with high incidence of net-out-migration. In the 1981 Census the migration rates was 11 percent<sup>3</sup>. Being an extremely backward district with high incidence of net out-migration, Pauri Garhwal is purposively selected for the study.

Pauri Garhwal district is divided into three tehsils and fifteen developmental blocks. There are a total of 1214 gram-sabha with 3565 villages and 8 towns (Districts Census Handbook, 1991). Yamkeshwar development block in Kotdwara tehsil is the most backward of the fifteen developmental blocks. Spread over an area of 644 sq.kms, it has

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<sup>1</sup> The 27<sup>th</sup> state of the Indian Union, Uttaranchal was formally born on November 9, 2000. Its creation brings to an end the struggle for a separate state of Uttarakhand, carved out of Uttar Pradesh, comprising the hill region of Garhwal and Kumaon. Uttaranchal State today comprises of 13 districts of the Garhwal and Kumaon region.

<sup>2</sup> Based on criterion adopted by Indian government for assessing levels of regional backwardness, the hilly districts of Almora, Pithoragarh, Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Tehri Garhwal and Pauri Garhwal are looked upon as extremely backward districts in government records.

<sup>3</sup> According to migration rates shown in Census Report of 1981, Almora (17%), Pauri Garhwal (11%) and Pithoragarh (10%) are districts with highest incidence of net out-migration. This trend is there since 1961 Census. At the time of starting this research study, migration tables of the 1991 Census were not available; hence the migration data from 1981 Census was used for selecting the district.

8 Nyaya Panchayats, 90 gram-sabhas and total of 236 revenue villages out of which 222 are inhabited (Census 1991)

## **PHASE I: THE BASELINE SURVEY**

### **OBJECTIVE AND RATIONALE OF THE BASELINE SURVEY**

The first phase of the research study comprised a concise baseline survey of eleven villages in Yamkeshwar block. The broad aim of the survey was to gain familiarity with the region, its climate and topography and provide first hand exposure to village organisation, people, their culture and way of life. More specifically, the survey aimed at generating an overview of the economic and social composition of the villages in terms of caste, occupational status, landownership patterns, agricultural production, livestock and other resources of families. The survey specifically focused on establishing the incidence and patterns of out-migration from the region. Moreover the baseline data provided the background information against which the explorations of the in-depth study could be carried out. The baseline survey was further useful in selecting the two villages for in-depth study in Phase II.

### **SAMPLING PROCEDURE**

Yamkeshwar block's two hundred and twenty two inhabited villages have a total of 8401 households with a population of 40,566 and average of 4.8 persons per household (Source: Census 1991). These 222 villages were stratified in terms of three criteria relevant to the final selection: distance from the town; size of the village and the rate of inter-censal population growth (1991 – 1981).

The distance from a town is considered a determining variable for rate and type of migration patterns that evolve in a region. Therefore we grouped all the villages into the following four groups in terms of distance from the two towns, Rishikesh and Kotdwara (as given in 1991 Census).

Group I	Upto 10 km from town
Group II	11 to 30 km from town
Group III	31 to 50 km from town
Group IV	Above 50 km from town

Villages were further subdivided on the basis of the size of the village that was determined by number of households in each village. On the basis of this criterion we divided them into three groups:

Small	Up to 10 households
Medium	Between 10 to 60 households
Large	Above 60 households

Each of these sub-groups was further divided by the rate of inter-censal population growth (1991 - 1981). Assuming that the rates of natural population increase (birth minus deaths divided by mean inter-censal population) are about the same in all the village and that in-migration is also negligible, those villages with relatively high rates of population growth may be estimated to have relatively low rates of out-migration, while those with relatively low rates of population growth would have relatively high rates of out-migration. This procedure is indirect and does not specifically identify areas of in or out-migration, but has been used as a rough indicator of migration in few research studies<sup>4</sup>. Thus data from 1981 and 1991 Census was used to compute the rates of inter censal population growth of these villages. Based on this the villages were divided into two groups viz. high and low population growth villages which was assumed to reflect the relative extent of out-migration.

<sup>4</sup> See Punjab ILO survey by Oberoi and Singh, 1983. The method is regarded as suitable if the above two assumptions (i.e. rates of natural population increase are same in all villages and that in-migration is negligible in all villages) are determined to be generally acceptable.

High population growth villages: indicate low rates of out- migration	Population growth more than zero
Low population growth villages: indicate high rates of out- migration.	Population growth zero or less than zero (negative or no population growth)

The distribution of the villages in terms of these criteria is given in Table 2.1. The classification gave rise to 24 clusters<sup>5</sup>. Nine villages falling in Group I (upto 10 km) were excluded from the sampling frame since because of their proximity to the town the bulk of the villagers were daily commuters. Further we excluded 34 small size villages (upto 10 households), as we felt that including them would demand taking a large number of villages in final sample. Further since we assume that “high” and “low” population growth is reflective of out-migration, we decided to focus only on villages with low population growth i.e. high out-migration. With this method of exclusion we arrived at a sample of 87 villages<sup>6</sup>. The final village sample was then selected from these 87 villages, which formed the universe of this study.

**Table 2.1: Classification Of Villages In Yamkeshwar Block According Distance, Size And Inter-Censal Population Growth**

Distance from town →	I (upto 10 km)		II (11-30 km)		III (31-50 km)		IV (above 50 km)		Total		Grand Total
	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	
Size of village ↓											
Small (Upto 10 hh)	1	0	6	4	3	4	8	9	18	17	35 [16]
Medium (11-60 hh)	5	2	24	25	20	23	31	28	80	78	158 [71]
Large (above 60 hh)	1	0	8	6	2	3	7	2	18	11	29 [13]
Total	7	2	38	35	25	30	46	39	116	106	222 [100]
Grand Total	9(4)		73(33)		55(25)		85(38)		222(100)		

Note: (1) Distance from the Rishikesh / Kotdwara town as mentioned in 1991 Census (2) Size of village according to number of households (3) H=High population growth; L= Low population growth. This intercensal population has been calculated from 1991 and 1981 census. (4) [ ] Figures in parenthesis denote column percentages (5.) ( ) Figures in parenthesis denote row percentages

<sup>5</sup> For total number of households in each of the 24-clusters, see Appendix TableA2.1

<sup>6</sup> These 87 villages constitute about 39% of the Block's population.

In terms of the size of the villages, 76 of these 87 villages (87.4 percent) are medium size villages and 11 villages (12.6 percent) are large size villages. According to the distance from the town they are further divided as follows

<i>Medium (76 villages)</i>	<i>Large (11 villages)</i>
11 to 30 km = 6 villages	11 to 30 km = 25 villages
31 to 50 km = 23 villages	31 to 50 km = 3 villages
Above 50km = 3 villages	Above 50km = 28 villages

Out of this universe, 10 percent of villages were selected by stratified random sampling. In this way, a total of 11 villages were selected for the baseline survey. All households of selected villages were surveyed, hence no sampling was required. Table 2.2 shows the list of selected villages.

**Table 2.2: Villages Selected For Baseline Survey**

Village size/ Distance	11 to 30 km	31 to 50 km	Above 50 km
<b>Medium size villages</b> (11 to 60 HHS)	Ediya (39) Gomalgoan Bara (39)	Bunga (53) KharduniTalli (56) Badune (54) Daurn(43)	Ranchula (51) Jai Damrada (45) Kolsi (50)
<b>Large size village</b> (above 60 HHS)	Kuthar (68)	Kheda Talla (65)	* Not selected

Note: \* Village could not be selected from this cluster due to logistical problem.

Figures in parenthesis show the number of households in each village.

According to the 1991 Census a total of 563 households in these villages had to be surveyed. Table A.2.2 in the Appendix displays the distribution of the 563 households in each strata / cluster.

## TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION

A semi-structured interview schedule, a village information schedule and discussions were the three primary tools of data collection in the baseline survey. *Semi-structured interview schedule* was administered to all households in the eleven villages. The aim

was to do a house listing and to seek baseline information through questions with both structured and open-ended response categories (see Appendix Table AS 2.1). Information on some selected socio-economic indicators like land ownership, cultivation, sufficiency of produce was sought and an attempt was made to gather data on rate and pattern of out-migration from the villages. A **village information schedule** was developed to make a profile of each study village on the basis of information on land use pattern, forests, amenities, government schemes being implemented in the village etc (Appendix Table AS 2.2). **Discussions** were planned with varied groups of people to gather information on ecological set-up, developmental issues, to ascertain the penetration of market etc. In addition, review of secondary literature was used to develop a broad historical view of the area. Details of this are given along with the secondary sources used for Phase II.

## **PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION**

These eleven selected villages were scattered all over the Yamkeshwar Block ranging from an altitude of 1100m to 2100m (see Map 4.3 in Chapter IV). We started the data collection from southeast of Yamkeshwar Block from Kolsi village (four hours from Kotdwara) and we moved systematically to extreme northwest of the block. The last village to be surveyed was Ediya (four hours from Rishikesh). Before climbing to the village, we would often halt at roadside teashops. Informal discussion with people assembled at teashops, near the village bazaar and so on would provide us a lot of general information on the villages and the developmental issues pertaining to that region. Invariably we met some residents of the village we were scheduled to survey, or sometimes the *pradhan*, schoolteacher etc. They would take us to the village and generally introduce us. We usually had to stay for a week in each village to administer the semi-structured interview schedule on all households. This stay provided us innumerable occasions to have discussions with different groups of villagers, meet the village *pradhan* (head), village *chowkidar* (guard), schoolteacher and sometimes the *patwari* (revenue officer). These interviews yielded data on the Village information schedule and also provided insights, which were useful in designing the second phase of the study. Besides this we took formal appointments with various government officials like the Yamkeshwar Block officials, the BDO, PHC staff, Ayurvedic dispensary staff



etc. and we conducted several interviews with them related to the problems in the Block and programs being implemented there. The baseline survey took a total of five months to complete.

## **PHASE II: THE IN-DEPTH STUDY**

To study the complex interconnections between the key macro structural aspects and micro reality of women's lives, work and health, the second phase of the research necessitated a qualitative paradigm of research. This research focuses on complex relational and ideological aspects of social life as they affect women, as also women's perception of their life, status, experience and situation. Since we wished to look at the correlates of health and well being, we required intensive qualitative data to understand the changes that have occurred over time in the villages vis-à-vis the agriculture, forests and other economic activities. We also needed to study the forces of migration, modernisation such as markets and their influence and the developmental processes and their implication for women's lives. The study thus demanded elaborate and detailed gathering of data on contexts, events and experiences to yield an in-depth understanding of the phenomena under study. Therefore, this phase of the study had to be largely anthropological in nature.

It was therefore decided to conduct an intensive study of two villages, which would yield detailed valid and authentic data in the difficult areas chosen for exploration. Due to the complexity and depth of the data to be collected, several visits to the research sites were required. The study also required adoption of multiple tools for data collection. It is our understanding that more authentic, rich and comprehensive data, even if it covers a limited sample, is more important from the point of view of addressing the complex connections that we are seeking to make in the study.

## **SELECTION OF VILLAGES FOR IN-DEPTH STUDY**

The criterion for selection of villages for in-depth study derives their logical rationale from the research problematic and specific objectives. Keeping in view the need to understand macro-micro linkages between structural and larger developmental processes,

women's work, life and health we developed the following criteria of selection which cover all crucial variables like migration status, caste and landownership of the households:

- Villages with the highest number of households reporting out-migration but also having a fair number of non-migrant households.
- Villages that have a presence of all three major caste groups and ideally those that have more or less even caste distribution
- Villages in which land ownership has a wide range

Analysis of the baseline survey data yielded information which assisted in the actual selection of the two villages from the eleven baseline villages. Table 2.3 below lists the identified five villages that were meeting the above criteria.

**Table 2.3: Villages That Fulfilled The Selection Criteria For The In-Depth Study**

<b>Distance</b>	<b>11-30 km</b>	<b>30-50 km</b>	<b>Above 50 km</b>
<b>Size</b>			
<b>Medium (11-60 households)</b>	Ediya (30)	Bunga(61) Daurn(41)	Ranchula (40)
<b>Large (above 60 households)</b>	Kuthar(63)		

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate total number of households in each village. This household data is based on analysis of baseline data and not the Census of 1991

In our final selection of villages for in-depth study, we decided not to include Ediya and Ranchula because they are relatively smaller villages and the distribution of castes in these villages is skewed. This is despite Ediya having the highest percentage of out-migrant households (76.7%). Kuthar village could not be considered for selection because it is located close to the Neelkanth Mahadev temple, which attracts a large number of tourists. Due to this tourist economy the whole character of this village has changed and hence it was not very representative (for details see Appendix Table A2.3).

Bunga and Daurn villages have a maximum range of landholdings and an adequate all-caste composition. They also have a large number of migrant households (70.5% and

52.5% respectively). Bunga has 44.3 % female-headed households while Daurn has 30.3% such households. Daurn and Bunga also are part of the same gram sabha and are located relatively close to each other. Hence we select Bunga and Daurn villages for the Phase II.

## **SELECTION OF HOUSEHOLDS AND OF THE WOMEN RESPONDENTS**

The second phase of the study used a three pronged strategy. First a detailed survey of all households in both the villages using a household interview schedule. Secondly, living, observing and interacting with village folks and documenting their lives (more intensely qualitative). And thirdly visiting the PHC, sub-centre and other health facilities, meeting with government officials and use of hill-based libraries, archives etc. All these three were going on simultaneously. But in order to give a more coherent account of the process, we can say that data collection comprised of three on-going levels.

For the first component of Phase II, we decided to cover all households in the two selected villages through the household interview schedule in order to develop a detailed household profile. For the second component or more intensive study, a sub-universe of women was identified from each village. The sub-universe of women was identified based on several criterion: land ownership, caste and migration status of the household, headship of households, woman's age, seniority in household and her relationship with the migrant, period/duration of migration and finally her role as primary or supportive worker. This selection was done after the majority of household schedules had been administered and we had basic household data. For the third component purposively key informants were selected and interviews were carried out and secondary data collected.

## **TOOLS OF DATA COLLECTION**

The study demanded gathering of detailed, sensitive data using a number of methods to fulfill its complex objectives. Given the variety of data that was required for the study, we drew tools from different disciplines, depending on our requirements. Several data

collection methods were combined over the course of this Phase<sup>7</sup>. The following tools were utilised to generate the required data:

- (i) Semi-structured interview schedule I (for heads of households).
- (ii) Semi-structured in-depth interview schedule II (for women)
- (iii) Women's Schedule III (women with maternal history in last five years)
- (iv) Interview guide for women (on a range of sensitive issues, process of change and inter generational shifts).
- (v) Key informant interview guide.
- (vi) Group discussion on important issues
- (vii) Observations
- (viii) Case reports / case studies

### **Primary Data Collection Tools**

#### ***Interviews***

Interviews allow the researcher to understand meanings people hold for their everyday activities and in-depth interviewing as a data-collection method is relied on quite extensively by researchers to generate data, which may otherwise get eclipsed in more structured methods of data collection. We used the technique of *semi-structured interview* for all the households in the selected village. This method was deemed most useful as on one hand it allows to produce quantifiable data set, and at the same time it encourages the respondents to speak fully from their own perspective. A semi-structured interview schedule (Semi-structured interview schedule I) covering socio-demographic profile of the household, questions of land ownership and land use, agricultural

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<sup>7</sup> This sort of triangulation helps to overcome limitations in one method as they can be compensated for by the strengths of a complementary one.

production and income, process of migration and related issues was administered to generate data on all the households in the selected villages ( see Appendix AS 2.3).

Another semi-structured in-depth interview schedule (Semi-structured in-depth women's interview schedule II) was administered to all households. Adult women who were either the primary or supportive workers of their household were selected as respondents for this schedule. Through this schedule we covered information pertaining to work pattern, sexual and familial division of labour (related to agricultural, animal husbandry related and domestic tasks) (see AS2.4). Health and illness of family members and related issues like perceived illness, utilisation, access, decision making and support related to healthcare services were covered in another schedule (see Appendix AS 2.5). A separate interview schedule was administered only to women who had conceived, aborted or delivered in the last five years. The reproductive history of these respondents was noted down. The mothers were interviewed about their last pregnancy and details of help and care given during this period was accounted. Questions were posed for last-born (alive) child (see Appendix AS 2.6).

In-depth interviews in the tradition of the *oral history method* with the use of an *interview guide* were conducted with a sub- universe of women viz. women of migrants and non-migrant households of different duration of migration of their husbands and sons (see Appendix AS2.7). Women in different age groups and representatives of the older generation of women were interviewed to collect data to describe the subtle dimensions of "change" and to understand the process of change over time through the individual's lived experience, lending the exploration more depth and substance. This interview guide also addressed the issues related to household food production and distribution patterns; women's work and time distribution, migration and its impact on women's work participation and family dynamics; women's mobility and access; women's autonomy and decision making. These women were encouraged to articulate their experiences and ideas on a range of sensitive issues or problem areas that were identified in the course of the in-depth interviews. The interview for example, often addressed issues in the areas of family status, family power relations, social discrimination, oppression, work and health. Based on these interviews *case reports* of select women were made. Through case

reports, detailed study of their work and leisure was made to understand the linkages between their labour, power relations, hold on resources, role in decision-making. Women's own perceptions' regarding their work and those of others in the family was also probed. Focus was on understanding women's status, role and changes in them.

Key informants were also interviewed using the interview guide. Researchers, administrators, other government officials, health services personnel and the NGOs working in this area were interviewed to contextualise this study and to understand the link between the micro and macro issues.

### ***Observation***

Interviews and other tools of data collection mentioned were integrated with observation. Developed mainly through the discipline of cultural anthropology and qualitative sociology, observation is both an overall approach to inquiry and a data gathering method. Observation entails systematic noting and recording of events, behaviours, processes and artifacts (objects) in the social setting chosen for study. It is especially useful to learn about behaviours and meanings that are difficult to be expressed/verbalised and can be unobtrusively gathered. The method allows for a greater amount of flexibility and provides opportunities to encounter unexpected circumstances that may provide crucial insights. Though observation is a fundamental and critical method in all-qualitative inquiry and helps in discovering complex interactions, it is however a method in which the researcher faces the difficulty of managing a relatively unobtrusive role, facing uncomfortable ethical dilemmas and trying to identify the "big picture". The study therefore used non-participant observation technique. In the early stages of qualitative inquiry, the researcher entered the setting with themes and areas of interest, without any predetermined categories or strict observational checklist. But after early analysis of the field notes, once some patterns of behaviour and relationships were identified and described, more focused observation covering specific settings and time schedules was done in later stages. For focused observation, checklists that were more appropriate and context sensitive were developed to help analyse themes in detail, to lead to holistic description of events, behaviours, processes, and so on (see Appendix AS2.9).

### ***Group Discussions***

Group Discussions were conducted with different groups of people on some sensitive issues, which the researcher felt, lent themselves better to group rather than individual interviewing. No specific effort was made to create artificial groups, but whenever naturally a small group of people gathered, informal discussion was started. Care was taken to ensure that these discussions are held with variety of groups that constituted people from different economic class and caste groups, different age groups and both sexes.

Thus the study, relying more on qualitative data, required meticulous registering and maintaining of data. The use of multiple tools, field diary, daily notes, continuous updating and consolidation of data was found essential for valid and reliable collection of data.

### **Secondary Sources Of Data**

#### ***Documentary Research***

Other than data collected first hand from respondents, for certain sections of the present study, a great deal of reliance has been placed on a variety of historical materials for reconstructing the past. Valuable information about Garhwal and Garhwali society came from review and analysis of records/ chronicles / gazetteers / settlement reports compiled by British administrators and other archival data, records, reports and documents, (published and unpublished) available in government offices. The sketches of Garhwali society made by British officers gave us a valuable picture of certain aspects of this society in the nineteenth and early twentieth society. Of particular mention are the various Settlement Reports, Gazetteers and codes of customary law and land tenure (Traill, 1928; Batten (ed.), 1851; Atkinson, 1882-6; Ramsay, 1874; Stowell, 1907; Walton, 1911; Lall, 1921). These general descriptions, though often doubted for strict accuracy by scholars, were found to be useful in understanding politics, kinship, social structure of this society, particularly in the absence of other serious anthropological work done on this society, till almost the middle of this century. Then there are the histories of

Kumaon & Garhwal (Raturi, 1920; Sankrityayan, 1959-60; Patti Ram, 1916; Datmal; 1964; 1967-71) and of special customs and religion (Smith, 1836; Atkinson, 1882-6; Lall, 1911); descriptions of the economy (Pant, 1935; Bose, 1960); folklore (Upreti, 1894, Pande, 1962) and customary law (Joshi, 1929). Some important information is contained in the various census reports, the more important of which are Eyde (1923) and Turner (1935).

Written material like novels, newsletters, magazines available in personal collection of some individuals were also scanned for use. Another important source of knowledge about the 'past' was the evidently rich Garhwali folklore. It has, however been used with great caution and only when other more direct source has corroborated it. All these materials in English and Hindi enabled us to view Garhwali society over time in a manner, which the anthropologist cannot always adopt. These were rich sources illuminating the past and at the same time provided a body of information against which data collected through fieldwork could be checked. We have combined these sources with the material from the fieldwork to interpret the present as well as the past.

## **PROCESS OF DATA COLLECTION**

I began the data collection for this phase in September 1999. Living and collecting data from Bunga and Daurn villages took a total of about twelve months. The first period of data collection lasted from September to November 1999 and again from February to July 2000. One more visit was made to the villages between September to December 2001.

The initial effort was to establish credibility with the villagers, get to know them and also explain the purpose of research to the people. I first administered the detailed Household Schedule and the Women's Schedule in all households of the two villages. Despite having gone from house to house for the baseline survey, I felt it will be useful to administer the schedules first as it will help me to get more familiar with the villagers, especially all female members of the villages. It not only helped me to establish rapport with them, but also gave them an opportunity to satisfy any curiosity they had about me and my work.



Through the first part of the household schedule, I not only collected the household census data, but also collected data on land ownership, agricultural production, livestock and other resources owned by the family. Income and expenditure data was also collected. Besides this, detailed migration histories were noted for all migrant households including information on migration patterns, family structure, patterns of remittances etc.

Collecting accurate data on land ownership was not easy. Many women particularly did not know how much land they owned. They merely pointed out to the fields they knew belonged to them. The official revenue records collected from the revenue officer were *patwaris* who provided information regarding land tenures, size of the holdings etc. But since the land records were seldom updated, the exercise was often more confusing. Eventually, the researcher had to rely on the information given by the villagers which at best was cross checked from a government booklet given to all villagers titled 'Krishi-Bhitti' which contained agricultural revenue records. Attempt was also made to cross check data regarding land ownership, immovable wealth, birth and death figures, percentage of school going children etc with school records, birth and mortality registers (from Binak sub-centre) and the records available with the *pradhan*.

Part II of semi-structured interview schedule (women's schedule) contained questions on work participation and health profile of each household. In order to develop a schedule which would detail each and every agricultural activity involved in crop production, few villagers (both men and women) were asked to describe in detail the various processes involved in growing and harvesting rice, wheat, *mandua*, *jhangora* and other crops. The agricultural processes listed include all operations from repairing the terraces up to storage of the food grain. Similarly the section on animal husbandry and domestic tasks was carefully developed.

Data was thus collected directly from the 102 households with a structured interview format, permitting quantitative analysis. Married women over age 20 or female heads of the households (usually migrant households) were identified to be respondents for this schedule. These women were identified as respondents because of their overall role as responsible adult members of the household and their functioning as major workers for

the household. Women were asked about pattern of labour performed within the entire households according to age, gender and relationship to the household head. Information pertaining to agricultural, animal husbandry and domestic work was recoded separately. The information gathered reflected the actual division of labour in the household. Women were also asked to identify the primary workers and those who assisted them in doing each task. Work, which was done by hired workers, informal work groups (like relatives, relative reciprocal) or by sharecroppers was also documented. Time taken to complete each task was also recoded for the households.

The second section of the schedule focused on the general health profile of family members. Instead of concentrating on measurement of disease (types of symptoms, severity, frequency of illness episodes or agents of causation etc.), the focus was on collecting health data on perceived illnesses. We began by asking the woman to tell us about cases of minor and major illnesses in her family. Minor illnesses were defined as illnesses, which had occurred in last two weeks, whose duration had not affected their usual functioning. Major illnesses were illnesses of longer duration (at least three weeks and above) which had affected their usual functioning, making them unable to perform their routine work. For major illnesses we collected data of past and present cases of major illnesses. Cases of hospitalisation and accidents in the family were separately documented. Woman's perception of the major health problems in the village and their changing profile was also collected through open-ended questions. Additionally women in each household with occurrence of a pregnancy, delivery or abortion in the last five years were interviewed separately. Their reproductive history was noted down in a separate schedule. We came across 25 such women.

This household level data collection process certainly helped in establishing a rapport with the village folks. By the end of it, I had roamed in all hamlets, met a lot of villagers and had tea and innumerable discussions with several of them. Now I felt I was ready to move to the next more intensive phase of data collection through focused interviews using different interview guides.

Since the focus of our study was women's health, we decided to interview women from both villages, cutting across caste and class and migrant and non-migrant household. Care was taken to include both younger and older women. Initially the interviews were greatly unstructured, informal and free flowing. Women were given full freedom to speak. The aim was to get a more comprehensive picture of women's life in these villages. Slowly the common experiences became a regular part of the interview guide. The effort throughout was to constantly look for newer insights, the hidden aspects and for uncharted area that women would give expression to.

Women were probed to understand issues related to women's status in the family and society. Their work routine and burden were discussed. Migration histories were developed. In the course of the interviews women were asked about their lives and health since childhood, menarche, going through pregnancy and childbirth. Their health experiences, both past and current and pregnancy periods were discussed and details of individual circumstances were probed. To capture "change" some of the oldest women in the village were interviewed. The basic premise was that the women knew best their own suffering, as they experience these everyday and throughout life. It should also be emphasised that the health and childbearing related data is obtained through careful questioning and interviews of women and not by doing clinical examination.

Though our main focus was on understanding women primarily as in their roles as wives (or women married into this village), in order to understand women in different roles and to give a picture of total socio-cultural context within which they live, we had to understand them simultaneously in multiple roles as daughters, sisters, sisters-in-law, daughters-in-law, mothers-in-law, and as workers through their different phases in life.

49 such interviews were done. Each interview was done through several sittings. The interviews generated case studies and oral histories of three generations of women in the village. However, we have taken the precaution to change the names of the women given in the lists and tables, or quoted in the text, to maintain the anonymity of the respondents.

Doing these 49 interviews did not stop me from having free flowing interviews and informal conversations with several other men, women, boys and girls of the village. The

interviews proceeded simultaneously with active observations of events that happened in and around the household/ village. My research questions brought me out of the private spheres of their homes, into the fields, forests and to the local RMPs, traditional healers, to Ayurvedic dispensaries, PHCs and to the hospitals at Rishikesh. In brief, I simply followed the women (and men) of Bunga & Daurn in their everyday lives, struggles, hardwork and resilience. These innumerable conversations, discussions and observations have also been put down as data as they gave more insights into the situation.

Throughout the data collection process, constant field notes were maintained and formal interviews were recorded which were also transcribed during the stay in the field. All the interviews were done either in Hindi or Garhwali and were later translated into English.

Apart from in-depth study of the two villages, I also visited the local ayurvedic dispensary frequently, observing and interviewing the OPD patients and staff. I also met all the traditional healers around the village and the private practitioners in the vicinity. I made a few visits to the PHC at Yamkeshwar where I interviewed the doctor and the other staff at the PHC. Some information was also collected at this PHC and analysed. I also interviewed the *Gramin Vikas Adhikari* (Rural Development Officer) of this Gram Panchayat and met whichever government functionary I could in this area. Maps and land records were obtained from the local land revenue offices or Patwari.

What one heard, found and observed in Bunga and Daurn was counter checked by brief visits to nearby villages. The generality of these findings was established through brief spells of fieldwork in other parts of the area, particularly few other villages in the Yamkeshwar block. Villages like Diuli, which is the nearest, relatively big market place and Kuthar, a village frequented by tourists attracted to the popular *Neelkanth Mahadev* Temple and Badoli village where the Block Development Office and the Primary Health Center of Yamkeshwar block are located were covered under the brief spells of data collection.

I also wanted to understand the contemporary context of health and development processes initiated by the government and NGOs in this region. Hence visits were made to various government officials and NGOs in Kotdwara, Rishikesh, Pauri, Dehradun,

Srinagar, Yamkeshwar etc. Rishikesh, is the closest town to my two field work villages (located at approximately 28 to 31 km from Bunga and Daurn)<sup>8</sup>. While Kotdwara is the Tehsil headquarters, the sub-district court and the Command Hospital are also located here. Both Rishikesh and Kotdwara have large markets, government and private hospitals and centres of higher education (undergraduate and post-graduate colleges). In many ways these two towns may be viewed as a centre of modernisation and these are places most frequented by my villagers. I visited the Tehsil, Mahila Samakhya staff, Forestry officer, and examined written records and reports and related block/district level data.

Besides this short visits were also made to Srinagar, the University Township of this area and to Pauri, which is not only the district head quarter but also the nerve centre of all political and administrative activities of this region. Information from the Computer Data Centre at Pauri and the Chief Medical Officer (in Pauri) were collected to get an overall picture of the health situation in Pauri Garhwal. The only NGO working in my village and delivering RCH services through a mobile van and health camps in my field villages called Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust (HIHT) with its head office in Jolly Grant, Dehradun was also visited. During these brief periods of field visits, interviews were conducted with personnel from administration, NGO-activists etc. This was done to gauge the range of responses to several developmental issues and to understand the factors behind it, particularly for the study of "change".

## **DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data recording and analysis overlapped considerably. All through the period of data collection, "deep" qualitative data was analysed simultaneously. Daily notes and field recording were continuously updated, consolidated and analysed. Data gathered through the interview schedules was sifted for relevance and quality, coded and processed using appropriate methods. Data gathered through the interview schedule was later processed using appropriate methods. Wherever required and feasible, data processing using SPSS computer software program was done. Open-ended qualitative data in the scheduled was processed and analysed manually.

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<sup>8</sup> Rishikesh is a religious town for Hindus and has an influx of foreigners who visit and stay here to study Hinduism. Most villagers come here for higher education in Sanskrit, or even the conventional education system.

## METHODOLOGICAL AND ANALYTICAL ISSUES

### *1. Determining landownership*

Collecting accurate data on land ownership was not easy. Many women did not know how much land they owned. They merely pointed out to the fields they knew belonged to them. The official revenue records collected from the revenue officer (*patwari*) provided information regarding land tenures, size of the holdings etc. But since the land records were seldom updated, the exercise was often more confusing. Eventually, the researcher had to rely on the information given by the villagers which at best was cross checked from a booklet given by the government to all villagers called 'Krishi-Bhitti' which contained agricultural revenue records. Attempt was also made to cross check data regarding land ownership, immovable wealth, birth and death figures, percentage of school going children etc with school records, birth and mortality registers (from Binak sub-centre) and the records available with the *pradhan*.

### *2. Economic classification of the households*

One of our purposes of collecting such details on land ownership was to use it extensively for identifying various economic classes in study villages. Land is an important asset, which traditionally reflects the economic status of the household. Though land ownership traditionally reflected correctly the economic status of the household, but in last three to four decades landholding alone could not sufficiently bring out the differences between the households. Although almost all families in the village cultivate small plots of land, but land does not any longer make all that much difference in their way of life. Nowadays, the more important variations in wealth between households stems less from the amount of land held, and more from the amount of cash earned by male members of the households usually employed outside the village. For many households, remittances from migrant family members alone may form the main income of the household. Thus with increasing male migration from the households, land cultivated/operated along with remittances better reflected the economic status of the households. Migration status of the household hence was an important economic criterion

for categorising the households. All the households in the sample were classified on basis of their migration status.

The study had three caste groups - Rajput, Brahmins and Schedule Caste (Dom). Caste being an explicit, discrete criterion, the collection of this data was not difficult. Although caste to a great extent reflects and overlaps with economic status, but the operation of migration does create differences even with the castes. Hence, while analysing the data finally four different economic groups and three categories namely land owned, migration status and caste were simultaneously used for analysis. These three categories were further crossed with gender to bring out the differences in gender relations and sexual divisions of labour in migrant or non-migrant households.

### ***3. Income data***

Additionally, not only has migration become increasingly important, a large section of the population is getting dependent on non-agricultural sources of income for their survival. Other sources of income are various other forms of labour, not strictly speaking wage labour, but some labour, which may be governed by the traditional socio-economic systems like working as a priest or doing other caste-specific labour. It may include artisan's work or earnings through labour such as assisting in building a house or ploughing someone's field etc. Though attempts were made to classify the households according to the distribution of the main sources of income, this again is not a precise, but a rough indicator. Each household was asked to ascertain what were their different sources of income annually and tell us approximately their total annual earning under these various heads.

### ***4. Female-headed households***

With a large percentage of the households being classified as migrant, there was a high probability of large number of households in our villages to be managed by females. It thus became necessary to carefully study these migrant houses to identify who really headed them. The Census of India defines "household" as an entire group of persons who commonly live together and take their meals from a common kitchen unless the

exigencies of work prevent them from doing so, and the "head of the household" was one who bears the chief responsibility of maintenance of the household, is the chief economic provider and the chief decision maker. This definition used by the Census leaves enough scope to include and be identified as head, even the out-migrated person of the household. This is because it relies heavily on "who is the chief provider". The out-migrant by remitting a large amount, even though not regularly, may turn out to be the chief provider. But by being away from the place of residence of his family, he may not be influencing the day-to-day decisions of the households. It is another matter that major decisions may be taken either in his consultation or when he is present. In that event, considering him as the head of the household just because he is the chief provider would in all probability misconstrue the picture. In his absence anyone else, a female or a male would be the head of the household. But in case of our patrimonial social system, acceptance and recognition of women as the "head" may not be possible. Even the concerned woman will hesitate to declare herself as the head. As a consequence such female heads go unreported or unidentified under this definition.

Urban migration of men in search of wage labour creates conditions wherein headship of the household falls on women, particularly in the absence of another elder male. But ambivalence on part of the woman herself as to her own status often hides the real situation. This was very evident during our fieldwork. In all migrant households, even in the absence of men, male headship was assumed, except where adult male was absent due to death, divorce, separation or desertion.

During our fieldwork we found that in households where there were no migrants, the eldest male was easily identified as the head. This person was not always necessarily the chief economic earner of the household, but on the basis of cultural traditions and practices, the powerful force of authority was vested within the eldest male. He was reported as the head of the household simply by virtue of his age / seniority and because of his legal control over land. In households with out-migrants, if one such elder male was found residing in the village headship fell on him. Again, this head may not be the principal earner and often may not play any active economic role, but his headship is linked with the cultural notion of authority vested in him due to his power position.



There was another group of households where women had to assume the responsibilities of the "head", due to the migration of their men in search of jobs / wage labour. But such women did not perceive themselves as the head of the household. They identified their migrant son or husband as the "head". In such cases we had to ask several questions to correctly identify the headship of such houses. Such female-headed households were identified through probing at the stage of data collection and were again checked during data processing. In households where more than one adult woman (for e.g. mother and wife of the migrant) was present, the elder woman was recognised as the head on basis of the link between seniority and authority in our cultural setting. Thus every effort was made to accurately represent female-headed households.

### *5. Studying Women's Work*

The concept of work includes production and reproduction activities of women. Though we agree with the argument of Beneria and Sen (1986) and Mies (1980) that the two are closely linked in subsistence economy, we make this distinction as a heuristic device as well as for systematic study. The former refers to use-value productive activities of agriculture and animal husbandry and gathering and also petty animal and non-farm income / wage earning activities. The concept of reproduction includes biological reproductive (child-bearing and early nurturing) and generational reproduction (care and socialisation) and daily reproduction of household work activities like cooking, collecting, washing, cleaning etc.

The concept of gender division of labour is used to describe the socially defined allocation of all tasks between women and men in peasant households. It is extremely difficult to study quantum of labour required to till a given area of land or to produce a given quantity of grain. There are crucial factors such as size of the field, the quality of the soil, distance from the settlement, the availability of water etc. that must be taken into consideration to talk of the 'average' amount. In order to capture this, informants from each household were asked to reflect on the fields they cultivated and tell me who were the men/women/from family, relatives or hired help who took up the main responsibility or secondary responsibility of performing all the tasks. They were also asked to give an

estimate of how many hours/days/ it took to complete each specific task in one agricultural cycle of wheat crop. These estimates were then checked with other informants and also checked by observation. This cross-checking suggested that the information was reasonably accurate.

Similarly it is extremely difficult to gather amount of time on these other occupations, on animal husbandry, water and wood fetching, cooking food, and growing vegetables and other subsidiary crops, and building. It is difficult, for example, for anyone to calculate how much time they spend on fetching water or grass. The problem is further complicated by the fact that people fit the pace of the work to the amount of time they have in which to do it. Thus the estimates are bound to be very rough. Though “oversimplified averages”, they provided us estimates that were needed to describe the work burden, time taken and sexual division of labour.

It is extremely difficult to demarcate work/leisure in such a society. Both seem to mingle with each other making estimation of time a difficult task. Additionally a somewhat arbitrary distinction has to be made between necessary and unnecessary labour. A certain amount of basketwork and rope making is still performed. It is not “necessary” economically, but it has a useful social function as such and occupies the time between more important agricultural works.

Another problem which arose when analysing data was that several households did not engage in some of the specific tasks in question (agricultural or livestock related), which were reported as “not applicable”. A “not applicable” response caused the denominator to shift from one activity to the next when data were aggregated. Thus in calculating participation rates, individuals or households not performing a certain task had to be excluded from the denominator for that task, reducing the base numbers, so that the resulting rates could be properly compared.

Knowing that females or males perform a certain task predominantly however, does not tell us about the conditions or work. It also simply describes the division of labour in relative terms, telling us nothing about the absolute labour contribution of each gender group. It also conceals important information on internal variations of age, gender and

kinship but also of caste and class differences in patterns of labour allocation. Moreover unless such data is collected over a long period of time, in all seasons, in combination with other techniques of data collection, one cannot probably get an exact picture of what women's labour. Thus, this data collected through structured questionnaire was further strengthened by drawing upon personal observations through different seasons, insights, conversations with a variety of informants selected from different social strata, age-sex categories etc. This qualitative data offered a wealth of information on the intricacies of the sexual division of labour in the village.

### **6. Capturing the state of health and illness**

Since we have decided to study beliefs and perceptions of illnesses that people had/are suffering from, without going into the illness episodes<sup>9</sup> (in terms of morbidity measurement), the approach is yielding perceptions of "real" illness that "connects" loosely with the actual occurrence of illness as in biomedical terms. Hence our health documentation deals with how elemental, physical changes in the body are sensed, perceived, labelled and interpreted; and how they shape the health seeking behaviour of the person ill. The household schedule revealed that the villagers associated major illness with *bari bimari* ('big' illness) which is fairly close to our biomedical understanding of sickness as disease. But when the respondents were asked to tell us about minor illnesses they articulated them in general terms like *bukhar* (fever), *pair mein dard* (pain in the legs) etc. Hence it was difficult distinguish between complaints that should be classified as "illness" as opposed to "not feeling well". We thus noted the responses in verbatim, seeking clarifications when necessary. The data was later analysed by classifying these complaints into broader categories. The reported symptoms were categorised on the basis of their systemic origin. While analysing this data, effects of age, sex and migration status of the family were seen. The data was analysed and structured on basis of the above categories.

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<sup>9</sup> In terms of types of symptoms, severity, frequency of illness episodes or agents of causation etc

## ENCOUNTERING THE 'FIELD'

Since I wanted to concentrate more on the women in the village, I had to interact with them the most, to gain familiarity, to be able to learn about their lives, work and health. I knew that probing into these issues could only proceed gradually, and would therefore be time consuming. Hence I had to take residence in the village for a long duration. Throughout the period of my fieldwork, my headquarters were located in Bunga village. Luckily I had good residential facility in Bunga village. I stayed with a migrant family, which consisted of the migrant's wife and her two daughters who were educated upto graduate level. Living with this family and my familiarity with the local language "Garhwali" was very helpful for my fieldwork. They were the most educated girls of this village, highly respected and welcomed by all households. With these girls I was able to familiarise myself quickly with both Bunga and Daurn village. I was easily accepted by the villagers and soon knew my way around in the village. As the familiarity between us deepened, they not only accompanied me in many of my data collection trips to far away villages and hamlets, but also they became my chief respondents. The trips turned out to be both very enjoyable and very informative. With them I entered into the world of the young Garhwali girls and the older Garhwali women at the same time. Soon I got to know all the inhabitants of the village and could speak and interact with them on a personal basis.

Most villagers were in awe of my educated and employed (emphasis) status. To a small number of men and a few educated young girls the word research and Ph.D. were not a novelty. But most could not fathom what I was doing in this remote village. Seeing my painstaking, exhaustive probing with each woman respondent of the village and the strenuous exercise in noting down each bit of information carefully in the field diary, the women wanted to know if it was some kind of employment which required me to do this work. Or was I under some kind of training as a health worker or for some other form of employment? Initially I found it difficult to explain to most of them that through my work in their village, I simply expected to obtain a degree in the same way as students (like their own children) study and pass an examination to obtain a degree. Not surprising were queries about what I would gain from this tiresome, slogging exercise, as some

called it later. None ceased to marvel at the amount of work that was to be done to gain all the information I needed.

When I explained to them my job as teacher of Masters of Health and Hospital Administration program, the nature of employment also perplexed them. If I taught students, many of whom were doctors and nurses, how was I not a doctor? Many even till the end were not fully convinced that I was not a medical doctor. I had carried a small kit of medicines for common ailments, which I had to often dispense under circumstances where no other medical help was available. These acts of mine, along with the "queer" nature of my job, and my collection of information primarily on women's health issues, labelled me as a doctor, for at least the villagers of Bunga and Daurn!

As a woman, I was drawn to the experiences of women, and their lives were initially more open to me than the private world of men. With the objective of wanting to learn about the lives of women and of wives in particular, women became my "informants and confidants", research "subject"- for most part of my study. They shared information on their families, domestic and conjugal arrangements, migration, work and health histories, their hopes and aspirations for themselves and their families. To capture "change" some of the oldest women in the village were interviewed. Their obvious seniority to me in age was sometimes a barrier in discussing more intimate topics. But I felt I was able to overcome this barrier by reminding them of the fact of myself being a teacher who taught students who were often doctors and most importantly me being a woman. My total participation with them and living with them in their homes helped to develop a kin feeling with all. They appreciated my being one with them without reservation, knowing fully well the relative comforts I was used to. The women's concern was evident in that they tried to give me the cleanest bed sheet to lie upon or providing me the best *charpoi* in their house. In the course of this research study I learned how essential long-term research was to understand lives of women who struggled valiantly at times to raise their families, look after their homes, cattle and fields and manage to stay "alive" themselves.

Even though women were gracious and willing "informants", they soon became restless with the interviews and with the monotony and repetitiveness, which the data collection

often necessitated. Despite explaining my purpose of visit and extended stay in their village, my presence raised several questions, expectations and hope. Though mostly women understood my basic lines of inquiry, and many did not consider the questions I asked irrelevant, but still many wanted to know precisely what I was going to do for them. Many wanted me to open a clinic or to get them a doctor to open a clinic there; some wanted me to assist them to get piped drinking water in their village. Each time they approached me with their requests, I found myself helpless and backing out. I tried to explain to them that I am not trained as a doctor, that it will be illegal for me to give them any medicine. But my arguments were not convincing for them. They would be often hurt and angry. How could I refuse them medicines when they so much needed it? Didn't I care about them personally, their lives, their inabilities, their struggles and pressures? "*What is all this note taking about? What is this taking interview anyway to us?*" they often taunted.

I felt compelled, often emotionally to act as a "barefoot doctor"- to devote my time listening to them, often giving them basic medicines. This continued through out the period of fieldwork, and this new role left me always uncomfortable, with guilt and conflicts. But due to this role, I got ample opportunities to interact with men folk of these villages. Friendship with them took me into the "public" world of these villagers - into the market place, *gram pradhan's* meeting, schools etc. Consequently, my understanding of the community was enriched.

It was challenging to do such an intensive research. By now I am well accepted by the village women and am considered a part of their village and family. Many of them even offered further co-operation if there was still more work to be done or something left to be learnt for my research work. It was reassuring to know I had a few more friends and another home.

But this work is essentially women-centred. Women dominate these pages, as I found them numerically dominating the life in Bunga and Daur. I am shedding light thus on

culture, society and their public grievances and private discontents<sup>10</sup>. I am also conscious that even though both the intensive study villages have all the three caste groups, I spent most of my time with the 'higher' caste as I usually lived with them in whichever hamlet I visited. Moreover my own caste undoubtedly had a good deal of influence on the nature of my material since it tended to restrict in many ways my contacts with people of the very 'lowest' castes - the Doms would not allow me to stay with them, nor would the upper caste permit it. Though few of my closest friends and best informers were *aujhis* (doms) - a 'scheduled caste' - it was otherwise the case that my longest and most intense contacts were with the people of 'higher castes', primarily the Brahmins living in the Brahmin hamlet of village Bunga. The wide dispersal of hamlets in this difficult terrain made daily, close contacts with other hamlets very difficult in the relatively limited time that was at my disposal. To overcome this probable bias in data collection (particularly of thick ethnographic data), efforts to stay for a few days in other caste hamlets were done. I feel that my long stay in the study area and by mixing with the villagers of all caste groups in the fields, water source, forest and observing them through their daily routine and having numerous informal discussions with them I was able to overcome, this limitation. Slowly I felt there was no hesitation on their part to talk to me and their responses to my queries were genuine. But I still feel that much of what I write is primarily that as seen through the 'upper' castes. Nevertheless the Brahmin view of 'lower' castes did educate me on the subtle operation of caste practice in the supposedly more egalitarian hill society.

There is another consideration that I would like my readers to heed. Over these two years certain contacts and acquaintances were developed with residents of many neighbouring villages. Though throughout the period of my fieldwork I was located in Bunga and Daurn villages; but in addition to doing intensive fieldwork in these two villages and the baseline in eleven villages, I made a series of more cursory visits to various other parts of the district. I became quite familiar with the Yamkeshwar block. But here I write primarily about the locality I know well, and cannot claim with confidence that all my

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<sup>10</sup> However, I have taken the precaution to change the names of the women given in the lists and tables, or quoted in the text of my script, to maintain the anonymity of my respondents.

data are equally valid for the whole region. Therefore when I speak of "Garhwali culture and society", I request the readers to bear this qualification in mind.

Being a lone researcher with intricate data to collect, the work was overwhelming at times. Difficult terrain and gruelling climate added to the difficulties. Interruptions occurred sometimes. Onlookers or inadvertent coming and going of people often hijacked interviews. Discussions had to be often halted as it concerned intimate and often embarrassing issues such as childbirth and the women's relationship with her husband and family. The tape-recorder and camera were used extensively in my data collection work. They helped me in capturing the field and recording field situations, which were useful while rewriting field notes. Also, I could go back and cross check anything said in a past interview about which I had any doubt. But initially it had created too much curiosity and sometimes its use had to be curtailed.

This work is by its very nature heavily based on empirical evidence and therefore issues of subjectivity must be addressed. I have tried to get the "facts" as accurately as possible. But all facts are necessarily perceived and interpreted. And this holds true for the subjects of the study as much as for the researcher. Our effort therefore is to present accurately and frankly the views of our respondents, our own observations and the analytical categories we used. In addition our perspective necessarily influences our understanding. Hence, even though I make no claims to "scientific neutrality," I do offer a fair description and analysis of events and relationships, as I have perceived them.



**Chapter III**

**ECOLOGY, ECONOMY AND SOCIAL  
STRUCTURE: PRECOLONIAL CONFIGURATIONS  
AND COLONIAL CHANGE**

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From ancient times, geographic and ecological factors have played a key role in shaping the history and culture of the mountainous region. Thousands of years of land movements have altered elevations of mountains and fostered the instabilities of mountain zones, bestowing a unique history and a number of unique features upon the Himalayan valley. Each valley is a micro region housing many smaller, diverse communities. This chapter aims at capturing key aspects of historical change in the social ecology and the politico-economic and social life of the people in Garhwal region from pre-colonial to colonial times in order to understand the changing socio-historical context of Garhwali women and their location within that context. Adopting a broad political economy approach this chapter attempts a reconstruction of the pre-capitalist past of Garhwal peasant society, with a focus on examining the interrelationship between environment, population, social structure and culture. Following Afonja (1986) we attempt to understand social production, the relationship between women's role and relations in production, as well as their role and relations in reproduction.

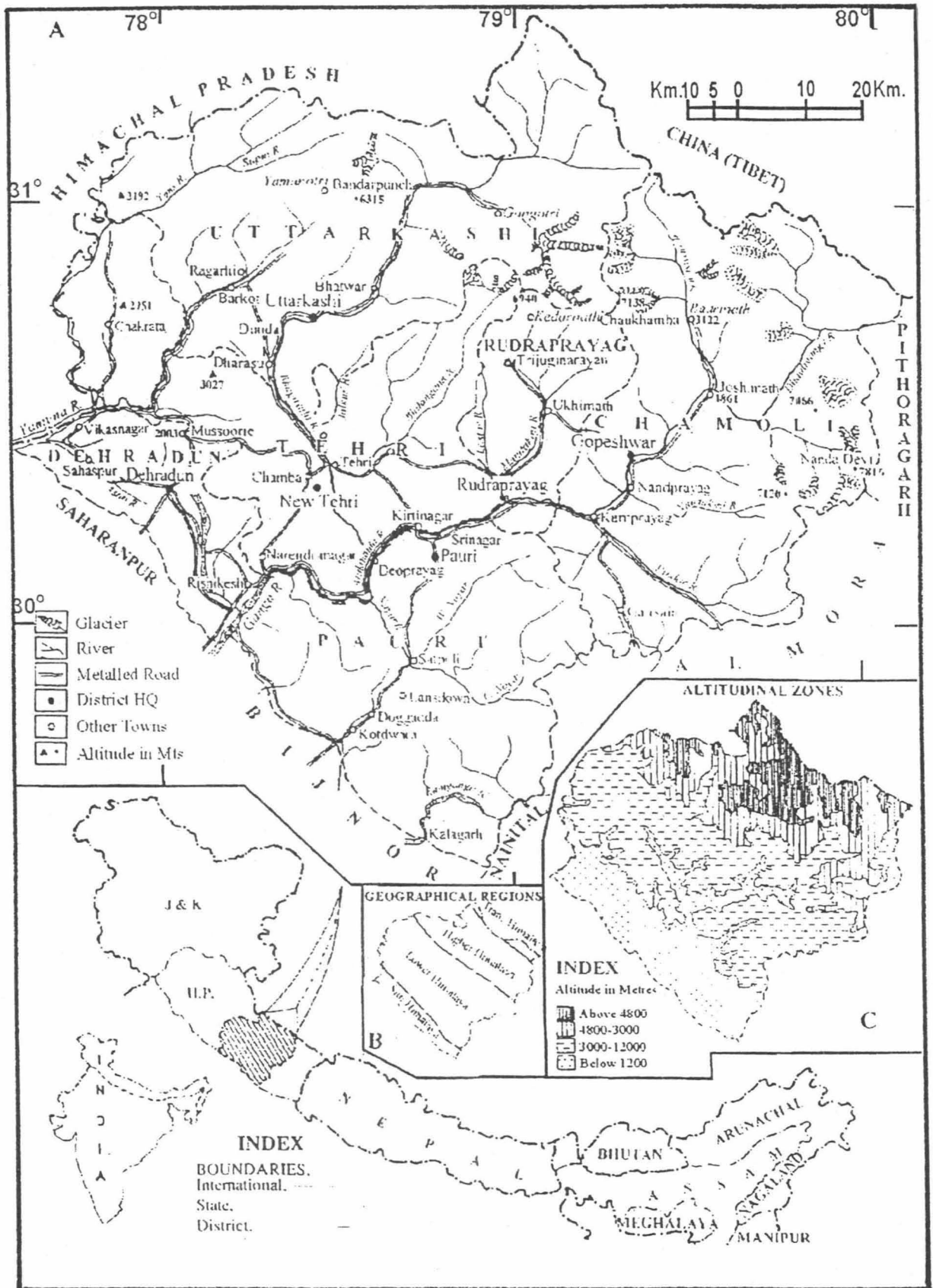
Important though the larger socio-historical context and women's location is for this study, we are constrained by the paucity and limitations of secondary source material. Atkinson's Gazetteer of the Garhwal Himalayas (1884) has been the primary and at times the only data source. Many historians and scholars have depended almost entirely on it. Others have pointed out its several shortcomings, for example, its spatial and temporal incoherence, unverified and unverifiable facts, based largely on hearsay and folklore. It is said to display an absence of a historical perspective and is imbued with the bias of an alien administration (Rawat, 1989). In recent times, few attempts have been made to give a more scientific account of this area based on primary sources like copper plate inscriptions, original manuscripts, archival sources etc. by historians. This has brought forth several controversies regarding the area and periodisation under study.

Information on Garhwal is especially scanty as compared to adjoining Kumaon. Historians are of the opinion that the "conditions obtained in Garhwal were more or less similar. As such the existence of somewhat same economic structure maybe suggested for the Garhwal chiefdom as well" (M.P.Joshi, 1990 p.96). Though historically and culturally Kumaon and Garhwal have stood as opposed categories and continue to do so

to some extent even today, yet their social structures share marked similarities and their inhabitants retain social and cultural ties (Sanwal, 1976; Guha, 1991). Hence, we have drawn upon documents pertaining to both Kumaon and Garhwal. Basically, it bears emphasis that this attempt to reconstruct the social history of this region thus has to be read with these limitations of the sources and problems of periodisation in mind. Much more historical research needs to be conducted in the region.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first describes the natural setting and geographical features of Garhwal. The second section attempts an analysis of pre-colonial Garhwal society in which we examine the ecological foundations, cultural adaptation and social organisation of the agriculture and animal husbandry-based subsistence economy. The third section examines structural and cultural dimensions of the relations of production, the evolution and nature of agrarian classes, caste and gender stratification and its linkages within. The fourth and final section examines the social impact on Garhwal peasant economy under the jolt of colonial-capitalist accumulation and the squeezing of people's resource which spelt the decline of subsistence economy and initiated processes of migration that have not been stemmed to this day.

Figure 3.1 : Location of Map of Garhwal Himalaya



Source : Khaikwal (2001), Physiographic Perspective in Kanduri and Gusain (ed) Garhwal Himalaya: Nature, Culture and Society. Srinagar: Transmedia

## **GARHWAL: GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION AND NATURAL FEATURES**

The "Gar-Kum" Himalayas of erstwhile Uttar Pradesh and present day Uttaranchal comprises the central portion of the Himalayan mountainous expanse from Kashmir to Darjeeling. It consisted of two clearly discernible cultural regions, namely Garhwal and Kumaon, extending from 29° 5' N to 31° 25' North latitudes and from 77° 45' E to 81° E longitudes, with an area of approximately 46,500 sq. kms, bordered by Nepal in the east and Tibet in the north, while Himachal Pradesh formed its western and north-western boundaries and in its south lies the Ganga Yamuna plains of Uttar Pradesh.

About three-fourth of this 'Garh-Kum" region, covering the western half is Garhwal - 'the country of fortress' - called after the large stone structures found scattered through the region. From the varied accounts, it appears that the region known today as Garhwal was known earlier as Kedarkhand. Geographically the Garhwal region lies between latitude 29° 26' N to 31° 28' N and longitude 77° 49' E to 80°6' E, with a total area of 29,089 sq. kms. In the east, the region is separated by the high hills of Kumaon Himalaya (forming the district boundaries of Pithoragarh, Almora and Nainital). River Ton separates Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh in the west. The snow clad peaks of Higher Himalaya make the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the North, while in the South, this region starts from the foothill zone of the Himalaya (see Map 3.1) Being a part of the larger geopolitical unit - the Himalayas - they share geological history with it. Like many parts of the Himalaya, this region also supports much varied and complex physical characteristics, mainly due to abrupt altitudinal variations, diverse topography and climatic extremes (Kharkwal, 2001).

Topographically the Garhwal region is one of rocky precipitous mountains and rivers, with highly undulating and rugged terrain. It varies from low valleys and narrow strips to very high mountains and between these extremes of elevation are high valleys, narrow plains, foothills and low mountains. There exists a great contrast in elevation of valley bottoms and mountain peaks everywhere in the region. Hence the region represents all characteristic features of the Himalayas viz. high relief, steep escarpments with most precipitous ravines, peaks crowned with perpetual snows, glaciers, deeply scooped

valleys with swiftly flowing, roaring streamlets and glistening lakes etc. (Kharkwal, 2001).

The mountain system of Garhwal Himalayas has a north-west and easterly direction, rising abruptly from the Gangetic plain at scarcely 1000 feet above sea-level to perpetual snow passes into Tibet, at 16,000 to 18,000 feet and the peaks of Bandarpunch, Trishul, Nanda Devi and others reaching 20,000 to 25,000 feet (Berreman, 1963). Thus about 16.2 percent of the region is under perpetual snow. The only exemption to this rugged mountainous terrain is a very narrow sub-mountain strip of plain land, called "Bhabhar"<sup>1</sup>, marking the southern boundary of the region. Hence Garhwal region enjoys a wide range of altitude ranging from 325 m in the "Bhabhar" to a height of 7817 m forming the peak of Greater Himalayas or *Himadri*. The northern part of the region, most of which lies under snow covered zone, provides the sources of the most important river system of the region, namely Ganga, Yamuna and Ramganga. These rivers flow parallel to the mountain, but at some places, they turn into acute bends, resulting in formation of deep gorges. The whole hilly tract is bisected by a number of small streams and rivulets locally known as *gad*, *gadhera* or *raula*. These rise in the lower hills of Garhwal and join these rivers either in this region or in adjoining district of Bijnor. These along with lakes or *tals* of various shapes and sizes are important water features of the region. The major river systems have cut deep north-south valleys, which are separated from one another by formidable ridges. The region's major river systems carry the glacial run-off to the plains and the river valleys provide the only access to the inner mountains. Occasionally, this topography has led to faunal and floral isolation of natural environments and is often responsible for segregation of agricultural systems (Kharkwal, 2001; Agarwal et al, 1995; English, 1985).

Administratively, the Garhwal region today embraces Uttarkashi, Chamoli, Rudraprayag, Tehri, Dehradun, Haridwar and Pauri Garhwal districts of Uttaranchal State<sup>2</sup>. The district of interest for this study is Pauri Garhwal district, often simply known as Garhwal

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<sup>1</sup> Bhabhar is a submontane strip, south of the foot of the Siwalik Hills, which extends upto the southern boundary of Garhwal district. The whole trail is 132 km with minimum and maximum width of 0.5 km and 6.00 kms respectively. The southern belts of this zone are comparatively levelled and is more favorable for agricultural practices.

<sup>2</sup> These seven districts together form the Garhwal region with its regional headquarters at Pauri in Pauri Garhwal district.

district, a populous region with its terrain of rugged hills, narrow river valleys and forested spurs rising to 3500 metres or more.

Pauri Garhwal District lies between the High Himalayas on the north and the *Terai*<sup>3</sup> bordering the Gangetic plain in the South. The altitude varies from 500 m to 3500 m and with the exception of a narrow strip 5 - 8 kms wide along the southern edge called *Bhabhar*, there is very little naturally flat land. The western boundary is formed by the Alakananda river, which below its confluence with Bhagirathi river at Deoprayag becomes the Ganga. The whole district, comprising numerous steep-sided valleys with narrow, often stony floors, is drained by tributaries of this system. The catchment of Nayar river, a tributary of the Alakananda is confined to the Pauri district. It has its origin in Dudatoli range, the highest point of 3098 m in the District. The Pauri Garhwal district comprises an area of 5440 sq. kms between latitude 29°45' to 30°15' N and longitude 78° 24' to 79° 23' E. About two-third area of the district falls under forestland. Thick forests are seen in southern Siwalik ranges and a few pockets at higher elevation of Deedatoli, Damdeval and Adwani ranges (Whittaker, 1984; Lal et al, 1987).

Topographically, Pauri Garhwal District embodies parts of Lesser Himalaya<sup>4</sup> in its northern and central part and sub-Himalayas<sup>5</sup> as foothills in the southern part and *Bhabhar* and *Terai* in its southern most parts. Since the Garhwal Himalayas lies above 30° North latitude, it is therefore within the temperate zone, not far from the tropics. The High Himalayas to the north and the Gangetic plain to the south influence the climate and vegetation. The sub-Himalayan parts get maximum monsoon rains as these form the major barrier, while Lesser Himalayan range receive comparatively less rainfall and the valley part gets still less rainfall. The western disturbances and summer monsoon currents contribute towards the changing seasons in this region. Maximum rainfall occurs from June to September, while sporadic snowfall occurs in the higher reaches in the month of

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<sup>3</sup> Terai is the name given to the flat belt of the region bordering the southern edge of the Himalayas from the Ganges gorge at Haridwar to the Northeast corner of Bihar State.

<sup>4</sup> Lesser Himalayas are central part of the Himalayas lying between the Greater Himalaya (or Himadri) and Siwaliks (or sub-Himalayas) ranging from 1500 to 2700 m of ridges and 500 to 1200 m of valleys.

<sup>5</sup> Sub-Himalayas or Outer-Himalayas are the Siwalik hills, which are the long chain of narrow and low hills (750 - 1200 m) running almost parallel to the main Himalayas.

December - January. Average annual rainfall in Pauri Garhwal is 1440 mm<sup>6</sup> (Whittaker, 1984; Lal et al, 1987; Kharkwal,2001).

Geographers conventionally identify three parallel environmental zones running on an east-west axis through the regions: the Lesser Himalayas, the sub-Himalayas or Siwalik Hills and the Bhabhar and Terai. Each zone is distinguished by specific variables of elevation, vegetation, soil composition, slope contours, precipitation and patterns of socio-economic adaptation of its inhabitants (Hagan, 1961, cf. English, 1985). The altitude and rainfall profoundly influence vegetation. The flora and fauna is varied and described in detail by Atkinson (Atkinson, 1884). Thus Pauri Garhwal exhibits a variety of climatic and vegetational zones from sub-tropical in the lowest parts of the lowest valley to warm temperate near the crests. Additionally due to elevation and other topographical features, there is diversification in climatic conditions to the extent that micro-climatic conditions usually differ from valley to valley and locality to locality, according to the direction of ridges, degree of slope, intensity of forest cover and nearness to the glaciers (Saklani, 1998). These in turn have a bearing on spatial interaction and process of development of the region, leading to a large degree of variation in the region's socio-economic development and related agricultural and other developmental activities.

## **ECOLOGICAL BASIS OF HILL SUBSISTENCE ECONOMY AND ITS DISTINCTIVE FEATURES**

### **The Ecological Basis Of The Subsistence Economy**

Against the background of climatic and topographic feature of Garhwal, we now move on to discussing the unique economy and specific mountain production strategy of the Garhwal region which evolved over a period of time. Most historians have placed the date of arrival of Aryans in this region to about 2000 B.C. Depending upon the meagre

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<sup>6</sup> Rainfall in the region is monsoonal in character and averages 1450 mm per annum, but there is high annual variability 955- 2300 mm, as well as marked seasonality. ) Over 75 percent of precipitation occurs between mid-June and mid-September (Lal et al, 1987, p.535 - based on data from Pauri for the period 1901 - 82 ; Whittaker, 1984, p.110).



sources of evidence, it is difficult to establish the periods more specifically. Hence we use this as the cut-off point.

The earliest non-Aryan peoples (prior to 2000 B.C.), whose lives are shrouded in pre-history, are said to have lived by simple hunting, fishing and gathering activity. In course of time, they gradually reached a new stage of primitive agriculture, popularly known as shift or *jhum* cultivation, which is called *katil* or *khil* in the hill region. Early agricultural operations included clearing of jungles on the hill-slope, burning of the patches and growing paddy and other crops. Patches were used for a few seasons and then abandoned. Later diversified varieties of grains, lentils, etc. were raised using maximum number of plots of land for cultivation and animals like cows, buffaloes, horses, goats, sheep and fowls were domesticated from the point of view of having food source. Transhumance was practised, which involved a seasonal cyclical movement of men and animals during the year so as to make the best possible use of seasonally available pastures and water. Forests were exploited for seasonal forest produce such as honey, tubers, fruits etc. Non-agricultural production in early Garhwal was largely restricted to the production of metal equipment and articles made from copper, iron, wood, leaves, leather and pottery. Artisans tapped the mountains for the mineral resources. Stone masonry, carpentry and oil pressing were the other occupations (Saklani, 1998, p.123-149)

The earliest archaeological sources shows that settled plough agriculture evolved in the region between 1500 to 1000 B.C. when the Khasa people established their numerical and political dominance. They adapted themselves to and further developed the multifaceted exploitation of a vertical eco-system (Berreman, 1963; Joshi, 1990; Saklani, 1998). The rainfed agricultural operations of the region were and are till today constrained by the fragile agro-ecological conditions. Yet Garhwali cultivators have managed to be self sufficient in food, by building a symbiotic relationship between themselves and their ecological niche. Cultivation, raising livestock and foraging were the chief subsistence activities.

Land, livestock, agricultural tools and implements have been the main means of production. Cultivation was primarily done with wooden ploughs tipped with iron blades.

Animal husbandry remained an integral part of the agricultural system due to the criticality for soil fertility. Given the poor soil conditions, hill agriculture is absolutely dependent on organic, animal dung manure for replenishing its fertility. The symbiotic relationship between ecology and economy is further underscored by the centrality of forests to the subsistence economy. Besides being sources of food, fuel, material for shelter, medicinal plants, fodder, and for the crafting of agricultural implements, both agriculture and animal husbandry are heavily forest biomass dependent. Forests augment nutritive value of soil through foliage. Fodder grass and leaves are critical for the maintenance of livestock, which in turn provided the sole source of manure to the fields. Hence, forests are essential to stability of soil systems and hydrological balance of the eco-system (Shiva, 1991; Mehta, 1994). Very importantly, soil conservation and protection of water resources are also related to forests. Long realising the criticality of forests for sustainability of their economy and lives, the Garhwali people have a history of traditional consciousness about the renewability of the natural assets. Customary practices regulated grazing. Care was taken to allow time for regeneration of village pastures by tactfully combining grazing with grass cutting, lopping and collection of straw from cultivated fields and practising vertical seasonal migrations. These practices evolved over time, perhaps due to sustainable use of pastures (Dangwal, 1997).

Self-sufficient subsistence however did not and could not spell economic isolation. Essential foods like salt and cloth, were procured from outside and there was intra-region barter trade. Moreover, these ancient communities also had an established internal and external trade system. Different communities traded in different goods like gold dust, silver, medicinal herbs, gems, perfumes, sweet smelling herbs, spice, beautiful animals, birds, wool, skins of various animals, iron tools, asbestos, grey pottery, copper ware and so on. (Thaper, 1984; Nautiyal, et. al., 1977; Pliny, 1892, all cited in Saklani, 1998). The trade was based on barter-system, as currency was not in circulation at that time (Chaudhory, 1955). Barter system, which formed an integral part of their internal trade and commerce, lasted for centuries, and some remnants of it can even be found in the villages today.

Thus there exist a strong link between forest, agriculture and animal husbandry and the economic life of the people. The economic structure and social organisation are built around the primary relationship with both its topographic features and natural resources in the Himalayas. Clearly, for the Garhwal economy, ecological conditions have been of utmost significance because of the tight inter weaving that exists in productive activity with the renewability of the surrounding natural assets (Dangwal, 1997).

### **The Distinctive Features Of Hill Agro-Ecology**

Hill agriculture is an elaborately organised and extremely difficult and laborious enterprise. It represents a unique adaptation to the challenges posed by the mountain terrain and environment. It has several distinctive features that are critical to understanding the labour process:

#### ***Terracing***

The mountainous terrain limits the scope of reclaiming land for cultivation purposes. Such conditions require that the land be terraced i.e. cut into hand-made field. The terraces rising in stair-like successions from the lower level towards the top, constitute a distinctive feature of hill farming. Terracing is indispensable to plough agriculture, which requires level fields and an effective means of checking soil erosion. It also enhances productivity by conserving heat and moisture. Cultivation on steep slopes would be impossible without it.

#### ***Verticality***

The construction of terraces depends upon the slope of the ridge on which they are built. The steeper the slope of the ridge, the smaller the size of the terrace, making large-sized fields almost impossible. But due to the topography of the region, the villagers are forced to use both the gentle and steep slopes and hence cultivation is carried on in scattered blocks, divided by intervening ridges and ravines. Hence one comes across enormous number of little fields, of variety of sizes, shapes and gradient, ranging from 500 to 6000 in number across villages (Pant, 1959) and cultivating is concurrently carried out on several tracts of land. This is called verticality. Scattered fields across varying heights

permit multi-layered cropping, maximising the use of solar energy and nutrients and at the same time, taking the advantage of differences in elevation, soil, rainfall and so forth. Verticality was also essential from the point of view of efficient resource-labour use and it worked as a strategy to hedge against pests and fickle climatic conditions.

### ***Organic manuring of soil***

Upland mountain soils are for most part shallow and skeletal with low water-retention capacity. Heavy rains wash off the top of the soil and impoverish it. It is therefore essential to replenish soil fertility. Constant and abundant manuring through organic manure occupies a most important place in agriculture of the hills. The people of this area have practised different forms of manuring to ensure good yields.

### ***Water resources and gul irrigation***

Cultivation is largely rain-fed and therefore subject to the vicissitudes of the climate. Periodic crop failure resulting from uneven distribution of rainfall within the growing season was an unavoidable feature of the agricultural economy. Irrigation is obviously desirable in such regions, which are marked by seasonality and annual variability of rainfall. However, the possibilities have been limited. Water for irrigation is thus only to be derived from small springs (locally called *gadera*) arising in the area. The water is harnessed by building *guls* or diversion channels and ditches contoured round hillsides. Only the smaller streams can be tapped, the larger ones are too turbulent to be easily harnessed. Thus over most of Garhwal, the possibilities for intensifying production through irrigation are limited by high variability in water supply and difficulty in harnessing water resources.

### ***Crop rotation systems***

With irrigated land (*taloan*) being limited in the hills and the available upland mountain soils needing constant replenishment, people have to resort to crop-land rotation to maintain agricultural productivity on the unirrigated terraced land (*uproan* or *ukhar*). Village lands are divided into two *sars* (parts or fields), with one remaining fallow each *rabi* season. This allows for soil recuperation and also possesses the advantage of

allowing livestock to graze on stubble without damaging crops growing in the other *sar*. Only three crops are grown per unit of arable land every two years. Pulses are often inter-cropped with cereals, which provide a balanced composition for the soil and keeps down weeding.

Apart from the knowledge and practice pertaining to agricultural production, practices regarding felling of forests and grazing were sensitive to natural sustenance. That regeneration of forests and pastures was a central concern was evident in tactful practices of grass cutting, lopping, collecting and the practice of seasonal migration. These practices evolved over time, towards preservation of natural vegetation cover, prevention of soil erosion and maintenance of water absorptive and retentive capacity of soil.

### **Land Use And Labour Process In The Subsistence Economy**

The widespread dispersion of family plots, or the original land allocations among the families can be interpreted as a response to the historical needs of maximising expected agricultural production in the presence of limited trading opportunities and constraints on labour availability. The distribution of agricultural plots at different altitudes allows a more or less equitable allocation of productive land among the members of the community as well as the sharing out of area specific risks such as landslides and gully erosion (Das, 2000). Traditionally the finer cereals like rice were planted in the more fertile plots at lower altitude and coarser grams like *cholai* and *mandua* were cultivated in the land around the village and higher up. Moreover, this distribution allows the maximisation of labour input through altitude contingent time calendars. The peak labour requirements for fields at different altitudes occur at different points in time, allowing household labour to be utilised in a dispersed manner throughout the year instead of a concentrated peak followed by a slack period. The production pattern therefore met the need to optimise labour available in the family.

As against the male and female farming systems identified by Boserup (1975) the Garhwal subsistence system maybe described as a family farming system with a large and significant role for women. Traditionally family, whether nuclear or extended as the case may be, is the fundamental labouring unit or the unit of production. Historically, the

difficulty, volume and intensity of subsistence activity and complete dependence on agricultural production demanded considerable flexibility and co-ordination among all household members, young and old, male and female. Hard physical work in extremely difficult conditions of the hilly terrain is the order of the day - the requirement of human labour in terms of quantum and time is enormous. Population being sparse and scattered, hired labour is difficult to get. The contribution of all family members above 8 years of age is thus required for intensive agricultural and all other work.

Apart from family labour there also exists a tradition of co-operative/collective group labour which cuts across lines of kinship within the community for more labour intensive activities. On the appointed day all those who are free to do so assemble at the place of work. For instance whenever there is a great deal of carrying to be done over considerable distances, co-operative labour may be employed, as when wood, slate, or sheet iron is to be brought for house construction. After co-operative work is completed the "host" serves some refreshment, but no formal obligation to repay is incurred. However an ideology of reciprocity surrounds these work patterns. Women too constitute informal co-operative groups for assistance with cultivation work especially. Moreover given the difficulties of production in the region, inter-village service exchanges between high and low caste also provide important source of labour assistance, though a specific patron client element enters this asymmetrical arrangement. Women of low caste families also provide labour assistance to high caste families.

### **Gender Division Of Labour And Women's Roles In Production And Reproduction**

The understanding in this section is based primarily on the work of British administrators like Traill (1828), Atkinson (1884), Pauw (1896) and Walton (1910) and also supported by Pant's study of 1935. Supported by cultural ideology, there exists a gender dichotomy of work in that certain activities in the domestic and agricultural realms are designated strictly as "male" or "female". Men are heads of families and make decisions in economic matters. Their tasks are to plough, dig and drive. Men do all the ploughing and other cultivation of fields that is done with animals. Even touching the plough is taboo for women. The plough is associated with men and virility. Men also sow the fields.

Their other tasks are the building of terrace walls and embanking and the excavation of irrigation ditches. Running the water mills, extraction of oil, marketing, and stack-building are among their tasks. It is men's responsibility to construct and repair the houses, make and maintain household equipment, and market / trade the produce. Men deal with the outside world, public agencies, the polity, administration and state.

Women are symbolically linked with fertility and hence their involvement with a range of cultivation / tending / rearing tasks. Women of all cultivating families play a major role in agriculture. Except ploughing, women virtually do everything, including help with male tasks. Preparing manure and manuring the fields, transplanting, weeding, hoeing, harvesting, cutting of grass for fodder, etc. is performed entirely by women with little help from the men to a little from children. Many jobs are common to both sexes: e.g. carrying home the field produce, threshing, etc. except during the sowing and harvesting seasons.

The reality is that the male cultivator literally "needs a wife" to perform the drudgery of the field all through the year. In the artisan and priestly castes, men do the specialised work and women perform nearly the same task, as do women in exclusively agricultural families. In the tailoring and basket making castes, women occasionally help their menfolk do some of the stitching or weaving.

Besides agricultural work, all women bear the responsibility of domestic / household / reproductive work and animal husbandry. They cook and care for children. While men are responsible for herding and grazing animals, women collect most of the fodder for animals and, with the children, tend to animals most of the time. They prepare the manure, take care of it, dry it, store it, and are primarily responsible for seeing that the fields are fertilised with it. They carry headloads of water for the family and the animals. Women winnow the grain after it is threshed and prepare it for storage. Cooking, cleaning, washing are female tasks. Between and during harvests women are fully employed in production and reproduction, accounting for the bulk of work in the former and total work in the latter. Within the women of the household, there are norms for sharing the tasks by age and seniority.

Women's centrality in the subsistence economy in Garhwal seems clearly linked to labour scarcity and hardship of mountain agriculture. As noted by Pant "in this inequitable division of labour, the majority of the tedious and fatiguing jobs have been assigned to women. For her there is no slack season; the whole year is spent in hard toil" (Pant, 1935). In seasonal and non-seasonal work, in slack as well as intense agricultural seasons, women's work cycle continues. Hence, in terms of sheer working hours, theirs is a higher and heavier participation in the hill economy.

### **SOCIAL STRUCTURE, THE SOCIAL RELATIONS OF SUBSISTENCE PRODUCTION AND REPRODUCTION: PRE-COLONIAL GARHWAL**

To understand gender relations within production in the context of the caste and class system, we have organised this section into four parts. Put together they emphasise how gender penetrates and influences production and is determined by property relations and ties down women into a subsidiary position in all social economic sphere. We are aware that our understanding has been constrained by paucity of historical and sociological research. Nevertheless, the available material has helped in bringing out the linkages between social processes and present a broad picture that needs further substantiation.

#### **Land, Class And Caste In Evolutionary Process**

Around 2000 B.C. ancient settlements of Kols, Kiratas, Doms in the region were displaced by the superior socio-political force of Khasas, Khasiya or Khasi perhaps of Aryan stock (Saklani, 1998, p39). The Khasas established a number of petty chieftanships all over the region, which came to be known after them as *Khas-des* or *Khasmandala*. The majority of the population of Garhwal-Kumaon is largely believed to be of Khasa origin. Khasa society was a territorially based socio-political system said to have worked like a kin dominated "tribal democracies". However, this was restricted to the Khasa who controlled the production and held superior proprietary rights, with the Doms occupying subservient positions as serfs. This was a politically decentralised system in which supernaturalism played an important role in the maintenance of the social order (Joshi, 1990, p.388)



It is believed that land was not property but was the territory for the Khasa communities and there existed a system of collective ownership of land. There was usually a sense of private ownership as regards their livestock, but as far as the land was concerned, there was community ownership. Each of the khasi clans inhabited a valley between two mountain ridges and claimed joint ownership of the land within the clan territory. Tradition suggests that two categories of land were recognised. First, agricultural land, which, along with the site inhabited by a lineage, constituted a village. This land was divided amongst the households of each lineage with ultimate ownership vested in the lineage and expressed in the restrictions imposed on the transfer of land to a non-lineage member without the consent of the lineage peers. This land was referred to as *that* (ancestral) and the right of property in such land derived from its original reclamation and occupation. Secondly, forest covered land was owned by the entire clan. It was used as grazing ground, hunting ground and for collection of fuel and other forest produce. A new site for laying out terraces and building residential structures could be cleared with the consent of the clan head and elders. When the population outgrew the land base in one area, people migrated to another occupied area where they had first user-rights. The second type of land was forest-covered land that belonged to the entire clan. This included communal grazing area, hunting grounds and forest for collecting fuel, fodder and other forest produce (Sanwal, 1976).

From the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., the Garhwal region was subject to a range of ruling dynasties - indigenous, local Himalayan or distant from the plains, which exerted varying degrees of political or economic control. The Kunindas, followed by the Yandheyas, the Nagas and later the powerful Katyuris. Territorially based loosely united hill dwellers were forced into sub-tenancy by the Katyuris laying the base for a "feudalistic society". However, people continued to live in economically self-sufficient villages and semi-autonomous settlements with least interference of the State. The administrative machinery of the ruling chiefs consisted of very few people. "Aristocracy" and "Dominant" persons were the key figures in Katyuri administration, called the Saynas / Budhas / Padhanas - the elder men of the communities. However, people are said to have enjoyed autonomy with regard to administration of justice, land use and so on (Traill, 1828 cf. Pokriyal 1993; Saklani, 1987 cf. Joshi, 1990; Sanwal, 1976).

## The Processes Of Differentiation Of The Peasantry

The emergence of the Parmara kings in the fourteenth century A.D. as the ruling classes marked the rise of the ruling class and demise of clan-based power. The control over productive means shifted from clan chiefs to a class of appointed officials in whom the ruling kings vested power. In this process, the relations of production were transformed from direct patriclass to chiefly family control, giving rise to a more differentiated or stratified social structure based on the rise of the classes. A proper four-ranked feudal class system evolved around land resources and control. Just below the king were the "feudal magnates" comprising the representatives of "best old families" called *thokdars* or *sayanans* (Walton, 1910). They were the revenue collectors of the king. The state successively imposed on landholders numerous taxes and customary dues (*dastur* and *phitai*) summed up under the term *chattis rakam aur battis kalam* (meaning thirty six items of royal revenue and thirty two ministerial dues) republishing heavy dues levied over the actual cultivating communities. The land revenue was collected as the share of the produce. The next stratum were the proprietors or land grantees called *thatwan* who worked as an intermediary between peasant cultivators and the feudatory (Trail, 1828; Walton, 1991). The vast majority were the peasant-cultivators called *khaikar* or occupancy tenants at will, or those who eat produce of the land or "*Khana*" on conditions of paying the land tax "*kar*", who were forced into formal status of occupancy tenants, but who enjoyed hereditary, permanent but non-transferable rights in the soil.

Besides *khaikar* cultivators there were temporary tenants called *kaini* and *sirtan* who had a right to land. Some kind of bonded labour known as *haliya* or *chorya* was also prevalent in some areas (Pauw, 1896; Walton, 1911). However, land in the interior seldom changed proprietors and the greater part of the occupants derived their legitimacy from long established tradition (Pauw, 1896). Clans and their village level control of land and traditional practices governing it were not destroyed.

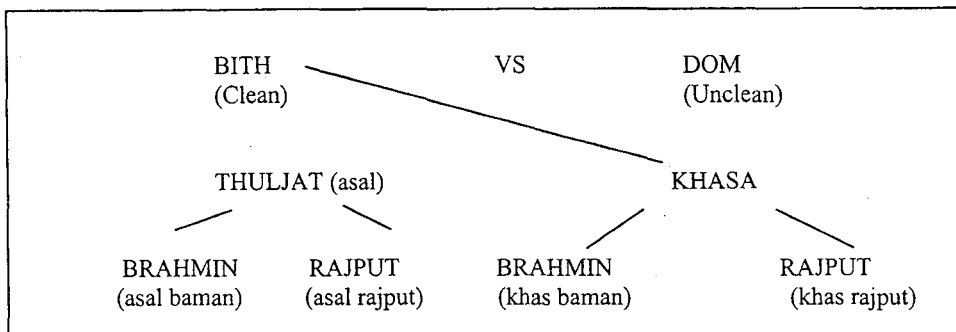
Access to forests and forest products continued to be universal without hindrance. The only forest related tax payable to the state was that on grazing of domestic animals,

which also included contributions (in kind) of various animal products, and handcrafted items such as baskets, wooden utensils and mats (Negi et al, 1997, p.160).

### *The Emergence of Hinduism and Caste Status Hierarchy*

The late Katyuri period had witnessed the immigration of people professing Shastric Hinduism. Brahmins and Kshatriyas from the Gangetic plains were encouraged to emigrate to be installed in key administrative positions by the Katyuri rulers. They were given gifts of land and powerful positions. Due to continuous cultural contacts with the brahminical Hinduism and greater Hindu tradition, the native Khasa/ Khasi communities gradually assumed social formations akin to the Brahmanical Hindu order. Consequently the territorial identities steadily assumed caste identities and the indigenous community entered firmly into a variant of the traditional caste or *jati* fold around 11 A.D.

A new two-tier system of Bith - Dom (high caste groups - low caste group) corresponded in the broadest sense to the distinction between 'clean' and 'unclean'. The line of distinction between Bith and Dom represented the barrier of untouchability. Immigrant influx led to sanskritisation, and also introduced labels of *baman* (Brahmin) and *jimidar* (Rajput) in the Garhwali society. The category Bith was in turn differentiated internally into (i) Thuljat or asal and (ii) Khasi, which corresponded to the distinction between "immigrant" and "indigenous". Superior status was accredited to immigrants (Thuljat or asal) based on their military and material powers and they as a whole ranked higher than the Khasis, while the indigenous or Khasa groups were considered too heterodox and outside mainstream Hindu tradition and thus relegated to a lower position by the new comers. This immigrant-indigenous dichotomy was well defined for both Rajput and Brahmins. Hence the Brahmin caste in Garhwal was subdivided into Thuljat (or asal-Baman) and khas-Baman, while the Rajputs were divided into Thuljat (or asal-Rajput) and khas-Rajput (locally called khas-jimidar and simply "khasiyas"). These distinctions can be pictorially represented as follows:



SOURCE: Adapted from R.D. Sanwal, Social Stratification in Rural Kumaon (Delhi, 1976).

In terms of their linkage to the class structure described in the previous section, the Brahmans and Rajputs were mostly the *hissedars* and *khaikars*, whereas *sirtans* and others were mostly from the Doms (Sanwal, 1976). Rajputs formed the numerically dominant group of the peasantry. The Doms hardly had any land of their own and minimal of *khaikar* and *hissedari* rights. They worked virtually as slaves of the Brahmin and Rajputs doing menial work and other occupations/services (Walton, 1911). A status hierarchy in terms of relative ritual purity evolved between and within the caste groups.

The *Asal baman* in Garhwal were differentiated into endogamous Sarolas and Gangaris, with the Sarolas ranking highest among the Garhwal Brahmins by virtue of service to the royal household. Sarola superiority was established by a royal decree (Raturi, 1928). Food commensality assumed great importance in determining the ritual status (Raturi, 1928; Aradhana, 1988).

Atkinson (1886) noted that nearly nine-tenth of the entire population recorded as Rajput was of local origin (*khasiyas*) and the remainder professed to be descendants from clans whose origin was traced to some districts in the plains (*asal* Rajputs). In return for their service the *asal* Rajputs were assigned villages and military titles were conferred on them. Names like Negi, Bisht, Rawat originally had occupational references only (Walton, 1910). But it is believed that slowly even the deemed low status *Khasiya* Rajputs started to affix such surnames that it became hard to distinguish *Thuljat* Rajput from the *Khasiya* class- a process called as *de-khasiasation* by few scholars (Joshi, 1990). Under the process of *de-khasiasation*, the word *Khasa* Rajput soon lost all ground and all

Rajputs increasingly styled themselves as Thakurs, Rajputs or simply Jimidars. In fact the word *Khasiya* has today become a contemptuous term.

The lowest caste group of Doms are conjectured to be the subjugated predecessors of the Khasis. They have been referred to as slaves in the early period and were accorded inferior social status under caste (Atkinson, 1884 and 1886). Walton describes Doms as a "depressed race", who seldom cultivate and who practically never own land (Walton, 1911). As the lowest and untouchable caste group of the Himalayan area, they worked as virtual slaves of the Brahmans and Rajput. The Doms comprise all segments that do menial work or are engaged in a range of services. The artisan classes referred to as Shilpkar are included among the Doms. There is no caste category of Shudra in this region. In hardened occupational sub-castes which are themselves ranked in a hierarchy within the broad untouchable caste category of Doms are the *Agari* (blacksmith), *Lohar* (ironsmith), *Tamta* (coppersmith), *Tirwa* (sword and knife sharpener), *Barhai* (carpenter), *Orh* (mason), *Raj* (mason) *Auji* (tailor and drummer), *Badi* (dancer), etc. Thus these sub-castes have an essentially functional orientation and are generally based on hereditary occupations (Atkinson, 1886; Bahadur, 1916; Raturi, 1928).

In terms of ritual and social status the Doms are social unequals in the moral economy of Garhwal. They suffered a number of disabilities, even though they were not as severe or oppressive as those in the plains. They were subject to such taxes not demanded from the non-Shilpakaras, for example, *amgadi*, *jhaguli*, a certain amount in cash on the birth of the first male child and on the occasion of the marriage of the first daughter, etc. Also their landed property was comparatively smaller as a sizeable number of them were tenant cultivators and many were landless. Most were engaged exclusively in commodity and service production. Records also show that the privilege granted to the Shilpakaras to collect dues from the people was occasionally termed as *bhika* (alms received as begging). This mode of address was contemptuous especially when similar rights enjoyed by non-Shilpakaras were termed differently, such as *nita*, *tika*, etc. (cited in Joshi, 1994). Furthermore, status distinctions were maintained through commensality restrictions, maintenance of separate water sources, separate system of religious observances and rituals. Where the relationship between the high and low differed, was

in their greater informal interaction emerging perhaps out of the co-operation that was necessitated by the hard mountain life at the village level. Interdependent economic activities of the castes were governed by *jajmani* - the traditional system of labour and grain exchange with rights of inherited patronage. Known as the *khaikiya-gusai* system in local terms it involved a system of economic exchange, landholding and labour relations that followed caste lines including a system of hereditary service relationships between families.

### **Gender And The Relations Of Production And Reproduction**

While the emergence of caste, subsequent power balance shifts and beginnings of peasant differentiation in the region is marked, we have little evidence to show women's status in caste-class terms. We have scanty data to show whether women in peasant (landed), tenants and landless category were really differentiated in terms of productive activities and if gender relations of production varied over them. Thus in order to draw an understanding of women's position in relations of production we use writings of Pant (1935); Walton (1910); Atkinson (1884); Traill (1828) as our main sources and analyse these evidences through Sack's framework (Sacks, 1979).

### **Gender And Relations Of Production**

The class-caste differentiated subsistence-production Garhwali peasant economy has clearly been male dominated. Men as heads of clans lineage components and households were the propertied and landholders in an economy organised around patrilineal/patrilocal kinship. Men held customary land rights and direct access to land and were the clients of the ruling classes. Men were related to the means of production (with respect to agricultural land and livestock) as sons and brothers of a family (lineage). Livestock, stored grain and the agricultural fields constituted the principal property of the family. The eldest male was the property owner and chief decision-maker.

In such a system women's relation to productive means and to the public world in general were through the husband or male head of the household. Sisters or daughters could not inherit land and houses, wives inherited from husbands. Thus the labour performed by

women described in the previous section was in the relationship of wife/sister/mother and was patriarchally controlled. Husband, father, mother and often the brother had a right upon their labour. Men also worked as brothers/husbands/fathers but they were producers and owners and the women were producers but not owners.

As owners of property and heads of patrilocal, patrilineal households, fathers had authority over the labour and marriage choices of unmarried children. A household usually consisted of a residential group of agnates and their families. Though not very clear, there is some evidence that till the late nineteenth century, this may have included the male head, his wife, his unmarried sons and daughters as well as the families of all married sons. But this group sharply decreased in size in the subsequent years, with sons establishing their separate household with their own family. It was said that all the man's property was his father's as long as the latter lived. The father made all decisions in the family; he was also responsible to take care of the needs of all the family members. Marrying his daughters and providing bridewealth for each of his sons was his responsibility. On his death, the eldest son took on the role of head.

Responsibility for productive labour in agriculture rested primarily on wives, though sisters and grown up daughters also assisted and participated in work at home and in the fields generally under the supervision of their mother. Task groups of wives primarily cultivated, collected fodder, water and firewood and cooked. Young unmarried girls were also assigned some tasks, but it was "the wife" on whom the primary responsibility rested. Wives, sisters and daughters all worked under the authority and management of the elder female, usually the head's wife / wives. With respect to household management, the oldest female held clear responsibility. Food was prepared for all family members by all wives (and their grown-up daughters) under their elder's management. Women (particularly the mother-in-law) decided what and how much to cook.

Both males and elder females of the family commanded the labour of the wives / daughters-in-law, and were entitled to their services. Even though women laboured to create the means of production, they did not own them and their claims to the produce were at best shared. The wives, as mothers of grown up sons, did have a place of their

own and a blood tie to the family's means of production, but the wives did not "own" any property or any means of production directly. Their claim on the family's property was as mother through their sons. Though their influence as wives and mothers was significant, women seldom acted as decision-makers. Clearly, kinship, marriage and family were the key structures that enforced the "wifely" relations of production.

### **Polygamy, Bride Price And Woman's Status**

Polygamy as a popular marriage form and brideprice as a marriage custom further underscored a woman's subordinate position in family and society. Polygamous marriages were common and the numbers of wives were largely restricted to two. No significant caste differences exist in this practice. Writing on the custom, Atkinson's (1884) hypothesis was that the custom probably arose from the great difficulty there was in cultivating large amounts of lands. Wives were procured to help in the fieldwork and looked upon as beasts of burden. Pant agrees and sees polygamy as an offshoot of the unnatural division of labour. A cultivator who possesses a large holding will usually be the husband of more than one wife. He marries more wives in order to work more land. Two wives are thought to be the first essential in the necessary equipment of a hill cultivator and the hillman's wealth and prosperity may be measured by the number of wives (Pant, 1935). In Berreman's study (1963), the reasons given for polygamy were four: (1) to produce children when the first wife was barren, (2) to help with work, (3) for 'pleasure' (4) inheritance of additional wife from a brother. Wives were perceived to be a valuable asset.

Like polygamy, the practice of bride price seems to have a clear economic basis viz. utility for subsistence work. *Dam Vivah* or *Tako-ka-vyah* is the name given to the traditionally dominant bride price system of marriage<sup>7</sup>. As noted by Walton, wives are always bought, (except among the few of the very highest caste), at a price which varies between two hundred rupees and one thousand (Walton, 1910). Due to her crucial role in production, the birth of a girl in Garhwali families is not considered a curse.

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<sup>7</sup> However, dowry is present even in *dam* marriages. Gifting of a rope, a sickle and other light agricultural implements used by women, bedding, cooking utensils, clothes and cattle - constitute the traditional dowry. Along with this, a woman also has the customary privilege of receiving gifts on festivals from her family of orientation.



But there is an opposing view on bride price, which asserts that it is the inferiority of the woman that is reflected in the practice. Pant is of the opinion that the “wives are literally bought as chattel, and the hillman can buy as many as he likes. They not only work for him, but also yield him children. The daughters he sells on profitable terms, while the sons help him like their mothers” (Pant, 1935).

Joshi too expressed similar sentiment when he wrote “a woman is a chattel, who is purchased for one of the sons by the father of the family. The nature of the transaction is more the acquisition of a valuable article for the family than a contractual relationship between a man and a woman”(Joshi, 1929). It is this view, which is borne out by cultural notions and practices, that surround bride price.

A woman with a well-built physique, capable of hardwork, proficient in household and agricultural work and having good fecundity is prized all over rural Garhwal. An infertile wife may either be divorced and/or another wife may be taken for begetting children. In the rough mountainous terrain, it has been observed that the girls of this area are preferred in the lower reaches, as they are considered tough and capable of putting in more labour. Even in that area, girls are generally brought from the interior of villages, where goes the belief that the father owns the daughter in the way the king owns the land.

It may therefore be surmised that the notion of ownership of daughter by father, of wife by husband and a woman’s economic role in production, go a long way to sustain the customary notion of bride price. In this respect it is significant that a young, good looking and well-built female divorcee may fetch a bride price higher than that paid for her earlier marriage. A perpetually weak wife is often divorced. A girl having a physical defect and not capable of putting in hard agricultural work does not fetch a good bride price.

Alongwith *dam vivah*, *dan vivah* (offering of daughter followed by *dakshina* or donation), has also been prevalent and may have evolved in the context of caste and Brahmanical values<sup>8</sup>. When a daughter is given in *dan* and is accepted, *dakshina* is

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<sup>8</sup> In the ideological spirit of *dan Vivah*, *dan* (offering of daughter) is followed by *dakshina* (donation), i.e., consideration for accepting *dan*.

offered in the form of dowry, which has tended to increase in terms of money and conspicuous goods of luxury under the impact of monetary economy and modern consumerism. *Dan* marriage is prestigious and it has been practised by high castes having a greater share in land income. In the context of Garhwal, Raturi (1911) points out that the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas of Garhwal generally practise *dan Vivah* though traditionally they did practice *dam vivah*.<sup>9</sup> This may have had implications for women's status. Fanger (1987) is of the opinion that the usage of the bride price form of marriage was indicative of the enormous importance of women in the traditional economy whereas the emergence of dowry suggests her decreased role in the expanding cash economy of employment migration. The issue requires further exploration.

### **The Cultural Ideology Of Women's Subordination**

At the cultural ideological level and social practice, women of Garhwal are generally subordinate to men. In theory she is of course man's other self or power incarnate (*Shakti*). On occasions of religious celebration, such as marriages and pilgrimages, she occupies a foremost place. Polygamy is discouraged by the hillman's songs and proverbs. Every hilltop is honoured with a temple dedicated to a goddess: for example, Dunagiri, Shiahidevi, or Bananidevi. "Without a woman," the proverb says, "everything is in darkness". Again: "He who has not a wife has nobody in the world". A person however rich, resourceful, disciplined and well settled, if unmarried, is advised to go for *ghara-bara* - i.e. a wife.

Yet, in the typically dualist Hindu cultural ideology of gender, the Garhwali woman is simultaneously held in low esteem. In Pant's ethnographic account, a woman has been likened to a worn-out shoe, which can easily be replaced by another. She is the first member of the household to get up in the morning and last to go to bed at night. Inside the house she must take her meals when all the men have finished. In respect of clothing and ornaments she receives niggardly treatment. She cannot dispose of the household goods as she wishes or when she requires. She cannot sell or distribute grain in large

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<sup>9</sup> With the impact of modern forces of change and sources of income other than agriculture, *dan vivah* has been attaining greater social expanse. With preference for bridegrooms settled in urban-based white-collar jobs, the swing for *dan* marriages and negotiated dowry has been on the increase.

quantities. The men are the custodians of hard cash, and all monetary dealings are their exclusive concern. During the harvest her husband coaxes her into toiling her hardest; but at other times she is treated as livestock. The husband chastises his wife, and the men often talk boastfully of the necessity of maintaining discipline in the house. On account of her incessant labour and constant exposure to the weather, she becomes hard-featured even by middle age. Occasionally she goes to some fair in the neighbourhood. Her wealth consists of a few silver ornaments, of which the main are bracelets, bangles, nose- and ear-rings, and a necklace (*hammal*) of British-Indian silver coins (Pant, 1935). British accounts have been equally vocal about women's conditions as beasts of burden and their ill-treatment. Traill (1828) has documented large numbers of suicides among women of the region, which owe their prevalence to the drudgery of their life.

To sum up, despite woman's central role in the economy, the Garhwal woman is socio-culturally subordinate to the man. This status is the combined outcome of the caste class structures and marked pervasiveness of Hindu patriarchal culture and the gender division of labour.

### **BRITISH IMPACT: BREAKDOWN OF AGRO-ECOLOGICAL SUBSISTENCE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF OUT-MIGRATION**

Prior to British control, Garhwalis suffered the brief but highly oppressive Gurkha regime (1804 to 1815). Armed resistance by people to their over-exploitation met with brutal suppression. An increase in trafficking of human slaves resulted in an exodus to escape oppression. The East India Company expelled the Gurkhas from Garhwal and Kumaon in 1815 paving the way for British.

The British regime imposed a series of policies and interventions that brought about fundamental changes in the lives of the people and began a process of their steady integration in the larger colonial economy and polity. As elsewhere, colonial rule signified the economic and commercial exploitation of natural resources and of labouring people. In Garhwal, the prime targets were forests and land. The British policy with respect to land and forest along with the ongoing increase in population, led to the depletion of natural resources and initiated processes that led to an insatiable commercial

interest in the forests and their rapid denudation. Colonial land policy further aggravated the situation. It promoted a more extensive cultivation of land by making it a source of revenue and instituting private property in land. The cumulative impact was the breakdown of the pre-colonial subsistence economy that had thrived on the close link between forests, agriculture and animal husbandry.

### **Forests: Control, Exploitation, Denudation**

Control of forests was brought about by a series of Imperial Forest Acts. The requirements of commercial capitalism forced the state to invoke and assert the dominant "proprietary" claims on forest resources in its favour and usurp the traditional prescriptive rights of the rural communities (Saklani, 1987, cf. Negi et al, 1997). State control of forests, which began slowly with the establishment of British rule, intensified by the middle of nineteenth century.

From mid-nineteenth century to 1911, the region saw the progressive control of forests and wasteland by the colonial state, expanding its rights for commercial use and restricting people's rights for survival use. Commercial value of the rich Himalayan forests rose suddenly from 1853 when the British began constructing railway network to connect main harbours and major cities with the fertile hinterland. The building of the railway network was indeed a major negative landmark in the history of Indian forestry. Additionally the experimental tapping of chir or pine for resin (*pinus longifolia*) was certified as commercially feasible by 1910. Success in chemically treating pines to make it timber grade for use, made the chir commercially doubly important. The scattering of the chir throughout the hills and across unmeasured land outside the reserved forests thus provided the rationale for further restriction and control.

With the establishment of the Forest Department in 1864, a series of acts were passed which limited the rights of the people and expanded state control. Forests came to be "reserved". The year 1893 marked a significant change in the colonial forest policy when all unmeasured land outside the reserved forests was constituted as the District Protected Forests (DPF). Snow-clad peaks, hard rocks, inaccessible cliffs, riverbeds, unmeasured land, lakes and intervening spaces between measured fields became protected forests

(Pathak, 1995; Dangwal, 1997). Rules were also formulated to regulate these forests, with restriction on cutting and lopping of reserved species and clearing land by felling trees. While DPF only empowered the Government to regulate the use of resources without settling the question of ownership, reserved forests definitely settled the question of right over forestland and produce between the individuals and the Government. Forests, which were reserved, were clearly under the control of the Forest Department. Successive new Forest Settlements (under Nelson, 1911-1917) made more excessive encroachments, further suppressing the rights of the local people. More often than not, the forest boundaries ran through people's measured land. Forest within the *assi sal* boundary (civil forests) also got reserved. *Assi sal*, the traditional village boundary, had also been given legal status by the State.

The violation of traditional patterns triggered a social movement, in the course of which people burnt state forests in protest. The outcome was the setting up of a "Forest Grievances Committee". It found most of the grievances of the peasants valid. Following the recommendations of the Committee, the restriction on use of resources in Reserve I (within *assi sal* boundary) forest was almost completely removed. The villagers had almost unlimited right to use the resources including free grazing, lopping and felling of timber for domestic purposes. Reserve II (outside *assi sal*) forests however continued to be with the Forest Department and subject to unrestrained felling. During World War II, felling and sawing were pushed into the remotest areas. As villagers struggled to retain and restore their rights, the colonial state did its utmost to take away or restrict these rights.

### **British Land Policy, New Agrarian Structure And The Expansion Of Agriculture**

British consolidation of interests in agriculture through land settlements saw the conferment of proprietorship rights and its private ownership. Rights over agricultural land, which was traditionally owned by the native king, were now granted to individual peasants setting aside existent community rights of the people. This laid the base for the development of a new agrarian class structure. The policy of encouraging agriculture in the settlements, with a view to increasing revenue resulted in a scramble for cultivable

area. Population pressure, private interest and British interests enhanced the possibilities and incidence of agricultural extension. Cultivation increased by one-third and cultivable land increased by 50 percent during a four-decade span.

Starting in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century, land surveys, known as *khasra*, recorded land area, proprietary rights, tenant classifications, crops and area of cropped land at the time of settlement (Imperial Gazetteer of India, 1908). Land was divided into following categories: *Talon Shera* – permanently irrigated land; *Panchar Shera* – irregularly irrigated land; *Uproan* – dry terraced land, first class (*awal*) and second class (*doyan*); and *Ijran* – inferior terraced land, cultivated intermittently (Negi et al, 1997; Stowell, 1907). Vast tracts of forestland were granted for agriculture. In the context of the new policy, cultivation was encouraged on wastelands that were adjoining the cultivated terraces known as *nayabad* land (Tucher, 1983, cf Negi et al, 1997).

Under the new land settlement, two basic classes of *hissedars* or proprietors and of occupancy tenants (*khaikar and sirtans*) were developed. Under the *hissedari* system, the British provided rights to all *thatwans* and *khaikars* of the prior rulers and some occupancy tenants who filled certain specific conditions became *hissedars* or proprietors. The *khaikars* differed from the *hissedars* only in that they could not transfer land and had to pay a fixed sum of cess (*malikhana*) to the proprietors. The attempt of the *khaikars* in British times was to gain status as *hissedars*. All persons holding land who were neither proprietors nor *khaikar* were known as *Sirtan*. *Sirtans* were tenants settled in *nayabad* land (newly cultivated land) obtained by village headman and Thokdars. *Khaikhars* who had put *nayabad* land into cultivation were assigned *hissedari* rights<sup>10</sup>. These *nayabad* lands was not taxed until the new settlement took place. When commercial exploitation of forest wealth began in mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the state put a stop to *nayabad* practice and encouraged forest conservation. The traditional village level administration was incorporated within the broader legal administrative arrangement of the state. Peasant

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<sup>10</sup> Under this kind of British Agrarian policy, proprietors were induced to claim a right of ownership in all land not assessed, where the possession was largely in the hands of tenants with occupancy rights. Tenants were equally resolute in contesting the claim or evading it by declaring the waste plots necessary for pasturage. The same pressure was at work in pushing cultivation into the wastelands adjoining rival villages.

society was recognised and the state penetrated through a chain of administrative layers of power (Negi et al, 1997; Pathak et al, 1995).

Proprietors and occupancy tenants constituted about 80 percent of the cultivators. Data provided by Pauw (1896) showed that by the end of nineteenth century in Garhwal, almost 63.13 percent of landholders were made of *hissedars*, whereas the *khaikhars* and *sirtans* were 23.15 percent and 13.69 percent respectively. Thus the proportion of increase of around 12 percent reflected upward mobility of the *khaikhar* (See Table 3.1 below)

**Table 3.1: Details Of Land Tenures In Garhwal (Areas In Acres)**

Tenures	Number		Area	
	Prior to 1896	1896	Prior to 1896	1896
Hissedar	25569 [50.83]	33959 [63.13]	94064.40 [73.19]	191661.30 [77.66]
Khaikar	14676 [29.18]	12468 [23.18]	26643.80 [20.73]	42772.80 [17.33]
Sirtan	10055 [19.99]	7364 [13.69]	7813.20 [6.08]	12369.31 [5.01]
Total	50298	53791	128526.40	246803.40

Note: 2.49 acres = 1 hectare; Figures in brackets show the percentage of total.

Source: Pauw (1896) p.299, Cited from Pohriyal H.C., (1993) Human Environment and Socio-economic development in Himalayas, Delhi: B.R.Publishing, pg. 63.

*Sirtans*, *peekast* and *kaini* or *khurni* consisted of the lowest strata of hill land tenancy. *Sirtans* (or tenants at will, bearing no right of occupancy) and *khurni* or *kaini* (occupancy tenants temporarily established by grantee) were grouped by Pauw under *sirtans* comprising 13.95 percent of the total peasantry. These groups aimed at *khaikar* status and *hissedari* rights (Pauw, 1896). The class of non-resident tenants or *peekast* mostly constituted of *sirtans* living outside the village or in other villages with no permanent rights in the land. They made arrangements with the proprietors usually for one crop (Pauw, 1886). Servant labour or bonded labour called *haliya* or *sanji* was miniscule in hill agrarian system (Baden-Powell, 1892; Stowell, 1907; Pauw, 1896; Pokhriyal, 1993). There was no such thing as landless unskilled labour. However, by the end of the

nineteenth century, it was estimated that nine out of ten hillmen were *hissedars*, cultivating land with full ownership rights (Stowell, 1907, cf Negi et al, 1997)

### **The Rupturing Of The Ecology-Economy Link**

The subsistence economy of pre-colonial times had given way to plentiful production during first phase of the British rule. Certainly in the first twenty to thirty years of British rule, "the land waxed fat". With production oriented towards subsistence needs, which were comfortably met, there remained a surplus of grain for export to Tibet and southwards to the plains. There was a modest export of foodstuff, including "grain of all kinds" (Trail, 1828) which were traded down the Alakananda valley during the dry season, which followed the *kharif* harvest (Girdlestone, 1867, p.61). Qualitative assessments of many British officials suggest that hill peasants were able to comfortably and autonomously meet their subsistence requirements, and in certain areas had surplus of grain for market. Usually having six months' stock of grain in hand, and with their diet supplemented by fish, fruit, vegetable, and animal flesh, the hill cultivators were described by Henry Ramsay, commissioner from 1856 to 1884, as 'probably better off than any peasantry in India' (Guha, 1991, p.143-48). The hill people also earned through sale of ghee, manufacture of woollen goods and load carriage by ponies of mountain goods (see for e.g. the Imperial Gazetteer of Hunter, 1885; Goudge, 1903; Walton, 1910).

However, colonial commercial interests along with increase of agricultural cultivation led to the denudation and depletion of the grazing, water and forest resources and exerted a massive environmental impact. The first victims of commercialisation of forests, were the forests themselves and the wildlife. The process gained increased momentum with each new land settlement and forest act. The teak forests of Tarai-Bhabhar and the pine forest of higher Himalayas were the first victims. Before 1815, the pine tree was targeted and by 1850 it was the teak forests of Tarai (Guha, 1989; Pathak, 1987c). Additionally mountaineering and trekking expeditions placed considerable pressure upon a few higher Himalayan valleys. In different travels and *shikaar* expeditions, thousands of birds and animals were killed. Trade in animal skin, bird feathers and musk also increased rapidly



(Mountaineer, 1860). Growth in agriculture resulted in further clearing up of the forests near the villages.

There was a significant difference between clear felling for cultivation by local people and clear felling for commercial use. Clear felling for cultivation in the indigenous system was followed by equally good regeneration, whereas this was not so in the areas clear felled for commercial purposes. The magnitude of the environmental impact of the latter was large, covering continuous vast tracts, sometimes in over a thousand hectares. Local peoples in contrast made small or compact and dispersed clearings. These continued to remain surrounded by forests and were fed by small streams with attendant beneficial effects on the soil derived from silt and compost. Secondly, even though clear felling for cultivation involved burning of refuse, this was a controlled and one-time affair, which enriched the soil, rather than impoverishing it. Regular cultivation over a period of time also had soil binding effects. Since the rotation of crops was based upon traditional knowledge of soil enriching versus soil depleting crops, the overall effect of agriculture was not to render the soils impoverished (as happened under British rule due to repeated fires, destruction of soil cover and long exposure to the sun).

The British were motivated by need to ensure a continuing supply of timber for imperial needs. Under the 'scientific forestry' management of the British, all commercially insignificant trees (especially the broad-leafed species providing fodder, fuel, food and fertility to soil) were removed and the commercially valuable pine or *chir* trees took their place. The conversion of oak forest into *chir* pine forest, was a change in species which had a disastrous effect on ecology, which was the permanent economy of the local people. With the disappearance of these forests, water resources started drying up and soil erosion was accelerated. The prevalence of *chir* led to soil acidity. The villagers resisted this and their plea was: "we need broad-leafed food, fodder and fuel species to feed ourselves and our cows". But their protest was brutally suppressed (Guha, 1991).

The ill effects of extended cultivation began to surface by the early twentieth century itself. As a state response to the crisis it had created, several regulations on unhindered expansion of cultivation and preservation of common property resources came to be

imposed. Also, the protection of forests started gaining ground. Thus, the government gradually started imposing restrictions on unrestricted breaking of land. Despite this, the pressure from the peasants to extend and expand agriculture could simply not be contained by the state. It was politically and physically infeasible (Pathak et al, 1995). As a result, the common land within the *assi sal* boundary continued to be brought under the plough.

Colonial forest policy also had a destructive impact on the pastoral economy of the region based on a careful system of eco-management through transhumance wherein village grounds were meant to be rested by rotation. In the pre-colonial period, there were customary practices to regulate grazing in the village pastures. Care was taken to allow time for regeneration of pastures by tactfully combining grazing with grass cutting, lopping and collection of straw from cultivated fields and practising vertical seasonal migrations. These practices evolved over time, perhaps due to sustainable use of pastures. Colonial forestry brought these linkages under strain. The state began to control and regulate grazing on the pretext of its being harmful to forests (Dangwal, 1997). Various restrictions were placed on grazing: large areas were closed for grazing; only limited cattle were allowed in the reserved forests; cattle movements were regulated; and there were restrictions on lopping of trees which was essential for fodder collection. These restrictions resulted in reduced pastures and exclusion of large number of cattle from the reserved forests.

While large forest areas were reserved for commercial exploitation, increasing cattle population was made dependant for grazing on shrinking pastures - a process that contributed to ecological degradation. If the area that met grazing requirements had been scattered widely, the possibility of overuse would have been decreased. The entire process of redefining and recording of grazing rights was a painful experience for the hill people, which got only partially reflected in their petitions, complaints, resistance and protests (Dangwal, 1997).

The establishment of the Forest Department and implementation of conservation practices changed the traditional relationship between the state and rural people. Forests

were no more to be treated as community property. The traditional activities of the villages such as grazing, lopping and cutting of trees for agricultural and domestic use became penal offences. Fines, imprisonment and other forms of harassment like *Begar* (maintenance of the traditional system of forced labour) haunted people (Negi et al, 1997).

Quite rapidly after this time, the social and ecological systems of the region came under pressure. First, agriculture was expanding and land was getting fragmented due to inheritance law and degraded; second, cattle population was growing; and third, the land and forest resource on which agriculture was premised was getting depleted. All these developments were mutually reinforcing and created an unprecedented pressure on the ecology of the region (Pathak et al, 1995). The encroachment on traditional rights and the rupturing of environmental stability of the already fragile ecosystem had a deleterious impact on the sources of livelihood of peasantry.

### **From Subsistence To External Dependence: The Turn To Out-Migration**

The inevitable and most devastating consequence of the breakdown of the ecology-economy link was the rapid decline of the people's subsistence. From a position of relative comfort and at times of prosperity, Garhwali people reached a stage when they could not produce enough to feed themselves. Colonialism set hill agriculture on a downward spiral. In any case hill agriculture with its small fragmented landholdings and peculiarities of topography had inherent limits to intensification. Systematic crop failures are documented, during the latter half of the British era when a growing population placed greater demands on thinning natural resources. The State Famine Relief had to be instituted when crops failed in 1890 and 1892.

Population increased steadily and by around five times between 1841 and 1941, except in 1918 when an influenza epidemic killed large numbers. With the severing of the age-old ties to land, forest and nature and of the largely harmonious ecology-people relationship, the ecology-economy link lay ruptured. The subsistence economy that had earlier been able to absorb in-migrants over centuries and even the initial attack of exploitative British policies could no more absorb the growth of population as land and forests, hitherto trusted and revered mainstays of economic life, were subject to impoverishment and

could not deliver results in these new harsh conditions. Natural calamities in the shape of floods and earthquakes had also increased people's miseries. Plague and cholera epidemics also occurred recurrently adding to their difficulties (see Table A 3.1 in Appendix).

Under these conditions people's lives were reduced to a struggle for survival. The transport and communications links established by the colonists provided escape through the opportunities for out-migration. Colonialism thus laid the basis for and heralded the coming of the money-order economy.

The railways had spawned some small-scale industrial and tertiary activity in Kotdwara to cater to the annual influx of pilgrims which was estimated at 30,000-50,000 (Raper, 1810; Traill, 1828). A demand was generated for restaurants, teashops, porters etc. Those villages situated near the Alakananda river benefited from this through the sale of grain, dairy products and labour. However immigration from outside into Garhwal was the dominant trend. Businesses were mostly owned by plainsmen and much of the profit from the pilgrim trade flowed down to the plains, to be invested in more lucrative areas there.

Garhwali migration initially took place within and later outside of Garhwal. The earliest migrants were largely from the lower castes and classes responding to the British demand for unskilled labour, public work and for coolies. Further, economic decline hastened the processes of out-migration. By the middle of the nineteenth century employment opportunities opened up in the British administrative bureaucracy, including the establishments of the survey, forest excise, archeology and other departments. The establishment of schools, hospitals and the press followed (Pathak, 1991, p.262). Pressures mounted on agriculture and on the need to diversify. Both were acutely felt and provided the impetus for younger folk to migrate to further destinations in search of jobs.

The British Army constituted the most important source of occupational recruitment. The Garhwalis already had a tradition of martial service - from the armies of the Garhwali kings to those of the Gurkha regime. The formation of the Garhwal Regiment by British

Government in 1890 with its headquarters at Landsdowne became a source of organised rural-urban migration.

At the lower end of the new emergent occupational hierarchy, seasonal labourers were employed in forests in southern parts of the district and in temporary labour in the hills stations and the army. The second low-grade occupational type was of domestic service in English households, which sought refuge from the blistering heat of the plains in the cool hill stations of Mussoorie and Nainital. Many seasonal workers were taken on as full-time servants in these houses. Some accompanied their new employers back to the plains (Whittaker, 1984). By 1900, Garhwalis were widely distributed over northern India.

Commensurate with patriarchal ideology, migration was completely a male affair. Women remained locked inside the crippled subsistence sector. Jobs were stratified by caste, the best and highest paid reserved for the upper castes. Employment in government agencies was open to the literate and those who had middle/high school education. Government jobs were considered more 'prestigious' compared to private sector jobs or self-employment (Panda, 2001). The introduction of a system of tax payment in cash rather than in kind by the British and the growing penetration of markets, increased the pressure for cash earnings and intensified the search for jobs outside of agriculture even by the not-so-well educated (Panda, 2001).

British interest in the Himalayan region was primarily four fold: expansion of colonial rule; greater mobilisation of raw materials and their export; acquisition of capital and manpower which became an important input in the army; and expansion of colonial market into the region. It also brought significant external influences. Incorporation into the British Empire, though accelerated its interaction with other parts of the country, failed to improve the socio-cultural and economic aspects of life in the region. The transfer of economic surplus through different channels adversely affected the development potentials, ultimately contributing to its underdevelopment.

Most crucially for the peasantry, land and forest degradation and exploitation weakened the resource base of peasant production and threatened the survival of households. This

decimation of the subsistence agro economy 'forced' many to abandon agriculture for migration. We have not ascertained the impact of migration on women. British accounts have contained a commentary on women as they lived and existed in pre-colonial Garhwali society. They have however, stopped short of establishing any connection between the colonial disruption of household-based economy and women's deteriorating role. As we have highlighted in the introductory chapter, there is a dearth of studies on women and it is this gap, which this research seeks to fulfill.

**Chapter IV**

**POST-COLONIAL DEVELOPMENT ENCOUNTER:  
AGRICULTURAL DECLINE AND MIGRATION IN  
PAURI GARHWAL**

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It is clear from Chapter III that the colonial policies were largely responsible for the ecological shifts and its implications for the economy and people of the region. Did the policies of independent India reverse this process? And if not, why? What were the implications? We examine these questions in the first two sections of this chapter. In the third and final section we present the findings of our survey of eleven villages of Yamkeshwar Block of Pauri Garhwal. Establishing the main transformations in rural Garhwal and the broad pattern of out-migration in the high migration district of Pauri Garhwal-Yamkeshwar Block in the post-independence period is the thrust of this section. The discussion in this chapter pertains to the erstwhile hill region<sup>1</sup> of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) and present day Uttarakhand with a focus on the Garhwal region.

## **POST INDEPENDENCE DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND OVERALL IMPACT**

### **Hill Development Approaches and Strategies**

The regions of British Garhwal and Kumaon Commissionerary were merged with the new state of Uttar Pradesh (U.P.) in 1947, with the princely state of Tehri Garhwal following in 1949. The hill region has been recognised as one of the backward and underdeveloped regions since the very beginning of planning era. However initial planning efforts (first two plan periods 1951-1962) did not reflect this recognition and in fact no need seems to have been felt to address the particular developmental needs of the local hill population. On the contrary the new policies of Independent India exhibited continuity with the British policies of resource exploitation to the extent that they pursued national and private interests at the cost of an already beleaguered peasantry of the region. Treating hill development merely as an extension of development in the plains, the state government did not make any specific development strategy in view of the varied physio-geographical, topographical and agro-climatic conditions of the region

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<sup>1</sup> At independence British Garhwal, Kumaon Commissionerary and Tehri Garhwal were merged into Uttar Pradesh. Initially there were four districts – Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal, Almora and Nainital. After 1962 Uttarkashi, Chamoli and Pithoragarh came into existence. Thereafter in 1970, Dehradun was also incorporated. Thus, over the years this hill region of U.P. was organised into two Administrative Divisions – Kumaon Division (Almora, Pithoragarh and Nainital) and Garhwal Division (Chamoli, Uttarkashi, Dehradun, Pauri and Tehri Garhwal). The present state of Uttarakhand was formed in November 2000 comprising 13 districts. Throughout the chapter, we will deal broadly with data of the erstwhile U.P. Hill region. The data presented here includes 8 districts of the U.P. hill districts. Therefore it includes integrated data for Nainital, Pithoragarh, Almora and Chamoli and excludes the Haridwar district. Wherever possible we will focus on the Garhwal region in specific.



In light of the Indo-China war, during the Third Plan period some consideration was given to the development of the Hill region by providing a separate allocation (of Rs. 500 million) for specific activities. Administratively, the Fourth Plan period (1967-1971) marked a significant change, when the government decided to treat the region as special in the context of development planning. A separate Department for Hill Area Development was created in 1973 with the main aim of decentralising decision-making and expediting the execution of plans and programs<sup>2</sup>. It was assigned the task of identifying areas of potential development, to prepare separate development plans, introduce various development packages and evaluate and monitor different programs.

Since the Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-1979) separate sub-plans for the development of the hill region began to be made and the Central Government began to provide special financial assistance (50 percent in assistance to the state budget) for hill development programs. Towards this end, through the separate hill area sub-plans, a three-pronged strategy of forestry development, industrial development and agricultural development began to be pursued in the plan documents.

However it is not so much lack of financial resources as absence of a region specific approach, that resulted in relatively poor development of the region.

With the Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-90) the constraints and opportunities of the region were recognised to some extent by planners and policy makers. As a result plan outlays emphasised on soil and water conservation, including watershed management, water supply and sanitation, minor irrigation works, road transport, basic education etc.

The Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-97), in addition to continuing these priorities gave focus to afforestation, scientific management and protection of forests etc. It also envisaged need-based development programmes with emphasis on creating additional employment and income generating opportunities through diversification of agricultural activities in horticulture, encouragement of pollution-free and locally available raw

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<sup>2</sup> There is an opinion among several researchers of this area that this move was promoted by the motive to quell popular discontent which had culminated in the demand for separate statehood for the hills.

material based small scale and cottage industries and development of tourism sector (Mehta, 1997, p.29-31).

In spite of the fact that area-specific issues found a place in the Plan documents since 1985 the development of the region did not really commence. On the other hand, the problems of unemployment and poverty arose and persisted and inequality in income distribution intensified. A critical review of development planning and implementations in the region locates this failure of development in the idea of internal colonialism - that the hill regions resources were being exploited by the rest of the state without adequate compensation or balanced development in return.<sup>3</sup> Even after independence the new state government (like its colonial predecessor) continued to look upon the resource rich hill region as resource provider for the progress of the state and for the modernising industrialising India. In line with the national government's policy of expanded industrialisation, it provided handsome subsidies for the supply of raw materials. The aim of providing electricity and water for the country as a whole saw the setting up of several hydroelectric projects in the 1960s in the Middle Himalayan zones along the Ganga and Yamuna rivers and their tributaries<sup>4</sup>. Similarly the State Government pursued mining in the interest of industrial development of the national government<sup>5</sup>.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the colonial network of communications were further strengthened and expanded towards an extended and intensive exploitation. The Indo-China war of 1962 underlined the strategic importance of hills. New border districts of Pithoragarh, Chamoli and Uttarkashi were created<sup>6</sup>. New roads were built and old ones were expanded and improved. The construction of strategic military roads for defence was extended to higher altitudes, opening up previously inaccessible mountain areas. This provided a boost to further commercial logging and raw material transport. The war once again signified that national rather than local interest defined development plans for

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<sup>3</sup> Idea of 'internal colonialism' developed from Maudsley, E. A New Himalayan State in India: Popular Perceptions of Regionalism, Politics and Development' in *Mountain Research and Development*, Vol. 19, No.2, 1999, Pp.101-112

<sup>4</sup> Contrary to this, the British had never constructed a big dam in the mountains. A few microhydel irrigation canals and small dams were built only in the Tarai region during their reign (Pathak, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> In the 1950s, the government conferred mining rights top 14 refugee families settled in Mussoorie – Dehradun region. Influential industrialists set up cement and calcium carbide plants in the area (Pathak, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Building of cantonment towns, government offices, schools and health institutions followed. Large areas of forest were destroyed in this development work.

the region<sup>7</sup>. In this way the state government drained the region of its raw materials (especially timber), and neglected its development.

Thus, the region's valuable resources were subject to continued exploitation in order to provide raw material, water and energy for national industrial and urban development. Moreover prevailing assumptions that industrialisation and modernisation are the true keys to development worked along with dominant material interests to permit the ruthless exploitation of forests. The new policies therefore only succeeded in aggravating the adverse effects of colonial rule.

We look briefly at policy, planning and implementation in five key areas which shaped the course of socio-economic change: forestry, industry, urban growth, agriculture and infrastructural growth. We critically assess their impact on environment, people and their subsistence.

### **Deforestation In The Name Of Development**

Under the name of forestry, industry and development, resource exploitation has continued unabated ravaging the forests. The literature on this aspect is extensive<sup>8</sup>. After independence the commercial and industrial interests, rapid growth of forest-based industries, technologies which aided resin tapping operations, all led to dramatic expansion of felling adding to massive destruction of forests. Even the hitherto untapped oak forests were put up for sale in urban-industrial markets. State subsidies in the supply of raw materials and a contractual system favouring long term forest contracts to sell timber and trees to industrialists<sup>9</sup> at ridiculously low prices increased the pressure on the forests. Sharp increases in the revenues of the Forest Department were an indication of viewing forests primarily as the source of raw material and government revenue.

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<sup>7</sup> These developments coincide with the Third Plan period when in light of the Indo-China war, consideration was given to the development of the Hill region by providing a separate allocation (of Rs. 500 million) for specific activities.

<sup>8</sup> For details see Dangwal, 2002; Negi et al, 2000; Nanda, 1999; Pathak and Pandey, 1995; Rawat, 1995; Saxena, 1995; Pokhriyal, 1994; Joshi and Pande, 1991; Swaroop, 1991; Guha, 1989; Bandopadhyaya and Shiva, 1987, 1988, 1991; Ives and Messerli, 1989; Dogra, 1988; Bahuguna, 1970 and 1992

<sup>9</sup> The Forest Department entered into contract affected from 1961 to 1981 with Star Paper Mills of Saharanpur (the Bajoria family) to sell waste timber and twisted trees at ridiculously low prices (cf. Guha, 1999; Gadgil et al, 1992,).

In order to meet the insatiable demand of the industry, a new strategy of industrial plantations viz. replacing of former 'inferior' slow growing oak and other broad-leaved forests with quick growing, high yielding species of chir pine was implemented. Subsequently commercial foresters encouraged monocultures of pine plantation as part of the afforestation drive.

While policy documents recognised the need to do away with intermediaries like the contractors (almost all of whom belonged to the plains), in practice the system continued due to political patronage. Meanwhile, small local clients and co-operative societies faced discrimination in the supply of raw material. Moreover while the big business houses owning large paper mills, turpentine factories and pharmaceutical companies were able to procure enough raw materials at very low prices, villagers were deprived of basic essentials of firewood, fodder and raw material. Women especially had to walk long distances for collecting fuel, fodder etc. (Askot Arakot Abhiyam, 1974, 1984 and 1994).

It was only in the aftermath of a strong peasant and women's resistance in the form of the Chipko movement that the forest conservation issue received government attention. A ten-year moratorium on cutting trees was ordered. The Forest Conservation Act of 1980, its amendments of 1987 and the 1988 National Forestry Policy placed a ban on de-reservation and restrictions on putting forestland to non-forest use. However these stipulations were rampantly violated. The excessive destruction of forest resources continues till date. The estimate for net annual depletion of forests stocks in the hill region stands at 3.76 million cubic meters per annum (Banuri, 1993; Dev, 1994). The magnitude of the damage is reflected in the 1993-94 data, which show that even though 63.98 percent of the area in Uttarakhand is recorded as forest area, only 44.08 percent has any tree cover (see in Appendix A4.1). In addition, less than 5 percent of the geographical area of Kumaon-Garhwal has forests having leaf cover of over 60 percent. Experts estimate that if current trends continue, 2031 may exhaust the forest's natural regenerative capacity (Valdiya, 1996; Pathak et al, 1995; Dev, 1994, Banuri, 1993). Moreover many researchers argue that these Forest Acts do not in any way affect big projects such as cement factories and big dams, but minor projects and the common

people face obstacles at every step (Mishra and Tripathi, 1978; Dogra, 1980, Pahar-2, 1991; Pathak, 1997; Joshi, 1991).

The scheme of having Civil Soyam forests as a buffer zone has met with a similar fate. The district administration see these common lands as avenues for further agricultural and horticulture expansion and for creation of community facilities in rural areas. Hence Civil Soyam forestland has often been allotted to the landless or marginal farmers for cultivation or provided as housing sites for the poor. Opening up of these forests for various government schemes and projects has made it difficult for local villagers to control the plunder. Additionally they are often over-exploited by unscrupulous alliances between contractors and government servants. Worse still, the victims (villagers) are held responsible for the destruction (Nanda, 1999).

A major adverse effect of deforestation, accelerated timber extraction and change in vegetation (from broad leaf to chir pine) has been damage to the hydrological regime, resulting in the dramatic decline in soil fertility. Soil moisture has reduced and perennial streams, springs have dried away and water supply shortages are common. Simultaneously, the water run-off, the topsoil erosion of slopes, landslides, flash floods and long spells of drought have increased rapidly. Lack of moisture reduced the fertility of existing agricultural land and productivity declined. To counter this trend, more land had to be increasingly brought under terrace cultivation. Much of new cultivated land was on steep slopes. This increase however, did not lead to increased productivity. Instead it increased pressure on forests for more land and for manure. The result was a strain on the capacity of the fields, declining the productivity of both forests and agriculture (Rawat, 1997; Valdiya, 1996; Bahuguna, 1992; Shiva, 1991,1988; Dewan, 1990; Jafri, 1990).

### **Industrial Development And Its Impact**

The physical characteristics of hill areas have posed a serious bottleneck to the development of the secondary sector. However since the Fifth Five-Year Plan, under the new industrial development strategy, special encouragement, incentives and facilities were provided for setting up of forest and mineral based industries, fruit and vegetable processing units, electronic and electrical items industries etc. In spite of availability of

variety of raw material, and several facilities and incentives for transformation from 'zero industry' into an 'industrial zone', the region has remained industrially backward. There is a virtual absence of industries, except in the plain areas of Nainital and Dehradun districts. This is a result of policies that are ignorant of and apathetic to local contexts and their special problems. For example, transport subsidies were made available from the nearest railhead in a region where road transport was the sole means of transport. This was a great deterrent to local private industrial entrepreneurship. Subsidies thus accrued to foothill districts Nainital and Dehradun, where the net domestic district output that registered was from manufacturing was very high compared to the hill region average<sup>10</sup> (Bora, 1996).

The fruit and vegetable processing industry has been constrained by the limited fruit production and non-availability of production and marketing infrastructure. Forest-based industry did not bring any real gains to the local people either. All the industrial raw material or timber is exported out of the hill region to the large-scale processing units located in the plains. Lack of transport and infrastructure facilities and the consequently heavier cost of production in the hills as compared to the plains, have inhibited locations of large-scale units of forest-based industries in the hilly belts. Secondly, as shown above, the system of sale of forest produce (trees and trunks) practices by the Forest Department based on tender, contracts and auctions leaves hardly any possibility of utilising products of Reserved Forests in small and decentralised basis by the local entrepreneurs. In fact, products of Reserved Forests have become increasingly inaccessible to the local people for production or consumption.

Thus the local population stands grossly neglected in the extraction and processing of forest produce. While the income from forestry pushes up the total income of the hill region, it has a minimal impact on the economic status of its people. In reality over 85 percent of the income originating in the forest sector in the hills does not accrue to hill people. A small part in the form of wage component of forestry and logging operations

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<sup>10</sup> The share of the manufacturing sector in the total net output at current prices in 1986-87 was only 11 percent, the lowest among all regions in U.P. state (Bora, 1996).

actually benefits the local people. Most exploitatively, they receive 'starvation' wages as forest labour (Tewari, 1983).

Governmental exploits in mineral resources<sup>11</sup> too have not been of much benefit to the locals. Very few people have gained employment as against fortunes amassed by the mining companies, the politicians, administrators and contractor lobby. While the Seventh Plan sanctioned Rs. 821.7 crores for mining, the investment was expected to provide likely employment to only 1350 people! (Pathak, 1995)

New mass pilgrim and nature tourism figured high in the urban-industrial development plan in view of religious shrines and sacred rivers and events in the region. A phenomenal increase in traffic of tourists underscores the great success of the tourism industry.<sup>12</sup> The tourism policy besides providing support to the Government tourism entailed a comprehensive package of financial incentives in the form of subsidies and loans to encourage the private sector and tourism. This has facilitated local private entrepreneurship to a small degree, but again major benefits have been usurped by the relatively more affluent and better-connected sections from the plains and other regions of the country. Tourism has provided limited jobs to people and business opportunities for the local economy. However, it has also brought about people's exploitation. While revenues from subsidised hotels flow out to absentee owners in the mega cities of Mumbai, Delhi etc. local people are largely at the mercy of ill paid seasonal jobs as waiters, cooks, drivers, *chaiwallas* etc. (Pande, 1996; Mehta, 1996; Joshi et al, 1991; Shilpkar, 1989).

### **Urbanisation, Growing Disparity And Other Socio-Economic Impacts**

Urbanisation has been an inevitable consequence of the developmental policies. The number of urban centres rose from 18 in 1901 to 79 in 1991, wherein 21.56 percent of the population is concentrated (Butola, 1992; Pant, 1996). New urban centres emerged either

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<sup>11</sup> Limestone quarrying flourished throughout the Central Himalayan region and in 1977, 25 percent of all limestone mines in India were in the mountains. In addition magnetite and phosphorite exploitations were significant. In 1978 mining leases in Uttar Pradesh Himalayas amounted to nearly 5000 ha (Rawat, 1990, p.316)

<sup>12</sup> The number of tourist in Uttarakhand increased from 112,036 to 121,099 between the period from 1991 and 1994 (Annual Plan 1995-96)

in strategically important areas<sup>13</sup> or as agro-industrial towns. Additionally cities, hill stations and cantonment towns established during the colonial rule became larger, encompassing the neighbouring villages. Creation of urban centres not only entailed takeover of some of the most fertile land for the new constructions, but significantly they had weak linkages with rural hinterlands

Besides urban centres, large agricultural estates also developed in Tarai region as a result of the government's settlement plans for Sikh refugees from Pakistan. Rich forest areas of Tarai-Bhabhar and Dun regions were transformed into agricultural fields to settle them. This not only led to loss of forest wealth, but also gradually led to the emergence of a neo-rich class of big, absentee landlords and capitalist farmers in Tarai region (Nainital Samachar, August 15, October 1 and 15, 1978; cf. Pathak, 1997).

Such development policies produced inter-district, rural-urban disparities and also led to creation of neo-rich classes. Such trends have at one level forced integration of hill villages within the mainstream society, but at another level have perpetuated weak linkages of urban centres with rural hinterlands. The patterns of trade relations are therefore unfavourable or exploitative, leading the hill areas into a dependency relationship with the wider, more dominant lowlands / plains political economies. These highly unequal terms of trade have created highly underdeveloped enclave economies.

Aggregate economic data however, gives a false impression of progress. Per capita income in the hill region is often seen to be the highest of all the regions in U.P. suggesting that it is the most prosperous (Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1985, 1990). But this is a statistical illusion as these figures arrive out of accounting the high income from forestry and logging, which does not accrue to the local people. When we exclude these sectors, the hill region indicates a low per capita income. Additionally, the total income of the hill region rose at an annual compound rate of 1.1 percent between 1970-71 to 1980-81; less than its rate of population growth during the same period – resulting in a negative growth rate of -1.3 percent of per capita income (Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1980; Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1985, cf. Bora, 1996, p22 – 23).

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<sup>13</sup> like Pithoragarh, Gopeshwar and Uttarkashi after the Indo-China war in 1962



The employment opportunities are not increasing to the extent of the growth of labour force in the region. The employment in organised public and private sector establishment went up from 2,07,373 in 1984 to 2,35,923 in 1991, covering only 4 percent of the population (Dhar, 1996, p128). Agriculture constitutes the biggest occupational category in the hills. However in recent decades both agricultural and manufacturing sectors share of workforce has been reducing and there has been a shift of workforce from these sectors to the tertiary sector (mainly government and semi-government services). In absolute terms the growth of workers in tertiary sector during 1981-1991 has been significantly higher at 45.96 percent compared to agricultural sector's 14.62 percent. Industrial sector actually shows a decline to 28.74 percent in the said decade (Bora, 1996; Pokriyal, 1993). As shown earlier the manufacturing sector is virtually non-existent<sup>14</sup>. Its contribution to the total income and employment in the hill region is low; the bulk of it is concentrated in plain areas of Dehradun and Nainital districts. Some new units that are deliberately located in the hilly region as a matter of purposive policy offer limited direct or indirect employment due to their capital-intensive nature, lack of backward and forward linkages and absence of infrastructure. The tertiary sector has no doubt shown a rapid growth, but it has been unable to provide a strong base to the regional economy. An increase of workers in tertiary sector and the relative decline in both primary (agriculture) and manufacturing (secondary) sectors are the true indication about the nature of mal-development.

### **Impact Of Infrastructure Development**

Infrastructure development by way of expansion of road networks, growth of transport, power, water supply, marketing and credit facilities etc. has been the indispensable underlying condition of all the types of development discussed above. This development too is not envisaged to meet local needs. Launching of large scale, capital-intensive development projects (like Tehri Dam, Vishnu Prayag Hydel project) by the national government, often with the funding by bilateral and multilateral organisations, has also not benefited the local people. The projects have marginalised small-scale mountain

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<sup>14</sup> The share of the manufacturing sector in the total net output at current prices in 1986 – 87 was only 11 percent in the hill region. This was the lowest amongst all the regions of U.P. State (Bora, 1996,p.23)

farmers, due to inherent contradictions between project aims and subsistence needs. Despite the location of several hydel power projects in the region, only 11.3 percent of net cultivated area in mountainous tract (excluding plan area of Nainital and Dehradun districts) was irrigated by the end of the year 1987-88 (Valdiya, 1996).

The U.P. government claims that 68.6 percent of the villages are electrified. However, this claim is not justified by the small amount of revenue (Rs. 12 lakhs) earned by the State Electricity Board in 1992-93 (Dhar and Gupta, 1992 cf. Valdiya, 1996). Similarly by the end of 1991-92, the length of the metalled road per thousand sq. km. increased from 164.15 km in 1980-81 to 227.86 km. But despite the emphasis being given to increasing road length, only 35 percent villages have roads passing through them, and 27 percent have metalled road more than 5 km away (Mehta, 1997). Much initial road construction was undertaken for security reasons. Later road construction has been encouraged by timber transportation, tourism or political pressure bypassing environment costs or local needs. Road links moreover have largely improved accessibility to government offices and to market towns. The impact of road transport is thus more beneficial for outside consumption economy. Only marginally and indirectly has it benefited the local production economy of Uttarakhand (Papola, 1996; Mehta, 1987).

### **Changes In Agriculture And Its Iniquitous Effects**

Agricultural and allied development, despite receiving high priority in terms of resource allocation, operated on the underlying assumption of the planners that hill areas could never become agriculturally self-sufficient. Thus the major thrust for the development of agriculture was on increasing productivity per unit of area by increasing the intensity of cropping and changing cropping patterns. This was to be achieved through adoption of high value crops, diversified agriculture, improved agricultural practices and technology, adequate inputs and extensive support. The role of horticulture, plantations of medicinal herbs, cultivation of vegetables and cash crops was given prominence in this connection. The plans recommend that cultivators should be motivated to convert the area under the production of "low valued inferior crops" (like *mandua* and *jhangora*) to plantation of fruits and medicinal herbs. Also recommended was the shift to production of high value

crops like soyabean, potatoes, oilseeds etc. and seasonal vegetables which might have an agro-climatic advantage and open up the possibility of export (Report of Seminar on Hill development, 1982; Sixth Five-Year Plan: sub-plan Uttaranchal; Seventh Five-Year Plan: Sub-plan Uttaranchal).

This kind of a thrust was in reality applicable to small sectors of the population, in some limited agro-climatic zones and in areas with ample water for irrigation. However its practice was restricted in the hills, as a large part of cultivated land could not be brought under irrigation. Even the use of modern technology in cultivation of land was very difficult in relatively small sized landholdings and terraced farming (Valdiya, 1996).

The policy thus was able to help only farmers who grew vegetables, fruits or grew high yielding varieties that required irrigation, fertilisers and intensive agriculture. Little aid was provided to peasants engaged in subsistence agriculture, despite being the overwhelming majority. Government policies thus most severely affected areas that were dry, arid, where conditions did not favour high intensive commercial cultivation. In sum, the needs of subsistence agriculture remained unaddressed.

An agricultural policy that defined 'development of agriculture' in terms of commercialisation through high cash-crop yield or production, bred further inequity and imbalance in economic and social life, while destroying the indigenous farming system. Commercialised horticulture and high cash value cropping have been introduced in agro-ecologically resource rich areas of middle and high Himalayas and the low lying areas of *tarai* and *bhabhar* region in a big way. Critics have rightly argued that the market forces and institutional set-up created for gearing up high value cash crops and horticultural development led to some economic growth but at the cost of equity. Prosperous farmers derived greater benefit than small and marginal farmers.

Today, the culture of self-reliance stands totally eroded. Crop diversity has disappeared in favour of monocultures or crop cultivators that are unsuited to mountain physical and subsistence conditions. Most of the market-oriented development has been accompanied by gradual loss of resilient traditional varieties which also affects other subsistence

activities like availability of crop by-product as fodder<sup>15</sup>. As a result, dependence on forest fodder has increased sharply, leading to overgrazing. Along with HYV seeds, the widespread / extensive use of modern fertiliser has rendered the land barren.

Where horticulture has become popular due to economic incentive and monetary profits ensured to farmers through government subsidy and market demands, people are further led to encroach upon forestland for cultivation and packaging for fruits. Zones dominated by ecologically and socially important forests like that of oaks, have suffered wreckage. Cultivation of fruits and vegetables as well as medicinal plants has also meant a relatively smaller area for the cultivation of food grains. Agriculture is now pushing into what was earlier forest and grazing land, primarily because good agricultural land is being used for commercial cultivation. Land encroachment even in protected / reserved forests is on the increase. Inevitably, tensions between agriculture and forestry have been growing.

Heightened commercialisation in the mountain context has thus proved to be a double-edged sword. On one hand, market oriented production has in many instances been accompanied by a high level of production for external consumption, at the expense of domestic consumption needs. On the other hand, in the absence of support, the traditional food crop were neglected and mixed cropping and fertility decreased, resulting in declined food availability which weakened the household nutrition security of the mountain people (Swaminathan, 1992; Semwal et al, 2001). Peasants lost the ability to meet household consumption requirements. Decreasing returns from existing agriculture means that farmers can survive for only seven to eight months a year on traditional food crops (rice, millet, wheat, maize) and have to look for non-farm income for the rest of the months. Marketable items produced in the wake of economic diversification only occasionally fetch a good price. The availability of inputs, knowledge and technology may have to some extent, led to changing cropping patterns in the hill areas, but these changes have seldom translated into increased production or marketable surplus at the

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<sup>15</sup> The hybrid seeds produce shorter, thicker stalks which withstand high winds and heavy rains, but are less resistant to fluctuations in rainfall and temperature and are not favoured by village women as animal feed. Number of cattle per household has declines due to shortage of fodder and leading to shortage of organic manure and all this has strong implications for households food security and nutritional intake. (For details, see Valdiya, 1996; Mehta, 1987; Shiva, 1994; Semwal et al, 2001).

village level. They have more often altered the local farmers consumption patterns with negative consequences for nutrition and health (Papola, 1996).

### **Increasing Environmental Degradation**

The multi-pronged development strategy outlined above have not only destroyed the forest wealth and agricultural land, but by breaking down systems of conserving and sharing natural resources, have wrought an overall environmental degradation of the region. The damage of soil, rock structures and water resources has assumed threatening proportions. Declining crop yields, reducing natural bio-diversity, loss of crop cultivators and livestock breeds are some of the crucial indicators of the ecosystem imbalance that is current in the Himalayan mountains. These are the combined effects of large-scale reckless destruction of forests, large-scale capital-intensive development projects, distorted urbanisation and urban construction. The extensive use of hilly forest land for industry, urban growth and tourism has led to water scarcity, floods and soil erosion. The fragile ecosystem has further deteriorated through massive forest clearance for imperfect alignments of hasty road construction. The growth of tourism has laid additional claim and stress on this, depleting resource base. Mass tourism has infested the pilgrimage routes with hotels, motels, rest houses, restaurants, shops etc. Further, tourism sells the Himalayas for climbers, adventurers and nature “freaks” and the pleasure-seeking urban tourist, taxing environmental capacity.

More recently, in the context of the new economic policy, new attempts ranging from low investment mobilisation of NGOs to investment intensive state driven efforts were concurrent. A cluster of programs like the Mahila Samakhya; Joint Forest Management Program (JFM)<sup>16</sup>; World Bank’s Swajal program (Drinking Water Project); USAID’s SIFSA or family Planning initiatives, Oxfam’s Watershed Management Program, UNDP’s Hill Hydro Program etc. initiated through the international and multilateral aid have added a new dimension to the development of hill areas (Gairola etal, 1999).

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<sup>16</sup> At the behest of the government order by the Ministry of Environment and Forests, 1990, U.P. Government was encouraged to involve local community in forest management through a programme commonly known as Joint Forest Management (JFM) i.e. starting Van Panchayats in the Civil Soyam forests - an experiment that has come under severe criticism.

On the whole, one can conclude that in spite of significantly large in-flows of funds allocated to the region through the Five Year Plans, progress of the region has not resulted in sustainable development and alleviation in poverty (Papola 1997, cf Mehta 1997). Rather the development policies have led to inequitous and skewed patterns of development that benefited few regions and some sections of the people, resulting in distorted ecological and economic profile for the region. It has created inter-regional and socio-economic disparities and few islands of prosperity and plenty in the hills.

In sum, the development agenda of the hill region fails to take into account of and respond to people's real needs and problems. There has been neither commitment strengthening the traditional agro-pastoral economy nor towards preserving the fragile ecosystem. The limited gains achieved have by far been outweighed by the costs paid in terms of injury to nature, and the decline of the peasantry and their subsistence and life-supporting systems. The full implications of this are dealt with in the next section.

### **THE MARGINALISED SUBSISTENCE AND CENTRALITY OF MIGRATION**

We now take stock of the specific negative impact of the multi-pronged development strategy outlined above specifically on the peasant economy and the peasantry of Garhwal. The enormity of ecological and environmental damage has destroyed the very basis of agriculture. In these circumstances population growth and density have become additionally critical factors that exert pressure on forests, land and other natural resources, hastening the process of decline. The result: population exodus and the substitution of subsistence economy by remittance economy.

#### **Decline And Inequity In Agriculture: Erosion Of Self-Sustaining Economy**

During this century, the population growth in Garhwal has been unmatched by a commensurate increase in either the area under cultivation or the volume of agricultural production. Demographic data from 1872 onwards shows that the population growth of Garhwal (i.e. 'British Garhwal' in colonial times) was generally increasing<sup>17</sup>(See

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<sup>17</sup> Except for two periods of comparatively low inter-censal growth (1911-21 and 1981-91). Low inter-censal growth in 1911-21 was perhaps due to the influenza epidemic, which raged across Northern India in 1918-19 and can also be attributed to the prolonged absence of males serving in the armed forces during World War II. The low inter-censal growth of 6.90 in 1981-1991 could perhaps be attributed to cumulative impact of increasing migration, improvement in life saving

Appendix A4.2). In addition, the percentage of net sown area to total reporting area Uttaranchal was only 12.5 percent as against the U.P. State's average of over 57 percent in 1986-87. (Government of Uttar Pradesh, 1990 cf. Bora, 1996, p.21). By 1991 Uttaranchal's population had increased by 22.5 percent over the 1981 census, whereas the cultivation increased only by 12.22 percent during the same decade (Rao et al, 2000).

Viewed in terms of a composite geographical area, the region is characterised by low population density. However when compared to U.P.state as a whole, its population per hectare of net sown area works out to be 8.5 persons in contrast to 8 for U.P. state. Because of comparatively small area under cultivation, the overall population density of 129 persons per sq.km conceals the fact that in Garhwal, as in other Himalayan districts, there is considerable population pressure on land. Population density in Garhwal district in 1991 was 448 persons/ sq.km of agricultural land (Rai et al, 2002), a level as high as in the most fertile regions of South Asia<sup>18</sup>. Therefore a region that had already reached its peak production capacity during early colonial rule has now had to sustain twice as many people. This population pressure on land in Pauri Garhwal district is depicted in Appendix A5.16.

The vast majority of the Garhwali population is rural (87 percent) and even today largely engaged in agriculture. A comparison of figures of 1896 to 1980 shows that cultivated area increased by 51 percent from 88,222 ha in 1896 to 133,500 ha in 1980, while the irrigated area increased from 3.2 percent to 7.8 percent of the cultivated area (Pauw, 1896; Dept. of Agriculture, U.P., 1980, cf. Whittaker, 1987). Even as recently as the year 1996-97, of the total reporting area in Garhwal, 11.6 percent of the total area is under cultivation, of which only 8.8 percent is irrigated, revealing that dry farming is still the norm in the district (See Appendix A4.15)

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health facilities available from outside, along with government efforts at family planning, which although much less than required, has reduced death rates even in remote mountain areas. During the last two decades the population in the region is growing at a ratio near to national average.

<sup>18</sup> But whereas on alluvial soils two-three crops per year can be grown with high yield, in the hill areas because of its peculiar geomorphic condition soil fertility is easily and rapidly exhausted and only three crops are grown per unit of arable land every two years (Whittaker, 1984; Rai et al, 2002).

Today these processes of expansion of agricultural land have almost ceased and all possible land is presently under cultivation. Today the cultivable waste in Uttar Pradesh hills is only 1.04 percent of the total geographical area, which means that whatever land could be cultivated, has already been brought under the plough (Pathak et al, 1995). Thus the increasing pressure of population on cultivable land has inevitably reduced the land-man ratio in an otherwise expansive hill tract. Even the per capita cultivated land is the lowest in the hill region, working out to only 0.89 hectares (cf. Mehta, 1997, p10-11). The small peasantry has emerged as a significant category. Increased population pressure and fragmentation of land (in context of the land inheritance system) with restrictions on agricultural extensions have reduced the farms to marginal sizes. The present land holding structure in the Uttarakhand hill region as a whole reveals that 88.2 percent of the total holdings are under small and marginal peasants who own 58.7 percent of total operated area. In Pauri Garhwal district, while in 1970-71 almost 48.20 percent of total landholdings were under semi-medium peasants, in 1990-91 approximately 40.4 percent of landholdings fell under small and marginal holding (Mehta, 1997, p10-11; Statistical diary 1993; Pokhriyal, 1993,p.51-52; also see Appendix A4.3).

In the later post-independence period most of the agricultural expansion occurred in community forests and common grazing grounds since good agricultural land was used for commercial exploitation. Yet the crop-livestock-based economy is showing certain disconcerting trends. The cumulative impact of government's policies has been a significant decadal decline in the proportion of the 'net sown area' to the 'total geographical area' in general and Pauri Garhwal in particular. The figures for Pauri Garhwal reveal that the 'net sown area' has declined from 17.86 percent in 1950-51, to 12.42 percent in 1993-94 and further 11.6 percent 1996-97. On the other hand, the proportion of 'cultivable waste' and 'current and other fallow land' has been increasing<sup>19</sup> (Pokhriyal, 1993, p.43; also see Appendix A4.1 and A 4.15). The data for Pauri Garhwal reveal that land not available for cultivation in the form of 'current fallows'. 'Barren and uncultivable area' and 'other categories of fallow' is increasing. Contrary to this, area put

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<sup>19</sup> From Agricultural census, 1993-94; Ministry of agriculture, 1993, p.93-95; Uttar Pradesh State Planning Institute, p.109-110; Board of Revenue, p.148-150. All sources cited from Pokhriyal, 1993, p.43).



to non-agricultural use shows an increasing trend. The decline in cultivated area symbolises a shift away from agriculture.

The data for the rural population of Garhwal (Appendix A4.5) also reveals that there is a sharp decline in the proportion of cultivators to total population in Garhwal district from 35.42 percent in 1971 to 19.92 percent in 1991. But what is more revealing is that this fall is more for male than female cultivators. Proportion of male cultivators to total rural male workers fell from 87.4 percent in 1951 to 42.4 percent in 1991. But this is not so for the female cultivators - their proportions to total rural female workers have remained fairly constant at 94 percent in 1991 in comparison to 98.6 percent in 1951. A more significant finding is that the proportion of female cultivators to total cultivators rose from 54 percent in 1951 to 61.5 percent in 1981 with a small decline to 57.4 percent in 1991<sup>20</sup>. The proportion of female peasants in the hill districts is highest compared to all other districts of Uttar Pradesh. This indicates that female cultivators play a significant role in the rural agricultural economy and the cultivation has been largely dependent on female workers.

Therefore we can conclude that on one hand stagnation and decline in agricultural productivity have resulted from concentration on cash crop production, horticulture and promoting high value crops. Enhancing the productivity of traditional crop plants instead would have insured food grain security for the majority. Forest destruction, fragmentation of landholdings, over-extension of agriculture, over grazing and intensive cropping has resulted in soil erosion and decline of soil fertility which have had a further adverse effect on agriculture. Very few families today obtain more than two or three months food from their fields. Further, with increased pressure on the resource base, it was difficult to continue traditional adaptation that required a high land-man ration, long fallows and rotations. As a cumulative result, there is a decline in the productivity of the subsistence base. We thus have a situation of large dependence on agriculture, yet a concomitant decline in produce (See Appendix A4.4). Majority i.e. 95.18 percent of the net sown area is under food grain production and average yield is 11.73 quintals / ha (Statistical diary 1993 and 1998). The per capita production of food grains in 1993-94 was 210 kg/person,

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<sup>20</sup> This increase may also be explained due to changes in the definition of workers used by consecutive censuses.

while the per capita rural income (at 1992-93 prices) was Rs. 1,322. (Ninth Five Year Plan document).

Additionally, population pressure and rising needs have imposed a heavy burden on common property resource such as public or communal forests, pastures and grazing land. Average decadal rate of population increase of even 10 percent is twice that of the rate of natural forest growth and is bound to have diminished size of the forests and depleted their regenerative capacity. As a result of agricultural expansion, land degradation, landslide and overuse of forests, the available grazing lands are shrinking. Data shows that the density of livestock increased from 342 animals / sq. km in 1896 to 474 animals / sq.km. in 1980 (Whittaker, 1984). This has also accentuated pressure on trees for cattle feed and for field manure. A greater amount of time is spent in fodder and fuel collection and significantly the inter-seasonal hunger gap (food deficit period) has been extended (Beyers etal, 1994; Jodha, 1989b).

In conclusion, we could say without exaggeration, that going way beyond colonial exploitation, post-independence 'development' took the region further on the path of ecological degradation and economic decay. Policies were not people-oriented, but were actually anti-people, anti-ecology and anti-subsistence economy. In this condition, the growth of population exacerbated the situation, leading to migration, rupturing further the ecology-economy link and ruining the agricultural economy.

### **Migration And Transition To Money Order Economy**

To a population that had been stripped off by the limited absorptive capacity of the local system, out-migration emerged as the only course of action. Non-availability of adequate local off-farm employment opportunities, especially for the educated, increased the pace of out-migration and the region's swift transition to money order economy. People's preparedness to venture to faraway cities increased. They preferred to hire out their labour for cash, rather than struggle to live off their own land.

Cash was increasingly required for a range of activities - to have ready access to agricultural inputs and public distribution system, better educational facilities, health

facilities outside the village in case of critical illnesses and a host of consumer products and consumer durables that made their appearance in the markets. It was easier now to expand rather than contract expenditure. Family expenditure had increased considerably on what were now “necessities” such as sugar, tea, and kerosene. Such expenditure demanded an income, which many families did not have. To most, migration in search of jobs was the only alternative to incurring debt.

Thus there were changes in the type and nature of migration from this region. Earliest migrations were seasonal or of short duration (Pauw, 1986). These were now unable to generate sufficient incomes resulting in their replacement by semi-permanent migration i.e. for the duration of working life.

The first generation in migrants of the post-Independence period came to cities like Lucknow, Chandigarh, Delhi and Bombay. They migrated as menial workers, hotel boys and domestic servants<sup>21</sup> (Joshi, 1997). After the Indo-China war and the ensuing defence build-up, job openings in the armed forces increased<sup>22</sup>. It is a popular belief that at least one person from each hill family is employed in the army<sup>23</sup>. Of late however, the proportion of people joining the army has declined (Pande, 2001).

The gross out-migration for Garhwal showed an overall increase during 1961-81 (see Appendix A4.7) with the rate especially high in Pauri Garhwal district. Region specific studies have also confirmed high rates of out-migration. It is estimated that as many as 60 per cent of all village households have a male family member working outside the hill region (Bora 1996). Some studies at the village level show that 42 to 57 percent of the households have at least one out-migrant (Khanka, 1984; Sharma, 1980; Bora, 1987 cf. Bora 1996). In a survey conducted by Pande in 2000, nearly half the males in 15-40 year age group and 40 percent of those aged between 41-60 years in the surveyed households were working outside their districts. In Jafri's study of 844 households in Kumaon-

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<sup>21</sup> These migrants are now entering their third generation. The new generation due to better education and economy has become a force in these cities. They became less shy and more confident of asserting their identity as *pahari*. This self-assertive group was behind the movement for a separate hill state (Joshi, 1997, p394-6).

<sup>22</sup> The attraction of the army lay not only in the economic benefits that it conferred on the soldier, for example assured reasonable pay, clothing and board, a pension and/or gratuity on leaving the service, but it also offered an avenue of upward social, as well as economic mobility for even the barely literate (Parry, 1979, p. 42). It also offered a vehicle for the acquisition by some of practical skills of use on discharge from the service, for example driving.

<sup>23</sup> About 7% of the hill region's population is estimated to be serving in armed forces and 3,03,713 (6.3% of the population) are ex-servicemen (Valdiya, 1996, p8,11)

Garhwal region, Pauri Garhwal district showed highest out-migration where 57.7 percent households reported mass migration out of the village (Jafri, 1990). Today, it is estimated that more than six million Uttarakhandis are out of their homelands (Joshi, 1997; Valdiya, 1996).

The exceptionally high level of educational attainment of the region has been a facilitating factor. In 2001 the overall literacy rate for the population aged 7 years and above was 72 percent. In Garhwal district it is 78 percent (see Appendix A4.6). Since educational levels are not matched by job opportunities<sup>24</sup>, educated youth typically seek work away from the villages. Even if they do stay back, they do not wish to work the land.

The consolidation of migrated educated elite in service sector and on political platforms has continued at a rapid speed. The better off found assured source of cash income while others could only combine agriculture with temporary migration. Differential access to occupational mobility and income and the consequent creation of a new form of internal differentiation spelt the socio-economic dislocation of the local people. This economic differentiation of peasant proprietors became apparent in last few decades (Pathak et al, 1995). In the absence of social stratification through skewed landholdings, remittance is the basis of social inequality. Remittance from those employed in secure jobs and political access has led to the consolidation of a rural elite. This group has achieved the status of non-cultivating owners of land either through rental income or hired labour. This stratum has also cornered benefits of state development activities either as the local organisers/contractor of projects or as direct beneficiaries. The penetration of political parties and competition among them has further ruptured social cohesion and created the advantaged few with better access to power and resources. Changing stratification patterns did not alter existing inequalities along caste lines, but accentuated inequality within the upper castes themselves (Pathak et al, 1995).

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<sup>24</sup> According to Uttar Pradesh government figures, there has been a marginal growth of private and public sector job in the region. The number of job in the public sector, which is the main employer, declined from 203,763 to 202,627 during the 1990-95 period, while private sector jobs grew slightly from 32,235 to 34,112 in these years (Uniyal, 1999, p2).

An interesting feature of migration in this region is the simultaneous occurrence of out-migration and in-migration. A Garhwali seeks his fortune in the plains whereas a Purabai (persons from eastern U.P. or Bihar), Dotiyal (Nepali) and Kangari (Himachali) gets seasonal employment in the hill region. A limited number of in-migrants belong to Saharanpur and Bijnor districts of U.P. The migrants are employed in construction and other forms of wage labour. This outside migration is accounted for by the cultural inhibition of Garhwali men who are unwilling to do some types of wage work in their own land and a tendency to opt for lighter work.

There is little consensus in the literature about the amount and effects of remittances. While Parry's (1979) observation for Kangra (Himachal Pradesh), 'a remittance economy backed by subsistence agriculture' seems to hold true for this region, we have little literature which gives concrete indication of amount and effects of remittances. As far back as 1979, Whittaker had observed that remittance forms a large part of the rural household income. In some parts of the hill districts, more than 60 percent of the family income was derived from remittances (Guha, 1989, cf. Mahendra Dev, 1994). A study of Pauri Garhwal district revealed that the district economy depended to a large extent on outside income chiefly by way of money order remittances (Dobhal, 1987). Over the years, the dependence seems to have increased. The consequence has been the emergence of a remittance economy, supported by subsistence agriculture (Joshi, 1997; Valdiya, 1996).

Against this background of a broad post-independence development scenario of Uttaranchal, we now move to the survey findings of eleven villages of Yamkeshwar in Pauri Garhwal. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, in the absence of migration data from secondary sources, the baseline survey was conducted to establish the region as one of high migration and to profile some of its key characteristics in order to provide the backdrop to the in-depth study of two villages selected from these baseline villages.

## MIGRATION IN YAMKESHWAR: A SURVEY OF ELEVEN VILLAGES

### **The Context: Yamkeshwar And Pauri Garhwal**

Pauri Garhwal, or Garhwal as it is popularly called, is one of the thirteen districts of the state of Uttaranchal. Spreading over an area of 5230 sq.kms, the district for its administration and development planning purposes is divided into six tehsils and fifteen community development blocks. The six tehsils include Pauri, Thalising, Kotdwar, Lansdowne, Srinagar and Dhumakot. There are a total of 1214 gram sabhas with 3565 villages and 8 towns. Important urban centres are Pauri - the district headquarters, Srinagar - marketing post and university town, Lansdowne - regiment centre of Garhwal rifles and Kotdwara - principal market, industrial centre and only railhead in the district.

According to the 2001 census the population of the district is 69 million comprising 33 million males and 36 million females (See Appendix A4.8). Almost 97 percent of the population in the district is Hindu. The Scheduled Caste population constitutes 13.5 percent and the Scheduled Tribes a miniscule 0.22 percent. The district is sparsely populated. During the period between 1991 and 2001, the population in the district increased by 3.87 percent. Comparatively the growth rate is fairly slow, in fact, in Pauri district the population growth rate has come down from 9.05 percent in 1991 to 3.87 percent in 2001. Also the rural population growth has been much lower than urban growth in the district. Nevertheless, majority of the population (87 percent) of the district still lives in rural areas. Percent of urban population in the district has remained low at 12.23 percent. The sex ratio of the district is relatively high<sup>25</sup> at 1104 as compared to 964 of Uttaranchal and national average of 933<sup>26</sup> (See Appendix A4.8 to A4.12).

According to the 2001 Census, the literacy level of population aged 7+ years is 77.9 percent. Despite being high, the gender literacy disparity is still significant in the district

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<sup>25</sup> Over time, the sex ratio of Garhwal has continued to widen and followed a trend opposite to that of national level figures. This hints at substantial out-migration of males rather than simply a statement of favourable status of women of the area. Moreover a lower sex ratio of 925 in the 0-6 years age group is telling. This is slightly higher than the state figure of 906 and almost equivalent to the all India figure of 927 (Census 2001)

<sup>26</sup> Over time, the sex ratio of Garhwal has continued to widen and followed a trend opposite to that of national level figures. This hints at substantial out-migration of males rather than simply a statement of favourable status of women of the area. Moreover a lower sex ratio of 925 in the 0-6 years age group is telling. This is slightly higher than the state figure of 906 and almost equivalent to the all India figure of 927 (Census 2001)

(males is 92 percent and females is 66 percent) (See Appendix A4.6). Occupationally, 66.7 percent of the population is engaged in agriculture as cultivators and agricultural labourers (1991 census). The percentage employed in agriculture has declined from 89.6 percent in 1951 to 80.9 percent in 1971 and 81 percent of the workforce in 1981, with increase in service sector employment amounting for most of this change (See Appendix A4.13 and A4.14).

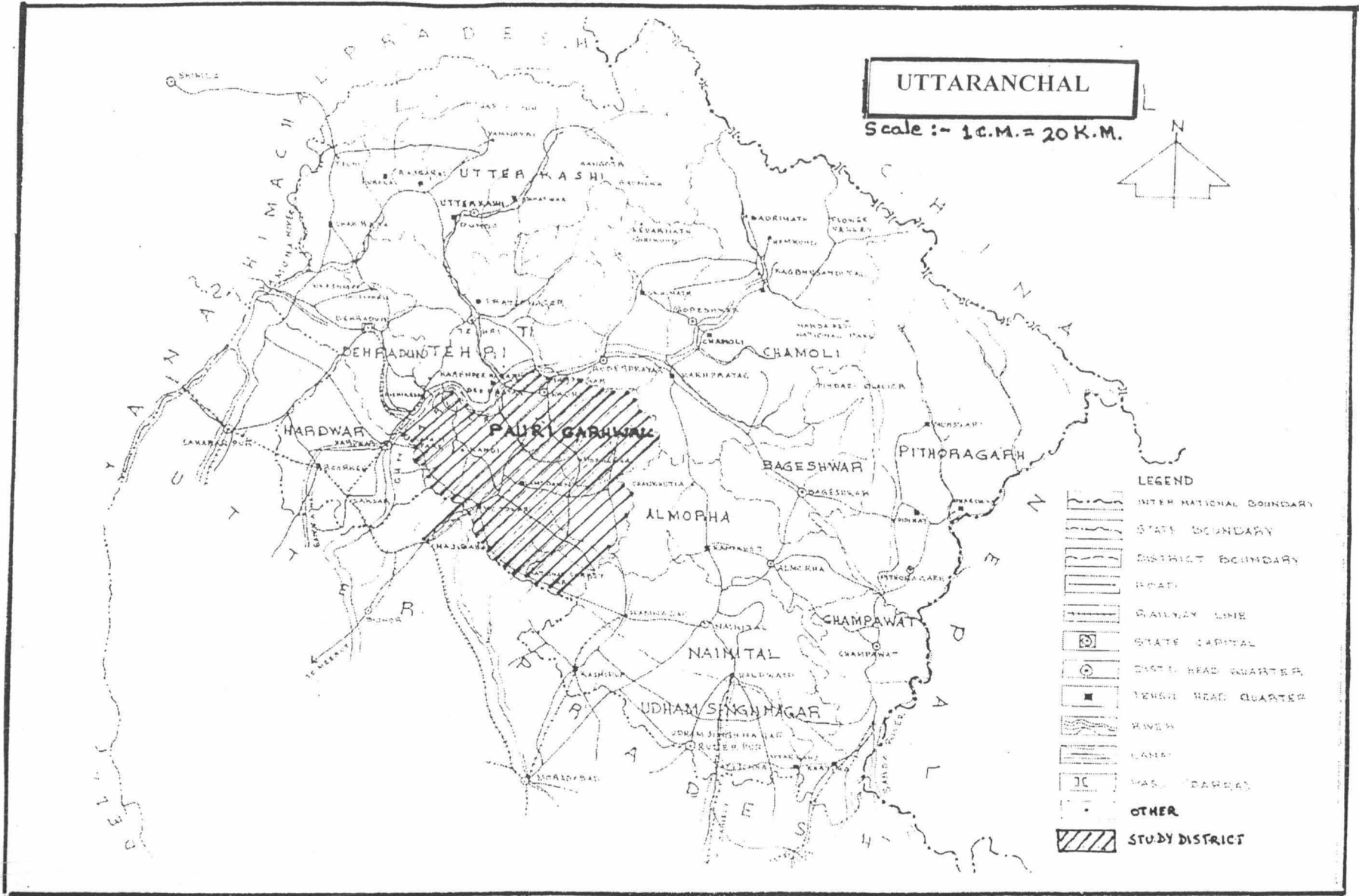
As per the statistics available for the year 1996-97 of the total reporting area, most of the land of the district (59 percent) is covered with forest. The district is poorly endowed with commercially exploitable mineral resources and possesses a weak industrial establishment employing less than 1 percent of the workforce. Industry is predominantly small-scale and is restricted to Kotdwara and surrounding area. Communications are even today poor and frequently disrupted during the monsoon by landslides<sup>27</sup>. As mentioned earlier, Kotdwara is also primary market and industrial centre and the only railhead in the district. (Whittaker, 1984).

**Yamkeshwar** the third largest Block of Kotdwara tehsil covers an area of 644 sq.kms. The headquarters of this block is located 154 kms from the district headquarters at Pauri. The nearest railway station is Kotdwara at a distance of 77 kms. For administrative purposes the Block has been divided into 8 Nyay Panchayats, 90 gram-sabhas and a total of 236 revenue villages out of which 222 are inhabited (see Fig 4.1)

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<sup>27</sup> The length of pucca road in Pauri Garhwal in 1989-90 was 4.26 Km / Km<sup>2</sup> which is lower than the U.P. state figure of 42.0 km / km<sup>2</sup> in 1971. This is despite the increase in road network since 1971.

Figure 4.1 : State of Uttarakhand with its 13 Districts





The total population of the block according to 1991 census is 40,566, of which 19,778 are males and 20,788 females. Females exceed the male population, reflecting the tendency of male out-migration. The decennial growth rate (rural) of the population (1981-91) in Yamkeshwar Block is 8.6 percent, which is higher than the district figures of 4.5 percent. But the population density in Yamkeshwar is the lowest at 63 persons per sq.km. The block has a total of 22141 literate persons (54.6 percent) of which 10269 are males as compared to 8787 females. Both figures are much lower than the district level though compared to 1971 census the literacy rates have almost increased three times for females<sup>28</sup> (Sankhakiya Patrika, Garhwal 1994, Mahila Samakhya, 2000; District Census, 1991).

The major source of occupation and livelihood of people in the Block is agriculture. Occupationally 63.3 percent workers are agricultural workers (cultivators plus agricultural labourers). While agriculture still engages the majority of population, over the last few decades there has been a tremendous decline in agricultural workers. The 1971 Census shows that 86.36 percent of the workforce constituted agricultural workers; hence the decline is 23.06 in two decades (Sankhakiya Patrika, Garhwal, 1994; District census, 1971 cf. Lal et al, 1987).

Around 57 percent land of Yamkeshwar block (20629 ha) is under forests. The net sown area is only 14.02 percent. With only 10.8 percent of cultivable land being irrigated, the region is predominantly a dry farming area. 98.11 percent of the cultivated land is utilised for food grain production<sup>29</sup>. The land use pattern of the region illustrates disturbing trends. Comparison of 1971 census figures with the figures given by the Block Development Officer in 2001 reveal that the forested area in the Block has come down from 70 to 57 percent while there has been an increase in cultivated wasteland (from 4.11 percent to 5.52 percent); current fallow (0.29 percent to 0.39 percent); old fallow (0.60 percent to 2.00 percent) and barren land (3.05 percent to 4.10 percent). Increasing fallows and barren land further promote degradation of land and indicate increasing disinterest in

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<sup>28</sup> In 1971 female literacy rate was 15 percent only (District census, 1971 cf. Lal et al, 1987).

<sup>29</sup> About 62.12 percent of the cultivated land is under Kharif compared to 37.88 percent under Rabi crops.

agricultural land management (Lal et al, 1987; Sankhakiya Patrika, Garhwal, 1994; Census 1971 and data from BDO, Yamkeshwar, 2001).

Infrastructure facilities in the block are extremely limited. While the length of total road in the block is 749 kms, only 47 villages (20 percent) are connected by road. Though the efforts for electrification started almost three decades ago, 106 villages (45 percent) are still non-electrified. The block has 68 PDS / ration shops, 2 co-operative and 7 commercial banks. There are three veterinary hospitals and one seed and fertiliser depot. Educational and health facilities are also limited in the Block. There are a total of 111 primary schools, 28 Junior High schools, 13 High schools and 7 inter-colleges in the Block. A Primary Health Centre (PHC) is located at block headquarters at Yamkeshwar, one additional PHC at Kimsar. Six state allopathic dispensaries (SAD) and 18 sub-centres exist in the block (information provided by the Block Development Officer at Yamkeshwar, 2001). For further detail data on Yamkeshwar Block see Appendix A4.16 and A4.17.

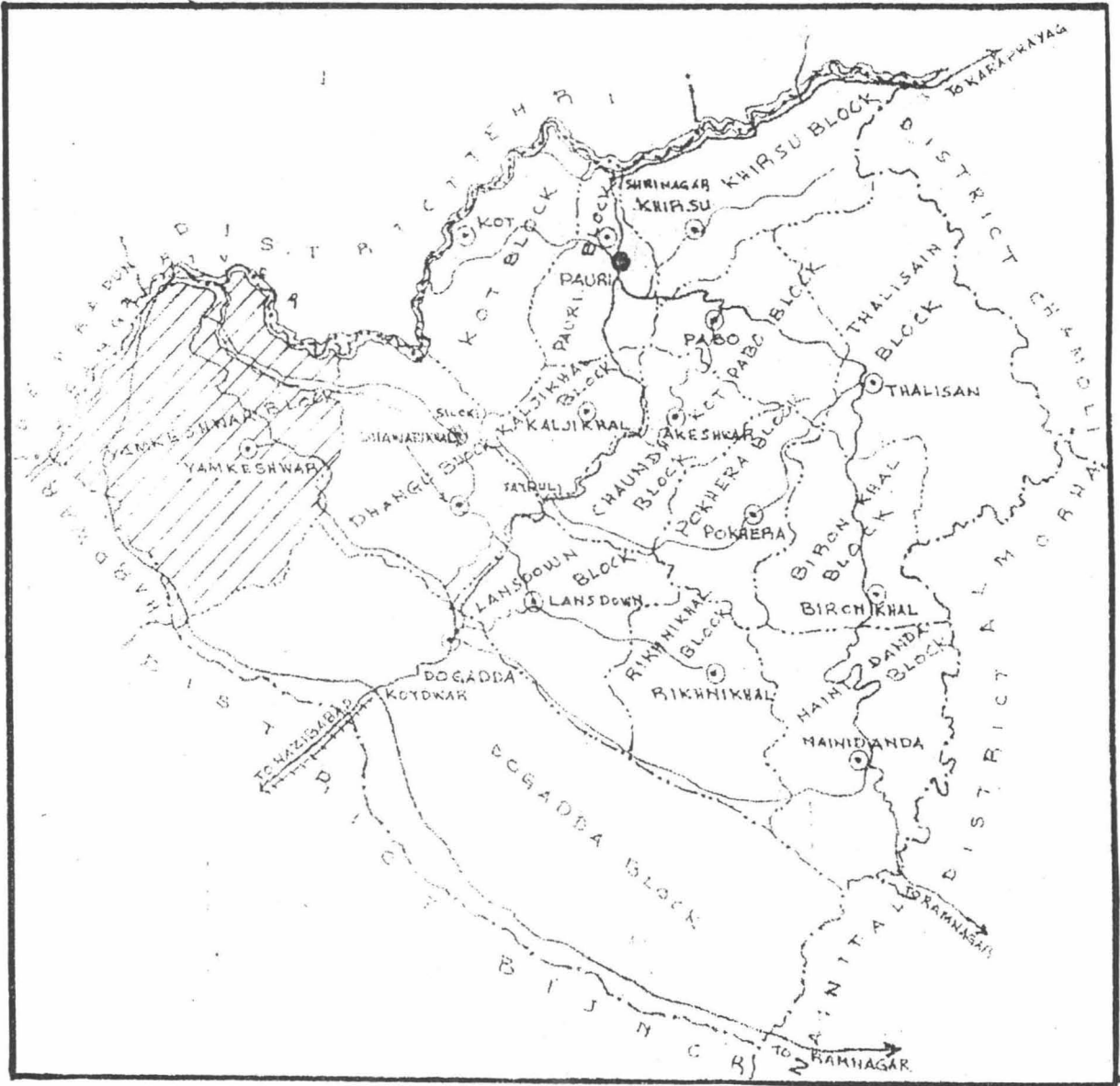
### **Contemporary Status Of Migration In Yamkeshwar**

The eleven villages surveyed for the baseline were spread across the Yamkeshwar block<sup>30</sup> (see Fig 4.2). Nestling amidst the mountains of the Lesser Himalayan range, at an altitude ranging from 1100 to 2000m, these villages represent the varied physical characteristics, agro-climatic conditions, natural resources, social structure, and infrastructure development in the Block. The details concerning the altitude, location, land use pattern infrastructure and demographic features of the baseline villages are given in Table 4.1 and 4.2.

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<sup>30</sup> Eleven villages representative of 10 percent of the sample were selected on the basis of geographical location (distance from the town), size of the village and population growth rate (1981 - 91 census). Details of the selection process are given in the methodology chapter.

**Figure 4.2 : Location of Yamkeshwar Block Amidst the Other Developmental Blocks in Pauri Garhwal District**




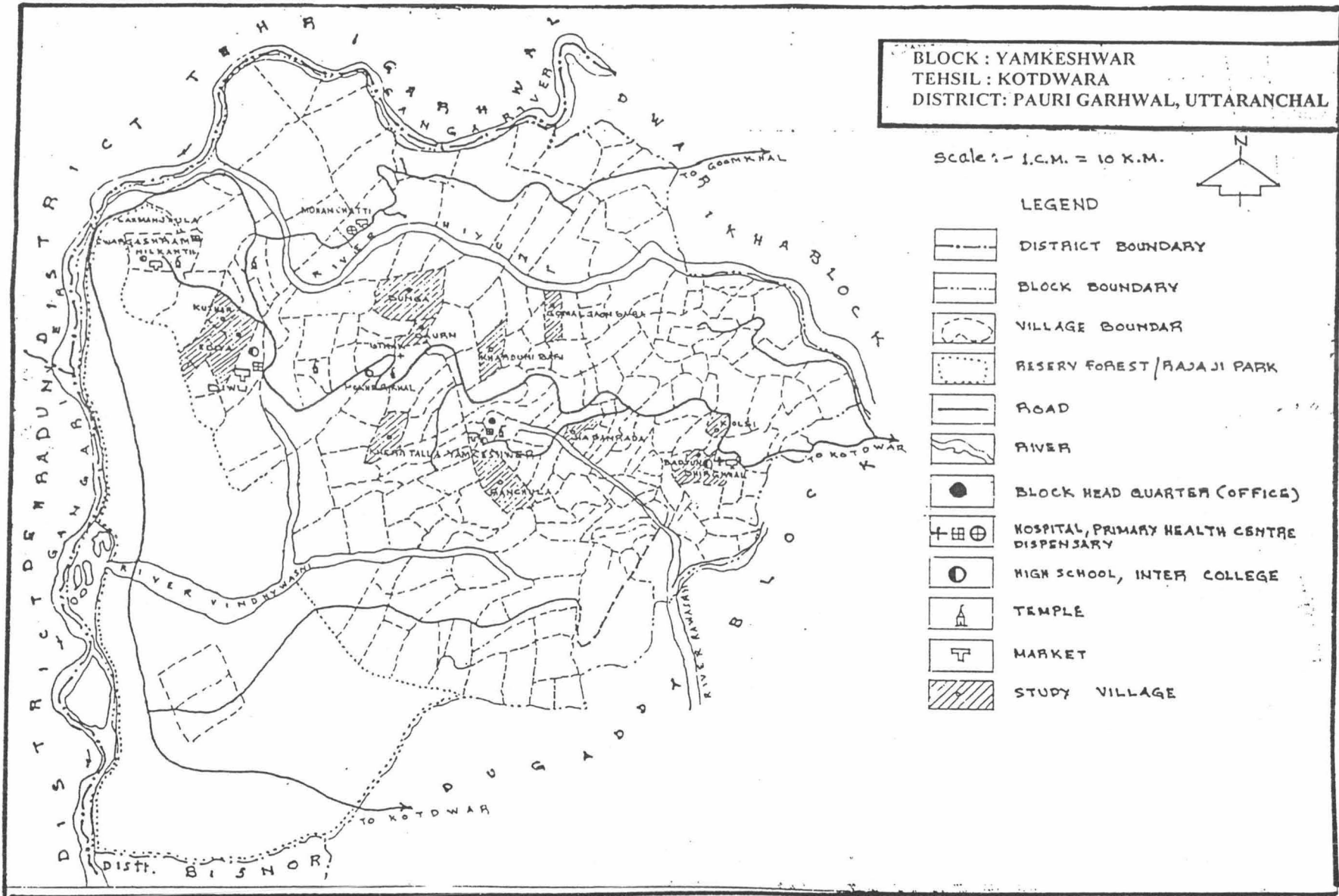
 Yamkeshwar Block: site of Baseline Survey and Indepth Study

Figure 4.3 : Baseline Study Villages in Yamkeshwar Block, Pauri Garhwal



Kolsi, Badaun, Ranchula and Jai Damrada were located at a distance of 42 to 79 kilometers from Kotdwara, while the remaining seven villages were located towards Rishikesh at a distance of 20 to 50 kilometers from Rishikesh town. There were villages as small as Ediya spread over just 36.83 ha to villages as large as Bunga spread over 422.51 ha. Some villages like Kharduni Talli and Gomalgaon have large areas under forest while villages like Ediya, Daurn, Badaun and Kolsi has negligible forest area. Even the distance from forests ranged from 0.5 kilometers in Jai Damrada and Kharduni Talli to villages like Kolsi and Daurn where forests were 4 – 6 kilometers away.

The villages also reflected the diversity of infrastructure development of the region reflected through availability of potable piped drinking water, electricity and roads. Even availability of schools in the vicinity shows a varied picture. For most villages except Badaun, Post Office and Bank were at a distance of nearly 3 – 4 kilometers.

Of the eleven selected villages Gomalgaon is exclusively inhabited by Rajputs. Even Kolsi is almost a unicast village with all except one households being of Rajputs (98.2 percent). Badaun had a miscellaneous population of Brahmin and Scheduled castes. Villages Kharduni Talli and Kheda Talla have Rajputs, as well as scheduled castes. The remaining five villages viz. Jai Damrada, Ranchula, Kuthar, Ediya and Daurn have members of all these groups viz. Brahmins, Rajputs and Scheduled caste.

**Table 4.1: Location, Land Use Pattern And Infrastructure Of The Baseline Villages**

A. Villages		Kolsi	Baduan	Jaidamrada	Ranchhula	Kharduni Tali	Gomalgaon Bara	Khera Talla	Kuthar	Etiya	Daurn	Bunga
1	Height (m)	1100	1100	1600	2000	1700	1800	1400	1900	1400	1800	1900
2	Total Area (ha)	122.62	78.51	83.37	420.89	157.83	212.06	293.41	210.44	36.83	125.05	422.51
3	Under forest (ha)	7.90	7.00	13.00	35.89	71.85	117.98	31.48	6.20	1.00	5.00	40.00
4	Unirrigated	50.00	30.00	43.37	200.00	32.16	73.63	124.66	170.24	32.23	100.00	300.00
5	Cultivable waste (Gauchar) (ha)	50.02	18.24	5.00	105.00	50.82	13.10	1.70	4.00	1.00	5.00	20.00
6	Area not available for cultivation (ha)	14.70	13.27	22.00	-	3.00	3.20	135.57	10.00	2.00	15.00	40.00
7	Distance from forest (km)	6	1	0.5	4	-	1.5	3	4	1	4	2
8	Water Source	Piped, Spring	Piped, Spring	Piped	Spring	Piped	Spring	Spring	Piped	Spring	Spring	Spring
9	Year of piped water	1965	1988	1983	-	1980	-	-	1978	1988	-	2002
10	Year of electrification	1986	1984	1991	-	1991	1991	1988	1988	1990	1992	1992
11	Distance from Kutcha road (km)	1	1	1	12	3	12	3	1.5	0.5	3	3
12	Nearest Bustop (km)	1	1	3	13	3	12	3		1	3	3
13	Primary school (km)	1.5	0.5	1	1.5	1	0	1	2	2	0	2
14	Junior High School (km)	1.5	0.5	1	4	3	0	0	-	-	4	0
15	High School (km)	5	0.5	3	4	12	8	4	3	3	5	5
16	Distance Post Office (km)	4	1	3	4	3	3	6	4	3	3	4
17	Distance Bank (km)	4	1.5	3	10	25	35	24	4	3	13	12
18	Distance from Rishikesh (R) / Kotdwara (K) (km)	76 (K)	42 (K)	75 (K)	75 (K)	40 (R)	50 (R)	40 (R)	20 (R)	27 (R)	36 (R)	35 (R)

Note: "-" refers to information not available ; Source: Garhwal District Census Handbook, 1991 and information given by BDO, Yamkeshwar

**Table 4.2: Basic Household And Population Profile Of The Baseline Villages**

Villages	Kolsi	Baduan	Jaidamrada	Ranchhula	Kharduni Tali	Gomargaon Bara	Khera Talla	Kuthar	Ediya	Dauri	Bunga
1. Total households	55	59	52	40	57	35	49	63	30	41	61
2. Caste											
Rajput	54(98.2)	–	4 [7.7]	23(57.5)	51(89.5)	35(100)	42(85.7)	30(47.6)	1(3.3)	28 [68.3]	21
Brahmin	–	48(81.4)	40 [76.9]	8(20.0)	–	–	–	12(19.0)	23(76.7)	5 [12.2]	28
S.C.	1(1.8)	11(18.6)	6 [11.5]	9(22.5)	6(10.5)	–	7(14.3)	21(33.3)	6(20.0)	8 [19.5]	12
Total	55	59	52	40	57	35	49	63	30	41	61
3. Migration Status											
Out migrant households (OM)	25(45.5)	30(50.8)	19 [36.5]	21(52.5)	39(68.4)	27(77.1)	24(49.0)	33(52.4)	23(76.7)	29 [70.7]	43(70.5)
Non-migrant households (NM)	30(54.5)	29(49.2)	33 [63.5]	19(47.5)	18(31.6)	8(22.9)	25(51.0)	30(47.6)	7(23.3)	12 [29.3]	18(29.5)
4. Household Heads	55	59	52	40	57	35	49	63	30	41	61
Male	41(74.5)	40(67.8)	16 [30.8]	17(42.5)	23(40.4)	20(57.1)	25(51.0)	19(30.2)	18(60.0)	22 [53.7]	27(44.3)
Female	14(25.5)	19(32.3)	36 [69.2]	23(57.5)	34(59.6)	15(42.9)	24(49.0)	44(69.8)	12(40.0)	19 [46.7]	34(55.7)
5. Demographic Characteristics											
(6a) Total Resident Population (excluding OM)	313	302	264	165	261	225	218	274	101	204	346
(6b) Total Resident Population (including OM)	350	354	290	209	328	266	264	326	161	249	426
(6c) Total No. of Migrants	37	52	26	44	67	41	46	52	60	45	80
Male	37	52	26	44	66	41	45	50	60	45	78
Female	–	–	–	–	1	–	1	2	–	0	2

Source: Baseline Survey

## Religion, Caste, Occupation of Village Households

The eleven villages together have a total of 542 households, with a total population of 2844 (1338 males and 1506 females). Of these 313 (57.7 percent) classify as migrant households which send out a total of 550 migrants. All households in the surveyed villages are of Hindus. As elsewhere it is patterned on the traditional caste system. The principal castes being Brahmins, Kshatriyas (called Rajputs) and scheduled castes (called Doms). Brahmins constitute 30.3 percent, Rajput 53.3 percent and Scheduled castes 16.4 percent of the village households. Notwithstanding migrating trend, most people practice agriculture. Agriculture is the main economic activity in these villages. Majority cultivate their own land. For a sizeable 53.3 percent households, agriculture alone is the main source of livelihood. Around 20.5 percent depend primarily on salary from service both in private and public sector while 11.3 percent survive mainly on pension. Wage share is small, only 7.4 percent and 5 percent households have some petty business, like teashops, grocery shop tailoring, running flour-mill etc. This represents the main source of livelihood of households, but almost all the time agriculture serves as the primary or secondary activity/ occupation of all the households (See Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3: Distribution Of Households According To Primary (Main) Source Of Livelihood.**

Major Occupation/ Total Land Owned (In acres)	0.00	.01-1.00	1.01-2.00	2.01-3.00	3.01-4.00	4.01>	Total
Service	2 (1.8) [4.8]	39 (35.1) [20.5]	36 (32.4) [27.3]	17 (15.3) [27.0]	11 (9.9) [22.9]	6 (5.4) [9.0]	111 [20.5]
Farmers Cultivators	5 (1.7) [11.9]	102 (35.3) [53.7]	69 (23.9) [52.3]	35 (12.1) [55.6]	30 (10.4) [62.5]	48(16.6) [71.6]	289 [53.3]
Share Croppers	6(100.0) [14.3]	-	-	-	-	-	6 [1.1]
Wage Earning	19(47.5) [45.2]	17 (42.5) [8.9]	3 (7.5) [2.3]	1 (2.5) [1.6]	-	-	40 [7.4]
Pensioners	-	15 (24.6) [7.9]	21 (34.4) [15.9]	7 (11.5) [11.1]	7 (11.5) [14.6]	11 (18.0) [16.4]	61 [11.3]
Petty Business	5 (18.5) [11.9]	15 (55.6) [7.9]	3 (11.1) [2.3]	2 (7.4) [3.2]	-	2 (7.4) [3.0]	27 (5.0)
Old Age Pension	5 (62.5) [11.9]	2 (25.0) [1.1]	-	1 (12.5) [1.6]	-	-	8 [1.5]
Total	42 (7.7)	190 (35.1)	132 (24.4)	63 (11.6)	48 (8.9)	67 (12.4)	542 (100.0)

Note: ( ) denotes row percentage; [ ] denotes column percentage



## Caste And Landholding

Table 4.4 below shows that of the total of 542 households, a sizeable percentage (42 percent) own 1 acre or less. Around 35.1 percent have from 0.01 to less than 100 acre. Overall 12.4 percent have more than 4 acres of land. Rajputs followed by Brahmins are holders of larger plots of land. In sharp contrast majority of Doms are landless (72.5 percent). Most Rajputs and Brahmins too fall in middle level category of 1 - 2 or 2 - 3 acres of land.

**Table 4.4: Distribution Of 542 Households According To Land Holding Size And Caste**

Class \ Caste	Brahmin	Rajput	Schedule Caste (Dom)	Total
0.00	4 (10.0) [2.4]	7 (17.5) [2.4]	29 [72.5] (32.6)	42 [7.7]
0.01 – 1.00	67 (35.3) [40.9]	70 (36.8) [24.2]	51 (27.1) [57.3]	190 [35.1]
1.01 – 2.00	47 (35.6) [28.7]	83 (62.9) [28.7]	2 (1.5) [2.2]	132 [24.4]
2.01 – 3.00	20 (31.7) [12.2]	42 (66.7) [14.5]	1 (1.6) [1.1]	63 [11.6]
3.01 – 4.00	9 (18.8) [5.5]	38 (79.2) [13.1]	1 (2.1) [1.1]	48 [8.9]
4.01 >	17 (23.9) [10.4]	49 (69.0) [17.0]	5 (7.0) [5.6]	67 [12.4]
<b>Total</b>	<b>164 (30.3)</b>	<b>289 (53.3)</b>	<b>89 (16.4)</b>	<b>542 (100.0)</b>

Note: ( ) denotes row percentage; [ ] denotes column percentage

Source: Survey of 11 villages in Yamkeshwar Block.

## Migrant Status And Landholdings

Table 4.5 shows that within each landholding group, migrant households outnumber non-migrant indicating that there is a propensity to migrate from all groups. Significantly only in the lowest landholding category, one finds that non-migrant households (66.7 percent) by far outnumber migrant ones.

In terms of caste, the same table shows that migrant households outnumber non-migrant ones among Brahmins (67 percent), followed by Rajputs (58 percent). The pattern is reversed among Doms. Taking landed status and caste together, one can conclude that most Doms have neither resources nor connections to adopt the strategy of migration.

Although the pattern of migration is largely similar across the area, the extent of migration varies between the villages ranging anywhere between 45 to 77 percent of families reporting migration. In all villages migration was higher among the upper castes. Proximity and accessibility to urban centres (Kotdwara and Rishikesh) did not bring about any significant variation in incidence of migration in villages (See Table 4.2).

**Table 4.5: Distribution Of The Households According To Landholding Size, Caste And Migration Status Of The Household.**

Total Land Owned (in acres)	Migrant	Non - Migrant	Total
0.00	14 (33.3)	28 (66.7)	42
0.01 - 1.00	101 (53.2)	89 (46.8)	190
1.01 - 2.00	85 (64.4)	47 (35.6)	132
2.01 - 3.00	38 (60.3)	25 (39.7)	63
3.01 - 4.00	34 (70.8)	14 (29.2)	48
4.01 >	41 (61.2)	26 (38.8)	67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313 (57.7)</b>	<b>229 (42.3)</b>	<b>542 (100.0)</b>
<b>Caste</b>			
Brahmin	110 (67.1)	54 (32.4)	164
Rajput	168 (58.1)	121 (41.9)	289
Schedule Caste	35 (39.3)	54 (60.7)	89
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313 (57.7)</b>	<b>229 (42.3)</b>	<b>542 (100.0)</b>

Note: ( ) denotes row percentage;

This section provides a profile of the migrant population to give a broad idea as to who migrates for what kinds of occupations and where. We have already established that migration occurs primarily from Brahmin and Rajput castes and from socio-economic strata of all landholding categories. Table 4.7 not only re-establishes the latter trend, it also shows that within migrant households those with 3-4 acres send out maximum of family members.

**Table 4.6: Distribution Of 550 Migrants By Landholding Size And Caste.**

Land Owned (In Acres)	Out Migrant Households	No. of Out Migrants	Average Out Migrants
0.00	14 [4.5]	17 [3.1]	1.21
0.01 - 1.00	101 [32.3]	188 [34.1]	1.86
1.01 - 2.00	85 [27.2]	138 [25.1]	1.62
2.01 - 3.00	38 [12.1]	65 [11.8]	1.71
3.01 - 4.00	34 [10.9]	69 [12.5]	2.03
4.01 >	41 [13.1]	73 [13.3]	1.78
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>313</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>1.76</b>

Contd/..

Caste			
Brahmin	110 [35.1]	208 [37.8]	1.89
Rajput	168 [53.7]	273 [49.6]	1.67
Schedule Caste	35 [11.2]	69 [12.5]	1.97
TOTAL	313	550	1.76

Note: Figures in parenthesis show column percentage

### Socio-Demographic Profile

The data establishes that migration from these villages is predominantly a male phenomenon. Around 313 households (57.7 percent) send a total of 550 migrants, out of which only 4 are females who have been sent outside for further study (Table 4.7). The overwhelming majority of the migrants belong to the working age group. The highest proportion (48.3 percent) are from the 25 - 35 years age group, suggesting that migrants leave their village at the initial stages of their life, which in turn suggests that the primary purpose is to find alternate work for livelihood earning. The next highest proportion (23.8 percent) is from 35 – 50 years age group. An overwhelming 98 percent of migrants have received formal education of whom about one-third had acquired at least middle school level (Junior high school). Around 20 percent have completed high school and 17 percent intermediate levels and more. It is clear that the better educated village men are seeking to give up agriculture for non-agricultural occupations and urban life. The majority of the migrants i.e. 71.3 percent are married (See Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7 : Socio - Demographic Profile Of Out-Migrants**

	Category	
1.	Sex	550
	Male	546 [99.3]
	Female	4 [0.7]
2.	Age	
	Upto 15	3 [0.57]
	15 - 25	104 [19.0]
	25 – 35	266 [48.3]
	35 – 50	131 [23.8]
	50 – 60	30 [5.4]
	Above 60	16 [2.9]
	Total	550

Contd/.....

<b>3.</b>	<b>Marital Status</b>	
	Unmarried	158 [28.7]
	Married	392 [71.3]
	Total	550
<b>4.</b>	<b>Educational Level</b>	
	Illiterate	12 [2.3]
	Primary	159 [28.9]
	Junior High School	173 [31.4]
	High School	114 [20.7]
	Intermediate	92 [16.7]
	Total	550

Note: All 4 females are unmarried students. Figures in parenthesis show column percent.

### Occupation Of Migrants

The question related to type of work revealed that migrants are engaged in private sector jobs, government service, petty business or wage labour. The maximum percentage (67.6 percent) are in the private sector which constitutes wide array of jobs of differing status and remuneration like clerks, accountants, peons, shops, watchman, casual work in factories etc. There are 25.9 percent in the government sector. Government service is considered more lucrative and is more desired as it provides security, status and regular source of income. Though all aspire for it, few can enter the government sector.

Whereas three or four decades ago employment was relatively easy to obtain in the urban areas, new migrants today report long initial spells of unemployment. Eventually they seem to end up in the informal sector and in menial jobs in roadside canteens, small restaurant or petty employment.

The data also show that though the percentage of migrants employed in private sector is high across castes, but in Scheduled castes an overwhelming 82.6 percent migrants work in this sector compared to 65.4 percent Brahmins and 59.7 percent Rajput. Labour for these overwhelming percentage of the workers is casual, unskilled and low paid. This is a reflection of the nature of the caste based segregation of the labour market.

**Table 4.8: Distribution Of Migrants According To Their Occupation**

Occupations	Number of migrants
Govt. service	137 [25.9]
Private service	356 [67.6]
Daily wages	9 [1.7]
Petty business	17 [3.2]
<b>Unemployed</b>	5 [0.9]
Employed but do not know the job	3 [0.6]
<b>Total</b>	527

Note: of the 550 migrants, 19 were students and 4 were retired, but yet not returned to the village (still looking for alternate jobs).

### Nature Of Migration

Of the 550 migrants, 52.6 percent had left their families behind, and 44.6 percent migrants had taken their families with them. Another 2.8 percent had only their children staying with them for educational purposes. Thus migration for most still does not involve resettlement in a new place. As our earlier table on occupation revealed, many pensioners return to the village. Urban migration thus seemed to be a temporary or semi-permanent phenomenon and mostly seems to last for the working life of the man. Most migrants continue to define their village as their home and do not as a rule sever links with their native land. Our data reveal that the duration of migration for the present crop of migrants ranges from 6 months to 53 years. Most are clustered in the three categories of 1-5, 5-10 and 10-20 years. The data reflects that migration has been an ongoing phenomenon for a long time. The continuous high rates of male labour migration confirm the picture of the Block as being a high migration zone.

**Table 4.9: Total Period Of Migration For 550 Migrants**

Years	Total Migration
<b>Upto 1</b>	49 [8.9]
1-5	155 [28.2]
5-10	149 [27.1]
10-20	127 [23.1]
20-30	50 [9.9]
Above 30	20 [3.6]
<b>Total</b>	<b>550 [100]</b>

Note: Figures in parenthesis show column percentages.

## Place Of Migration

Migration tends to focus around urban areas, closeby towns, big cities or the metropolis. The single largest percentage (28) are in Delhi (Table 4.10). An equally large percent (24) of the migrants are relocated within the Uttaranchal State. The most popular destinations are Rishikesh, Haridwar, Dehradun and Kotdwara. Concentration of migrants in cities and urban centres relatively closer to the village enhance sustained contact between the migrant and the village. Migration within the district is minimal (5 percent). Discussions with villagers revealed that migrants do not find work easily in local towns and are hence compelled to move further away. Indeed local labour is at a disadvantage in relation to the cheaper labour of distant migrants from Bihar, Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Nepal. Among places outside the state, besides Delhi, states like Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Maharashtra are the other preferred destinations. Generally the migrants tend to concentrate in the northern Hindi speaking part of the country.

**Table 4.10: Place Of Migration**

Place of Migration	Total Migrants	Percent
Within district	26	5
Within state, outside district	126	24
<b>Outside state</b>		
Delhi	147	28
Punjab	73	14
Uttar Pradesh	38	7
Harayana	32	6
Maharashtra	14	3
Madhya Pradesh	13	3
Rajasthan	12	2
Himachal Pradesh	11	2
Other States	29	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>100</b>

Note: 29 migrants (6 percent) place of migration not known

## Remittances

Approximately 66 percent of the migrants remitted to their families. (Table 4.11) Average yearly remittance worked out to Rs. 4210/-. About 50 percent remit regularly, 40 percent were reported to be irregular and another 10 percent sent money only when

asked. The percent of remitters amongst those who had left their family behind in the village was higher and the average amount remitted by them annually was approximately Rs. 8800/-. But even among the migrants who had migrated with their families, 109 migrants (20 percent) sent some money home though the average annual remittance was low - about Rs. 1535/- annually. Thus even though amounts of remittance vary, a significant proportion of migrants do send back money, justifying the use of the term “money-order economy” to describe the region.

**Table 4.11 : Annual Remittances Sent**

Amount Remitted Annually (Rs.)	No. of Remitting Migrants
Less than 500	26 [7.2]
500 – 1000	45 [12.4]
1000 – 2000	68 [18.8]
2000 – 3000	32 [8.8]
3000 - 5000	41 [11.3]
5000 - 7000	57 [15.7]
7000 - 10000	31 [8.8]
Above 10000	62 [17.1]

Note 1) 188 migrants (34.2 percent) are reported as not remitting any money.  
2) [ ] figures in parenthesis show column percents.

There have been some changes in patterns of migration. Upto the Independence period, migration was usually confined to the neighbouring districts and the state of Uttar Pradesh. However with considerable increases and improvement in means of communication, transport, literacy among the labour forces and increased levels of information and awareness, migrants have begun to go as far as Pondicherry, Kerala and the Northeast. Secondly, migration was definitely of a temporary nature in the earlier periods. Single male migrants were more likely to return to their native village. It has, in recent years, shown tendencies of becoming permanent. Wives and children accompany the male migrant, making their return more unlikely. In Yamkeshwar Block too, 20 percent migrants have migrated with their families and 74 percent of the families are living with the migrant for over 15 years.

Despite these changes, the pattern of migration is still male dominant and semi-permanent. Thus one can argue that it is not simply a money-order economy that has been created, but a dual economy i.e. the village family system supported by urban migrant

system. Increasing reliance on this migration/remittance system has serious implications for the local subsistence agriculture and for the village members (primarily women) who are left behind to operate in the local village family system. This constitutes the major theme of this research study which will be dealt with in the forthcoming chapters.

Thus we see the transformation in the Garhwal rural economy has serious implications for the vast majority of its peasantry. Post independence policies have led to further decimation of its agro-economy with almost negligible increase in local non-agricultural employment. The situation impelled and attracted many more men to abandon agriculture for migration. An inevitable consequence of the emergent demographic-economic situation is a higher sex ratio and a relatively high ratio of children and aged in the resident population. Despite migration however, the remittances were never enough to enable a total abandonment of agriculture. Thus on one hand, the post-independence period generated forces of de-peasantisation, it led on the other hand to greater peasantisation of women in the sense that they were compelled to assume even greater responsibility of production. As male out-migration increases, the percentage of total female population in agricultural workforce increases, suggesting that zero marginal productivity of labour never really existed even prior to migration and the removal of labour through migration affects agricultural production. Thus in terms of labour productivity, migration can only take place without disrupting the volume of production if compensatory measures are undertaken i.e. drafting in more labour to compensate that lost through migration. Thus agriculture still remains crucial to the economy, with the majority of population continuing to depend considerably on agriculture and natural resources of the hills in daily life. It is not simply a continuation of imbibed cultural values of a peasant community; for most it seems also a matter of no alternative. This makes the problem of hill agriculture, ecological degradation and increasing male out-migration highly cumulative and all pervasive. Its sociological implication for women constitute the main area of investigation of this research. In the next chapter we explore the micro level impact of these macro processes.



Chapter V

**BUNGA AND DAURN: SOCIO-ECONOMIC  
CONTEXT AND IMPACT OF MIGRATION ON  
VILLAGE / HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY**

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This chapter examines more closely the impact of socio-economic changes and migration on Bunga and Daurn - the two villages under study. It attempts to understand the contemporary socio-economic character of the villages in terms of which we can understand women's work patterns and health status.

The chapter is divided into five sections. In the first we geographically locate the villages within the mountainous terrain of the Garhwal Himalaya and examine its contemporary infrastructural developmental status. The second section attempts to reconstruct a history of the changing village economy, drawing links between oral accounts of the villagers and data from secondary sources. In the third section we examine the contemporary socio-economic structure of the villages in terms of its religious and caste composition and key aspects of the contemporary economy. The fourth section attempts more specifically to assess the impact of migration on village household economy. It explores the social pattern of migration and its impact on household structure and composition. It examines household economy in terms of the interplay of subsistence, wage labour and remittance. The fifth and final section examines role of remittance and wage labour in household economy.

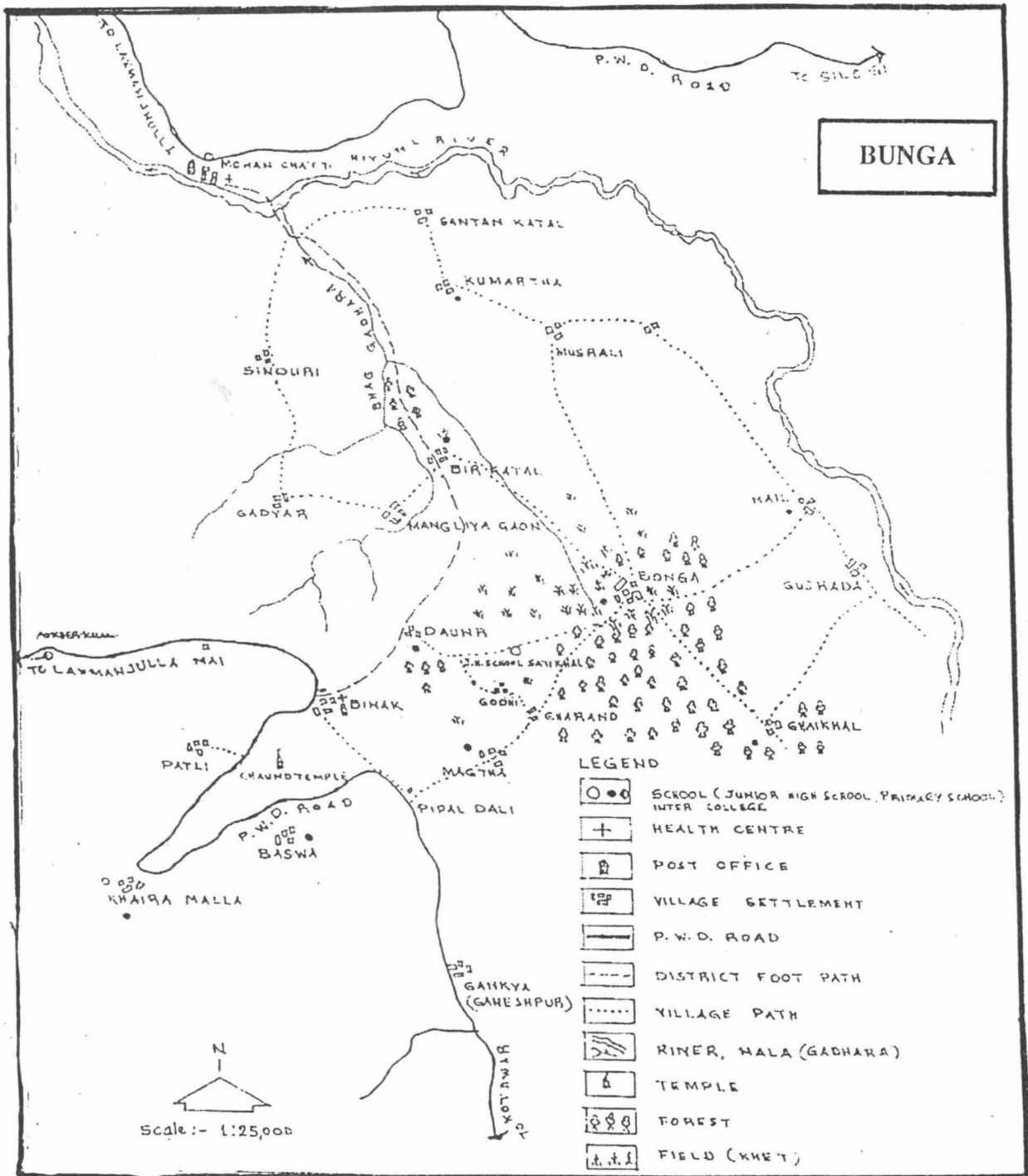
## **LOCATION, ACCESS AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

Bunga and Daurn are situated in the Yamkeshwar Development Block, off the Rishikesh-Dogadda motorable road. Together they constitute the Bunga Gram Sabha, which covers an area of 236.38 acres, with a range in elevation from 1300m to 2000m, and its population is numbered 489 at the 1991 census. The boundaries of the Gram Sabha and the way in which other villages border on it are shown in Map 5.1<sup>1</sup>. Most of this tract is covered with a patchwork of tiny terraced fields. The villages lie in the range which embodies southern part of Lesser Himalayas. On the north, a forested ridge forms a natural boundary with surrounding villages. This ridge moves southeasterly, falling precipitously away to the Hiul river valley below. The valley is covered with forests ranging from thick to sparsely covered slopes.

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<sup>1</sup> In the absence of precise map, this map was drawn with the help of Panchayat members. It is not to scale.

Figure 5.1 : Bunga Gram Sabha focussing on Bunga Hamlet



In 1970-71 Bunga's 22.50 ha of Civil Soyam Forest was converted into Panchayat Communal forest<sup>2</sup>. It is particularly difficult to estimate how far the forest on the high ridge to the northeast and east of the village belongs to Bunga Gram Sabha. According to the Patwari's estimates, almost 20.8 percent of the Gram Sabha's lands are forested.

Rishikesh, about 35 kilometers away, is the nearest town. The bus from Rishikesh takes about four hours to reach Binak, the nearest bus stop for Daurn. Travelling for another thirty minutes we reach Pipal Dali at Magatha village. Bunga village is accessible from here by a three-kilometer long foot trail. The stretch from Binak to Daurn is also approximately the same. The foot trails for most parts are narrow, rough, steep and sometimes dangerous and travel on it is difficult<sup>3</sup>. Until a decade back only one Roadways bus operated between Kotdwara and Rishikesh on the Rishikesh-Dogadda motorable road. Today the frequency has become twice a day and some Mahindra-Jeep taxis also ply during festival and summer time when many migrants return to their village.

Twelve kms away from and closest to the villages is Duili, the biggest rural market. The bank (Alaknanda Gramin Bank) and government Satellite Allopathic Dispensary (SAD) that is attached to the PHC at Yamkeshwar (about 28 kilometers from our study village) are also located here. One private doctor (RMP) has recently opened a clinic in this marketplace. The nearest Science Inter-college and the only English medium residential primary school are also situated at Duili. About six kilometers ahead is Pokharkhal, where the Intermediate college (only arts) and a government Ayurvedic dispensary are located. Binak (about 5 kilometers from our villages), is a roadside village with a ration shop that also doubles up as a post office; a small provision shop and flourmill, two teashops and a barbershop. The sub-centre and the Patwari's room are also located in Binak. Magatha (Pipal dali) too has one general provision shop and a newly opened

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<sup>2</sup> After the nationalisation of forestlands in 1953, the forests in Udaipur Patti were partly declared Reserve and partly Civil Forest. The stretch of forestland on the ridge behind Bunga called Mohan Chatty till Bairaghar village was declared as Reserve forest. The remaining forest land in the Udaipur Patti, primarily Baduan (94.20 ha) and Bunga (238 ha) was declared as Civil Soyam Forest. In 1970-71 Bunga Civil Forest was converted into Communal forest and an 8 member Van Panchayat was formed for protection of the forest.

<sup>3</sup> However goods of most types from grains to building material and gas cylinders are primarily carried by people – men carrying the load on their back and shoulders, women balancing the burden on their head. Few, more prosperous, may utilize mules for transporting goods to the villages.

teashop. Very recently a NGO run health centre also came to be located at Magatha. While both villages have a primary school each, the High School is located at Sattikhal, about two kms from both the villages. For residents of Bunga and Daurn these are the nearest facilities.

The village paths (*kharanja*) are coated with twigs, dry grass interspersed with cattle dropping. There are no drains in these villages. Water is simply allowed to run-off downhill along the village paths, which are seldom paved. This can make walking risky, especially in the rainy season. No house has a toilet, though the better off villagers have a washing room. All villagers go to the forests to relieve themselves. Most males and young girls bathe at the natural water source. Adult women usually bathe at the dead of the night in the room behind the kitchen where they store wood etc. Electricity came to the villages in 1992. Only a few houses however have connections and there are no streetlights either.

The villages depend on natural sources of water to fulfill water needs. Two dilapidated water tanks, a few taps (mostly dry) and broken water pipes strewn on the trail leading to Bunga are reminiscent of the unsuccessful drinking water scheme of 1970s. In 1989-90 water was piped to five hamlets<sup>4</sup> through Faldakot Pumping Gramin Payjal Yojna. However the scheme failed, as there is irregular power supply. Villagers are forced to rely almost totally on traditional sources of water- the natural springs (*chasma*) or small rivulets locally called *gadera / raggaria* which run into a *bouri*, *naav* or *dikki* (various types of storage) to fulfill their water needs. Bunga has one such rivulet (*gadera / raggaria*) on the south end of the village at a 45-minute walking distance. It is used primarily for bathing, washing clothes and feeding animals<sup>5</sup>. For drinking water villagers prefer to negotiate a steep one-kilometer uphill trail to collect water from the *chasma-dikki*<sup>6</sup>. The proverbial purity of the spring apparently compensates for its inconvenience. But when these two sources dwindle or dry up in summers, the villagers are forced go further uphill to the *mathi raggaria* where water is assured. In Birkatal valley there are

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<sup>4</sup> Hamlets like Daurn, Naudhar, Goddi, Masaiakhal and Bhador in Bunga and Daurn village.

<sup>5</sup> The scheduled castes use it for all domestic purposes while the upper castes use it for drinking purposes only when the third source - *dikki* is dry.

<sup>6</sup> In the year 2000 the villagers constructed a cement tank or *dikki* in which the water from the spring collects and can be taken out through two water taps.

perennial underground springs that surface at several places and thus water is collected into cement or mud tanks. It is used for both domestic purpose and minor irrigation. Daurn has a perennial natural spring (*chasma*) located very close to the main settlement. The Goddi hamlet unfortunately has no water source of its own and its dwellers have to take a two-hour trek to fetch water from the neighbouring Magatha village. Thus the availability of water and its quality and quantity varies from hamlet to hamlet.

### **Housing And Settlement Pattern**

Dotted along saddles above the fields are clusters of mudstone houses. Level land areas are too valuable to be used for housing and constitute stretches for cultivation. Houses are traditionally double storied mud-stone structures with slate roofs (*patal*) or thatch supported by heavy wooden beams<sup>7</sup>. The house usually has one long room in the ground floor and two on the first floor. The ground floor room is generally partitioned into two, with the back room being used for storing fuel wood, fodder and water. The front contains a cooking hearth. Most of these houses have an outside stone stairway and a narrow shelf like porch extending the length of the house called *tibari*. This is where guests are entertained and some family members sleep. Leading off the *tibari* at the back are a set of two rooms. The front one is utilised as living room, while the one behind it, is a smaller and a more private room, where the family's more valuable assets are stored. Idols of the *kul devta* (family god) are placed here. Part of the entire ceiling is boarded to provide a storage garret for storing wooden boards, agricultural implements, tools, seed grains cereals and vegetables. The rooms are entered by small doorways and have small, barred windows for light and ventilation. The house fronts on to a flagstone courtyard (*angan*), around which the house is built. Typically the houses are built around a series of interlocking courtyards. A single courtyard exists if there are only three or four houses in the cluster. Animals are kept either in the lower floor of the village house or more often in a separate shed outside the habitation area called *sanni*. In Dom households, the family occupies the second floor, and animals the first.

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<sup>7</sup> Thatch roof is an indication of poverty and is found usually in the Dom households.

Much of the settlement is in the form of clustered hamlets of houses or *danda*. The hamlets usually are single-caste unit. The relative altitude of the settlement has status connotations and the high-caste households tend to live higher-up hillsides and the low castes tend to predominate in low-lying barren valleys, often separated from the main village by wild cactus and thorny bushes.

Hamlets vary in population - ranging from one to thirty houses. Within each hamlet there exists smaller house clusters of agnatic groups<sup>8</sup> forming neighborhoods having strong bonds and constant interaction that are more significant in terms of social relations. Given patrilocal marriage, scarcity of land suitable for building, and a general preference for construction of a new house near to the parent home, lineages tend to take on a residentially compact character. Hence these are today the products of the repeated partition of joint families, as they existed traditionally. Generally these neighbourhoods are a more or less a nucleated bunch of houses, separated from the others by patches of wasteland. It is with such neighbours that villagers usually gossip, do simple jobs and constantly interact. Connecting these hamlets are a myriad of human and animal pathways cutting across fields and up the sides of hills, guiding people to and from their fields, their neighbours and more distant sites.

Thus Bunga and Daurn revenue villages consist of several hamlets, lying at some distance from each other. **The Bunga revenue village** consists of two major hamlets - Bunga and Birkatal - located at an altitude of 1900m and 1100m respectively (see Map 5.1 and 5.2 respectively). On the outskirts of Bunga village is the first and smallest scheduled caste hamlet called Naudhar. One kilometer away, situated on the crest of the spur is the Brahmin settlement called Bunga. This is regarded as the parent hamlet of the village Bunga. The down-slope of the spur and the adjoining hillside is used for cultivation while the linear pattern of settlement stretches across the crest slopes of the spur. North of this settlement is the deep valley of Birkatal. The ridge overlooking Birkatal has been in disuse for last three decades and is now covered with wild bush. The area below the ridge is used for cultivation. In the slopes of Birkatal are located several

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<sup>8</sup> *Naudhar, kasani, khal, bangla, palligaon, murkhal, mathi kwal, pipalam, amla, badaur, katal, chatalai, siyar, dhar, jagarion* etc. are the local terms for such neighbourhood in one of the hamlets (Bunga). Classically members claim to be descendants of the original founders of the hamlet.

smaller, dispersed clusters of houses organised around caste lines. On the higher slopes are the Rajputs. A little away are the Brahmins while the lower degraded slopes have the scheduled caste settlement.

**Daurn revenue village** is located west of Bunga village - about a walk of thirty minutes. Daurn village is spread across 50.06 acres, with its three main hamlets (see Map 5.3). Daurn (at 1800m) is in the largest hamlet inhabited by Rajputs. Spread over a north-south spur, this settlement is interspersed with terraced fields. One kilometer south of Daurn is Goddi (at 2000m), which is a scheduled caste hamlet. It is a distinct degraded area, separated from the main Daurn village by small patch of trees, wild cactus and thorny bushes. Southeast of Daurn is Masiakhal (at 1800m), a rather small settlement of Brahmin households which almost adjoins the terraced fields of Bunga.

Each of the bigger hamlets in the two villages has an explicit social recognition and tends to be an exogamous unit in practice with the villagers considering their hamlet as separate village or *gaon*. Despite the fact that the smallest unit of local organisation, from the administrative point of view, is the revenue village, but for the villagers a hamlet that consists of a residential site, area of arable land (or *khet*) and an expanse of wasteland (or *gauchar*) is the smallest unit of local organisation.



Figure 5.2 : Birkatal Hamlet of Bunga Village

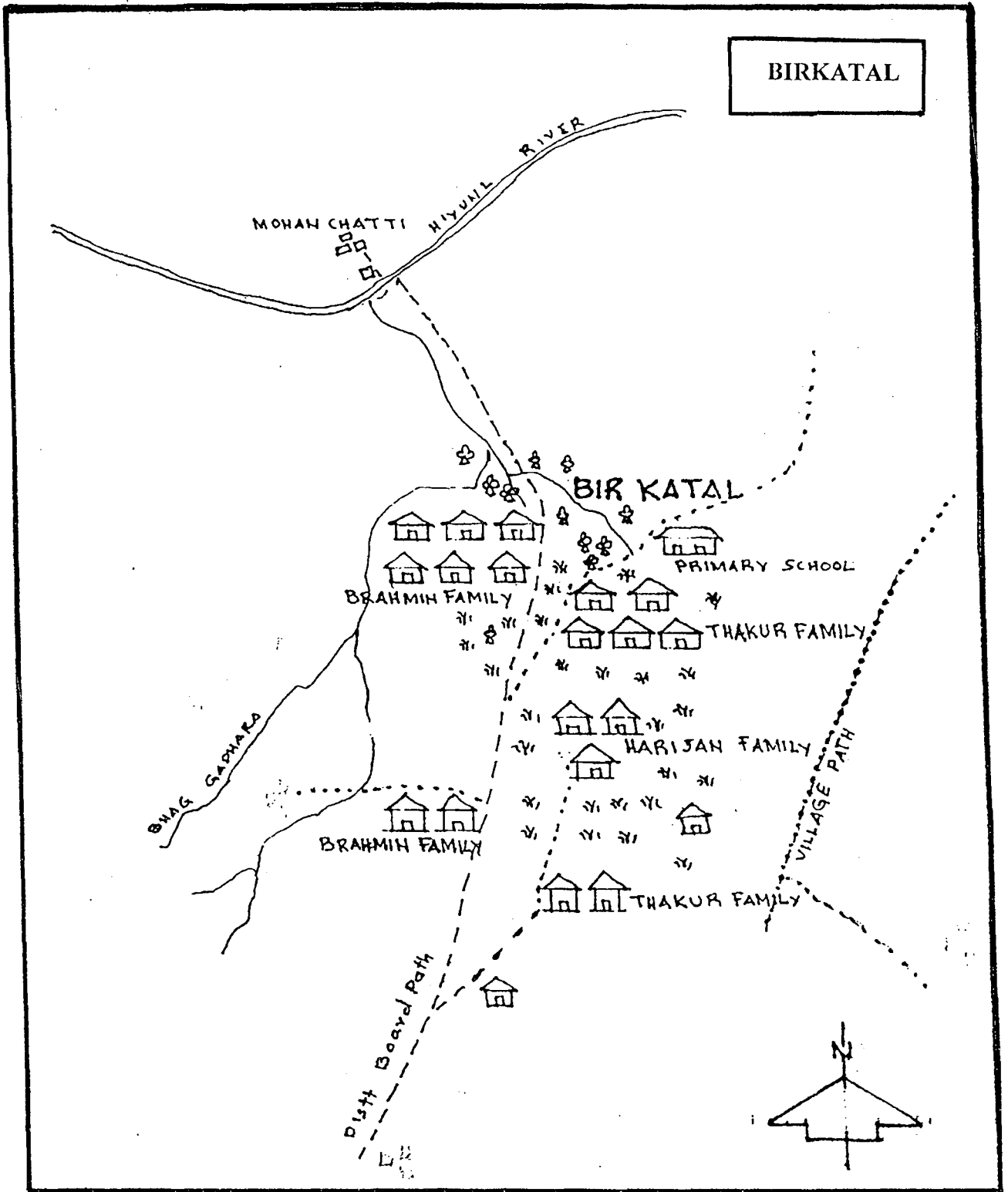
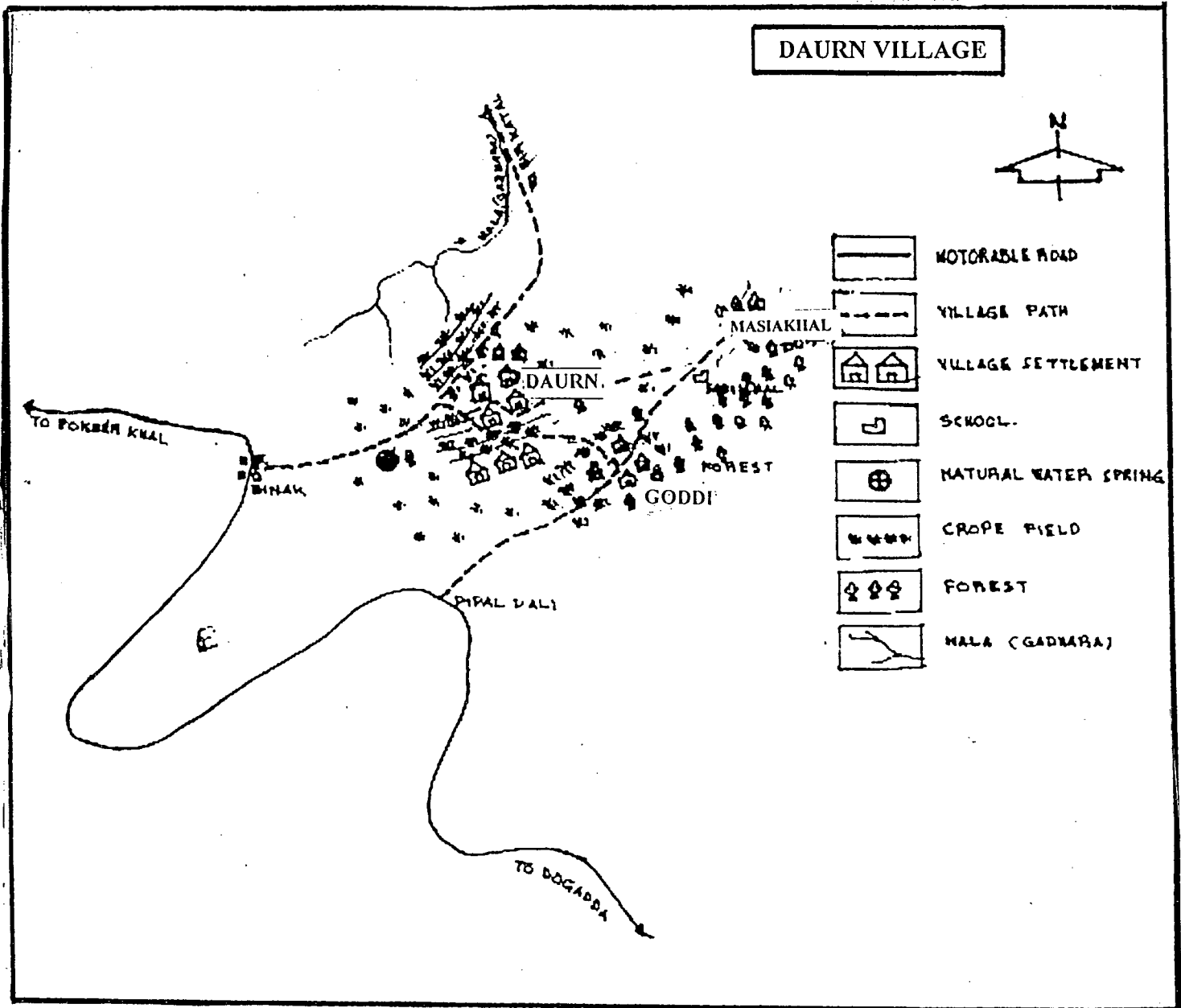


Figure 5.3 : Daurn Village with Daurn, Goddi and Masiakhal Hamlets



## CHANGING VILLAGES: THE BREAKDOWN OF SELF-SUFFICIENT ECONOMY

As most Garhwali villages, the biophysical environment of Bunga and Daurn is characterised by fairly high degree of inaccessibility, imposed isolation and necessitated self-sufficiency. Older villagers' narratives suggest that sufficiency prevailed, in correspondence with the ambition and needs of the people. The local population produced and exchanged enough to sustain themselves. The oldest resident of Bunga, eighty-five year old Darshini, and even Susheela of Daurn, now fifty-eight, remember that large surpluses of food grains existed, which were exchanged during inter-village trade. This inter-village trade functioned as a system of familial exchanges / barter among members of separate caste groups and villages. Additionally as another form of village-interdependence, "disaster" markets were held in villages during times of crisis and scarcity such as recurrent bad crops. Muslim traders / peddlers from Najibabad in Bijnor district came occasionally to the village on ponies, and exchanged / bartered agricultural surpluses, *ghee*<sup>9</sup>, honey and livestock for items of use not produced locally like salt, *jaggery*, sugar, clothes and glass bangles. Reminiscence of both these forms of trade exists even today.

Essential to and integrated with the village agricultural economy was a traditional system of labour and grain exchange (*khalkiya-gusai*) which created economic interdependency between upper and low caste groups and villages, and preserved the village self-sufficiency. Commodities of agricultural and household requirements were made by untouchable artisan castes, which were directed towards family and village based subsistence. Some lived in the villages, others came from nearby villages to regularly sell their wares. *Lohars* from Birkatal made agricultural implements and iron cooking utensils while the *tamatas* from a close by village made brass and copper cooking utensils, pots and pans, and *chunariyas* made wooden churns, wooden vessels etc. The *baadi* supplied the villagers with earthen vessels, *hooka* pipes while the *parki* women (basket weavers) made baskets for storage of dry goods. *Gusai* doms of Goddi were masons, carpenters

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<sup>9</sup> Clarified butter made from excess milk and butter in villagers homes.

and tile roofers (dug rocks, made slate [*patal*]), carried and roofed the houses. The Auji-doms of Bunga stitched clothes for the villagers. In exchange for these products, villagers provided the castes with food grains, vegetables etc. (called *dadwar*).

There has also always been major reliance on forests for grazing livestock, particularly goats and cattle and collecting fodder and fuel wood. Villagers also satisfied their subsistence needs through the use of wood for building houses and agricultural implements or use of forest vegetation as supplement to daily diet. Local history and narratives both in Bunga and Daurn and the villages surrounding them, point out that the slopes surrounding the Bunga and Birkatal hamlet were thickly wooded. But the slopes of Daurn village were barren and often strewn with boulders. In fact Daurn always had negligible forest of its own. Bunga villagers recollect that their forests stretched for miles.

*It was so thick and green that we never had to go very far for wood and fodder. We never faced shortage of grass for grazing in the forest. There was never a need to restrict number of cattle as there was ample grass and fodder. Around two generations ago wild pig and other wild animals use to wander through the village from the surrounding forest without destroying our crops as they had enough food in the forest. (Maniklal, 73 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Older men recalled how many neighbouring villages depended upon their forest for wood and fodder.

*Besides Goddi and Daurn, villagers from as far as Basba, Khera and Patli villages use to come to Bunga to collect fuel and fodder. We did not mind outsiders using our forest on slopes that lay at a distance from our settlement. But we closely guarded the forests that lay close to the village settlements. (Maniklal, 73 yrs, Bunga)*

People did not speak however of direct dependence on forest or forest products as a major source of subsistence in the traditional livelihood system of this region. However the forest's productive capacity was essential to support the village farming system and yields basically depended on relationship with forests. Hence crop production and livestock provided the villagers with most of their livelihood. Of course some years brought in larger or smaller than average crop, but on the whole they had enough for sustenance.

*Till sixty years back one or at most two trips per year to Rishikesh market or Kotdwara sufficed to transact necessary business with relevant officials and may be buy major items not locally available. Only on occasion of marriage or any other big ceremony, villagers would go to these centres. Otherwise most of the needs were met by inter-village exchange and occasional visits from these Muslim peddlers. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Seasonal scarcity was met by consuming wild vegetables, tubers and roots from the forest. Darshini recalls only one famine year, and in her memory it occurred some fifty years ago. Crops were insufficient to meet food requirements, and a number of families had to go to Rishikesh to buy grains. Even today Darshini and her contemporaries lament this.

*Rishikesh was the closest large market and trade centre. But there were no roads, and hence visits were very infrequent and had to be planned. The way to Rishikesh was through a dense forest. No one went alone. A group of people had to be collected to go. They would begin their journey at 2 am in the dark. They would goad each other to keep walking till they reached the collectively pre-decided points of halt. A fire would be lit and they would make tea and have their food that they carried from home. (Anand Prasad, 69 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

Caste differences in resources were significant, with the lowest-castes having considerably less to live on than the higher. Under the *khalkiya-gusai* relationship, low-caste doms could meet their basic requirements from grain payment received for performance of traditional duties (called *dadwar*) and for other services. Besides providing harvest payment, high caste patrons were also expected to meet other subsistence needs of their low-caste dependants. Some Doms of Bunga recollect that up to eighty percent of the total food consumption of their families comprised of harvest payments that they earned. Besides this they were given small amounts of temporary share crop (*adhiya*) land to cultivate. Daulat Ram, aged around 78, belonging to a Auji-Dom caste recalls fifty years back, he as a young man worked with his father for the Padhan's family - the biggest, landowning Brahmin family in Bunga.

*We used to help the Brahmin in ploughing his fields, harvest wheat, carry it to the threshing ground, and when it was ready to be threshed we would go with our bullocks to thresh it. For this work we were given grains to take home. We used to often cut grass or even firewood for them. On weddings, childbirth we did the drumming and even carried the village bride to her wedded village. The Brahmin gave us sack full of grains for the family. In addition he gave us warm blankets*

*once in few years and sets of clothes every year. He also gave a big gold nose-ring<sup>10</sup> for my sisters wedding for all the work the family did for him. He also gave us a small piece of land at Naudhar to cultivate. But things are very different today. The Brahmin's son today will give Rs. Twenty-five for work worth Rs. Fifty. He is only eager to extract work from us whenever it is possible. But he will not part with anything of his own. (Daulat Ram, 78 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

Agriculture was the mainstay of the village communities survival. With sufficient lands, regular rainfall, and a tradition of maintaining the productivity of fields by crop rotation and the *goath*<sup>11</sup> system of manuring, adequate food supply was ensured. Cash expenditure on food was minimal. Susheela, remembers the days when she was a young daughter-in-law in Bunga village.

*There was lot of work in the fields and processing all the harvested grains was a big task. Rice, wheat, mandua, jhangora, gahat, bhat all were stored in big dabloos (large baskets for storage of dry goods). There was on an average yield of 17-18 mans<sup>12</sup> of wheat. At that time wheat harvest was so bountiful that many households like mine had to take the wheat grains to the "gharat" (or water mill) in Nail village (situated deep in the Hiul river valley, five kilometers away from Bunga) to grind flour. Nail was the nearest village that had the water mill and oil press (or "kol"). Even oil made from mustard seeds (rai) harvested from our own fields sufficed. Milk, curd, ghee, buttermilk was so much that all visitors were only given milk to drink. Nothing had to be bought (mol lana). (Susheela, 58 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Millets, *jhangora* and *mandua* with pulses *bhat* and *gahat* were the daily staples. Wheat *chappatis* and rice was substituted for *jhangora* for guests. Since dependence on local resources was nearly total, the villagers adapted their requirements and rationed their demands according to the constraints of the local resources. The poverty of *paharis* is well recognised, but this condition is associated more with their frugality and simplicity rather than non-fulfillment of basic needs. They did not acquire great wealth but neither did they live a deprived existence like some of their "plains" counterparts.

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<sup>10</sup> A big gold nose-ring is very valued possession of Garhwali women and a piece of jewellery that most acquire at the time of their wedding. Symbolically too it is very important.

<sup>11</sup> Traditional system of herding livestock on currently fallow fields for a few months to enrich the fields with the animal's droppings and urine. Will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

<sup>12</sup> One *man* = 40 kilos

## The Beginning of Migration and Its Socio-economic Impact

As discussed in chapter III, British rule in Garhwal imposed on the 'subsistence minded population' the material existence of an alien world. Land settlements brought about by British intervention introduced cash payment of taxes in an hitherto 'barter economy'. This meant that taxes could no longer be paid in kind. Old villagers have childhood memories of wheat crop being sold to pay the taxes. Along with the need for cash arose opportunities for earning cash. New avenues of employment opened up after the setting up of the Garhwal Rifles in Lansdowne and the administrative establishment. New official positions were created along with a number of semi-skilled and manual jobs. Peons, cooks and manual labour for road construction and for load carriage were required in large number. The establishment of new cantonment-towns and hill stations expanded job opportunities as well as prospects for commercial activities. Meanwhile, the opening up of the Railway station in Najibabad in 1897<sup>13</sup>, and subsequently a bridle road connecting Lansdowne to Kotdwara in 1909 had already begun to initiate mobility and movement and remove the isolation of villages in the Lansdowne Tehsil<sup>14</sup>.

Prior to transport development, Rishikesh was the nearest food market, almost a two-day walk for the village folk of Bunga and Daurn. In response to the new demands, small shops were set up around a few villages. *Lala ki dukaan* in village Nail situated deep in the Hiul river valley, five kilometers away from Bunga was one such shop that the villagers frequented<sup>15</sup>. With more road construction, intermediary markets came up at villages on the road heads, like those in Duili (12 km from Bunga) and Binak. These intermediary markets were well connected to towns like Rishikesh and Kotdwara and they provided all items of need such as mill-made clothes, agricultural implements, spices, sugar, grains, soap, etc. Though bigger centres like Rishikesh were preferred due to lower prices and choice, convenient ones like Binak and Duili were also frequently patronized. A steady inflow of finished goods had started to enter the villages and the cash economy was firmly installed.

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<sup>13</sup> see Walton, 1910, p.48-9 for details

<sup>14</sup> These villages at that time were part of the Landsdowne Tehsil

<sup>15</sup> Even till four decades back Nail was the only closest center, which had ration shop, oil mill, flourmill, and cloth and utensil shop.

The implications of colonial land and forest policies described in Chapter III could perhaps be felt in these villages as well. Though no living resident recalls any systematic commercial felling in the area, but Walton's Gazetteer (1910) reveals that the Udaipur Patti forests were declared as Reserved Forests in 1879. The forests earlier open, contained mixed *Sal*, *tun*, bamboo and *jamun*; and other trees of minor importance also existed. Walton also wrote "the best trees had been exploited (already) in the heavy felling before the establishment of conservation". By 1910 the forests of this area were already fairly denuded. The British policy of extending land under agricultural cultivation also added to reckless extension into forests. Growing population pressure, the possibility of extending cultivable land and securing land rights encouraged residents of Bunga to move northwards into the forests. Villagers recounted many ancestral stories of geographical movement told by their grandparents and parents. The new settlement came to be called Birkatal, which is now a hamlet of Bunga.

Several problems surfaced out of the creation of the new land settlements. Walton noted the impossibility of even moderate extensions of cultivation in Udaipur Patti<sup>16</sup>. Regulations on unrestricted breaking of land for cultivation and preservation of common property resources came to be imposed by the government. Despite this, the pressure from the peasants to extend and expand agriculture simply could not be contained. Villagers narratives abounded with examples of how forests within the *assi sal* boundary continued to be brought under the plough. The region experienced the gradual depletion of grazing, water and forest resources. The vital forest resource on which agriculture-animal husbandry was premised was fast degrading under the new pressures.

The impact on subsistence was palpable. Villagers said that wheat, which could once be sold to meet the tax demands, was now needed for family consumption. The decline in production and the mismatch in production and consumption led to a decline in people's stake in land and agriculture. Simultaneously the growth of village-markets like Binak, Duili and Nail in the vicinity of Bunga ensured the villagers availability of food even in lean periods and foods produced and manufactured in the plains. This was of course

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<sup>16</sup> Walton, 1910, p.17-18



contingent on access to cash or credit, which now created a strong impetus for voluntary migration.

The foundation for migration was laid by recruitment in the armed forces. Three peasant men from Daurn joined the British-Indian Army. Four others from Bunga joined the British railways. In the initial period not many were attracted to long-term outside employment. Our Darshini recollected:

*When I got married into the village in around 1927, only four males from the village were employed outside - all in Karachi. All four had migrated to Karachi to work in the British railways. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Many returned after for short stays. Older men recounted the days of their youthful adventures when they visited the plains region to wander around, maybe take up a short-term job and return in a few months to re-settle in the village. Rarely was outside employment considered more than a temporary activity, nor was it looked upon with approval or admiration.

Male out-migration as an integral part of village life was established as a continuing and growing phenomenon in the post-independence period. The period saw a sharp decline in the village agricultural economy. Small, fragmented holdings (which resulted from new laws of inheritance) and an eroded land base due to growing neglect, led to a tremendous fall in agricultural production. Today, despite hard labour, agricultural production in the villages today does not fetch surplus, as practically all produce is consumed by villagers. In fact the overall picture that emerges is that cultivation does not yield enough to meet basic requirement. Table 5.1 presents survey data of sufficiency of produce of the four main cereals in the 102 households.

**Table 5.1: Cereal Sufficiency (In Months) For The 102 Households**

	No produce	Less than 3 months	3-6 months	6-11 months	All year round	Average period of sufficiency (in months)
Rice	6 (5.9)	68 (66.7)	15 (14.7)	9 (8.8)	4 (3.9)	2.76
Wheat	5 (4.9)	66 (64.7)	16 (15.7)	11 (10.8)	4 (3.9)	2.98
Mandua	13 (12.7)	46 (45.5)	26 (25.5)	5 (4.9)	12 (11.8)	4.01
Jhangora	21 (20.6)	43 (42.7)	17 (16.7)	4 (3.9)	17 (16.7)	4.02

Note: 1. Figures show the number of households 2. Figures in parentheses show percent of total

This data does not denote exact quantities of produce. People's subjective estimates and perceptions of sufficiency have been relied upon as best indicators of real availability. Amount of grain (rice) stacked outside homes in autumn was a way of checking / comparing rice yield with information given. For majority of households cereal sufficiency for all four grains – rice, wheat, *mandua* and *jhangora* was approximately less than 3 months. A few households also produce a small surplus over their annual requirement. This may be bartered or sold within the village.

Though traditionally *jhangora* and *mandua* were the staple food for Bunga and Daurm residents, however over the years the consumption of *jhangora* and *mandua* has slowly given way to rice and wheat, which are now the preferred staple diet. However, rice and wheat, sufficiency is also poor. Table 5.2 below shows the sufficiency period of rice and wheat.

**Table 5.2: Sufficiency Period Of Rice And Wheat For 102 Households**

Sufficiency of produce	Total no. of households	Percent
<b>(i) YEAR ROUND</b>		
Rice and wheat	3	2.9
Rice	4	3.9
Wheat	4	3.9
<b>(ii) 6 – 11 MONTHS</b>		
Rice and wheat	6	5.9
Rice	9	8.8
Wheat	11	10.8
<b>(iii) 3-6 MONTHS</b>		
Rice and wheat	10	9.8
Rice	15	14.7
Wheat	16	15.7
<b>(iv) LESS THAN 3 MONTHS</b>		
Rice and wheat	61	59.8
Rice	68	66.7
Wheat	66	64.7
<b>Total No. of Household in study villages</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Only 2.9 percent of the households had managed to meet their grain needs from their own produce. 59.8 percent of households could barely subsist for less than three months from their land, from land held on a sharecropping basis, or on grain received from labour or

from performance of traditional service duties. None had surplus for sale; everything was required for home consumption. Agricultural production thus falls short of the material needs of the people.

From villagers narratives, it is not possible to construct a precise history in terms of sequence or causation. It appears that the stagnancy of village economy in the face of post-independence developmental interventions, possibilities and economic processes led to the attractiveness of out-migration as a viable and available option to hard agricultural labour. From the initial tendency to move to nearby destinations, big cities and metropolises like Delhi and later Mumbai became the new destinations. Like thousands of others, Bunga and Daurn represented the phenomenon of declining subsistence and increasing out-migration.

In the next section we examine contemporary socio-demographic aspects of Bunga and Daurn and the impact of migration on village economic and social structure.

## CONTEMPORARY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

### Religion And Caste

The inhabitants of Bunga and Daurn are Hindus. Hinduism here shares virtually all its forms with that in Pauri Garhwal. The practice of religion in the villages shows the stronghold of Brahminical gods and goddesses like *Shiva*, *Vishnu*, *Ganesh*. Popular religion comprises faith in regional gods like *Narsingh*, *Bhairav*, *Nagaraj* etc. and in a wide range of supernatural beings like spirits, ghosts, and ancestral spirits. The village itself does not have any local temple, but the village head's (*padhan's*) courtyard has a stone structure called *Mandar ki devi* where the *devi's* flag is kept. It is considered to be an auspicious place and all public religious activities (*devi poojan*) begin at this point. Both worship of the pantheon of the popular gods/ goddesses as well as specific family gods (*kul devta / kul devi*) who are believed to be associated with the household are a part of social and religious life. A Shiva temple viz. *Neelkanth Mahadev* and *Yamkeshwar* and the *Chaudhama devi*, are the three popular temples within a radius of 25 kms.

Bunga is primarily a Brahmin village with a total population of 278. Of the 61 households, Brahmins constitute 47.5 percent, Rajputs constitute 27.9 percent and Doms constitute 24.6 percent. Daurn village has a total of 41 households and a total resident population of 204. Predominantly a Rajput village, Daurn has 68.3 percent Rajputs households followed by Doms (19.5 percent) and Brahmin (12.2 percent).

Caste ranking is based on relative ritual purity. The highest ranked and most ritually pure groups are the Brahmins, followed by the Rajputs. The Brahmins in Bunga village are of *Bhatt* sub-caste, while those in Daurn are *Kukreti*. Rajputs in both the villages are sub-caste *Rauthans*.

Lowest in the caste hierarchy are the Doms or the Scheduled Castes also known as *Dumara* or *Shilpkars*<sup>17</sup>. There exists several sub-castes among whom there exists a ranking and strict banning of intermarriage<sup>18</sup>. They are divided into three *jati*-clusters: Artisan/*gusai lohar* Doms (three households); *Darzi* (tailor) (three households) and *jagaris* with nine households. All eight Dom households in Goddi hamlet of Daurn belong to the artisan/ *gusai* cluster.

Amongst these three low caste *jati*-clusters *jagaris* hold the top position due to their ritual significance. They perform a very popular folk religious practice known as *jagara*<sup>19</sup>. The *jagaris* are all located in Birkatal. Next in hierarchy are the artisan Doms of Goddi who call themselves *Gusai* and claim that they do not practice any specific caste occupation. This *jati*-cluster has shown considerable occupational mobility and a greater social interaction<sup>20</sup>. It is difficult to ascertain their exact status. As a group they prefer to be

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<sup>17</sup> "Dom" or "*Dumara*" is the older degrading term, which they don't like to use, as it implies untouchability. They prefer to call themselves *Shilpkars*. Most of the *Shilpkars* in the area claim to be *Aryas*: that is followers of the teaching of *Arya Samaj*. However their claim to *arya* identity is made with little conviction and local *shilpkars* exhibit little understanding or awareness of *arya samaj* teachings.

<sup>18</sup> Even the Doms (S.C) settlement or *dumauda* as they are contemptuously called tend to be organised along low-castes ranking, reflecting *jati* separation between the low-castes as well.

<sup>19</sup> In religious life of the traditional Garhwali society, the *Jagaris* are indispensable. In the *jagar* ritual they act as diviners and ritual singers. A *jagar* is essentially a spirit possession seance in which a designated deity or deities (*devatas*) is induced by ritual drumming and singing of traditional *devata* legends to possess a prearranged oracle medium or spirit. It is usually a modest Rs.125 plus a meal, overnight lodging and morning tea. Women do not perform the *jagars*. Although *jagariyas* earn supplementary income from this work, but their families also partake in subsistence agricultural production. There exists no *Khalkiya* relationship for *jagariyas*; people call whomever they are most comfortable with. *Jagaris* performances constitute a supplementary source of income – though their fees is not fixed. For details see Fanger (1990) *The Jagar Spirit Possession Seance among the Rajputs and Shilpkars of Kumaon* in Joshi et al (ed) *Himalaya: Past and Present Vol I* Shree Almora: Almora.

<sup>20</sup> For details see Fanger, 1980:79; Fanger, 1992: 280

known as *mistri* (artisans) and to be individually addressed on basis of the skill they practice viz. *Badhi* (carpenter) or *Oudh* (masons) or *Lohar* (blacksmith). Lowest in hierarchy are the *Darzi* Doms who reside in the Naudhar hamlet of Bunga. They were formerly known as *Das-Dholis* or *Aujis*, as their primary occupation was drumming and dancing<sup>21</sup>. Though many continue to do ceremonial drumming, they now earn their living primarily as tailors and hence prefer to be referred to as "masters" (a general term for someone with a special skill). Traditionally Doms have been part of the village community as suppliers of skill based services mentioned above including carpentry, iron smithy, masonry and house building. Besides they are also marginal farmers.

Brahmins and Rajputs or *jimadars* are primarily or exclusively agriculturalists. The former of course also practice their caste occupation. The *Bhatt* Brahmins or *Bamans* are the hereditary priests of several villages including Bunga and Daurn, and in particular Birkatal and Goddi hamlets. They provide ritual services and astrological advice to their *jajmans* or *tulla* (households who hire them). In exchange the *Baman* is provided grains, money, gifts of *dhoti*, cow etc.

The relationship between a *jajaman* and his Brahmin<sup>22</sup> is kept sharply distinct from the traditional intra and inter-village service exchanges between high and low caste called the *khalkiya-gusai* system. A clear dominant-subordinate element enters this asymmetrical master/patron - worker arrangement. The Dom households provide commodity (farm tools, clothes, utensils etc) and services (ploughing, threshing, weeding etc) to the upper caste, for which they received payments in kind – in the form of harvest shares (*dadwar*). Under this system the upper castes could also call upon Doms to help them in emergencies or other tasks.

The ties of *khalkiya-gusai* system are now considerably transformed. There is today an increasing reluctance on part of the lower castes to undertake caste labour under the demeaning relations that it was earlier organised. The practice of *khalkiya-gusai* system demanded "begging" for *dadwar* in lieu of services rendered, a custom regarded by the

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<sup>21</sup> In all religious and social functions they played a leading part with their *dhol*. And as a compensation for their caste labour, they would go begging (take *dadwar*) especially during the month of *Chait*, after the winter harvest.

<sup>22</sup> Villagers distinguish "*jajamani*" system from the "*khalkiya-gusai*" system where the artisans client is the "*gusa*" or "*gaitch*", who purchases the service of another through traditional payment of "*dadwar*"

Doms today as humiliating. The power of upper castes to command their services, often without remuneration, is strongly resented. It is also not lucrative – wages in cities are much higher.

Thus low caste labour has largely opted out of traditional caste occupations. For instance, the new generations of *aujis* are refusing to continue to drum on wedding and other festive occasions. Doms who still practice their caste occupation prefer cash remuneration. Even the Doms from a nearby village Ghaikal who had work ties with Bunga are unwilling to work on traditional terms. Few who continue to plough the fields of the upper castes do so only for wages. In other cases the occupations themselves have been eroded. For eg. tile roofers find their skills redundant with growing preference for cement roofs. Yet, some Doms are still constrained / continue to seek (*dadwar*) their harvest share over and above monetary payment. Upper castes are increasingly reluctant to follow the customs since produce is hardly sufficient for their own families.

On the whole, artisan households who practice their trades like the ironsmith, masons, tailors are engaged in petty commodity production and are more economically secure, as their commodities are universally required.

### **The Village Peasant Economy**

This section provides a brief description of what currently exists of the agriculture and animal husbandry based peasant economy of the study villages. It describes patterns of land use and key factors of the farming and animal husbandry systems.

#### ***Current pattern of land use***

Agricultural land in the form of terraced fields in Bunga and Dauri exists at a number of sites, as far as six or seven kilometers from the village. The two villages together have a total of 4715 fields of variety of sizes, shapes and gradient at differing altitudes, ranging from 1100 to 2000m, spread over 460.703 hectare of land.<sup>23</sup> Due to the topography of the region, the villagers are forced to use both the gentle and steep slope and hence

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<sup>23</sup> Information provided by Patwari from land records or 'Khasra'. Villagers say that their agricultural plots were carved out of hillside in the early settlement period. Since 1950s addition to land under cultivation has been negligible.

cultivation is carried on in scattered blocks, divided by intervening ridges and ravines. Most of the 102 households of Bunga and Daurn own a number of agricultural plots. But due to the aforesaid dispersion of fields, the plots that inhabitants of a particular hamlet cultivate are likely to be scattered over a number of different hamlets, sometimes even bordering other villages in an area where most of the cultivation belonged to the members of another hamlet. Scattered fields across varying heights permit multi layered cropping, maximising the use of solar energy and nutrients and at the same time, taking advantage of the differences in elevation, soil, rainfall and so forth. Cultivating concurrently on several tracts of land—distributed at different altitudes allows an equitable allocation of productive land among the members of the community as well as the sharing out of area-specific risks such as landslides and gully erosion<sup>24</sup>. It also works as a strategy to hedge against pests and fickle climatic conditions. Moreover, dispersion of family plots helps to spread out the cultivation thus easing labour demands in one period of the year, when labour may be short. The peak labour requirements for fields at different altitude occur at different points in time, allowing household labour to be utilised in a dispersed manner throughout the year instead of concentrated peak followed by a slack period. The production pattern therefore met the need to increase labour availability in the family, through altitude contingent time calendars.

All agricultural plots in Bunga and Daurn are divided into two *sars* (parts or fields)—*mally/ mathi sar* or *tally/mauri sar*. Besides *tally* and *mally sar*, there are plots near the homestead known as *bada* and *pelwora* where vegetables and spices are cultivated. A distinguishing feature of the valley is that it falls in the drier agro-ecological zones with almost no access to water. Mud channels called *kutchi guls* (mud irrigation channels), which obtain water from natural springs, irrigate a negligible three acres of land in the field area. All of it lies in the low flat lands in Birkatal valley.

#### ***Current farming system: crop rotation and agricultural cycle***

There are two annual crops and harvests, in Bunga and Daurn: two annual harvests of “barley - wheat” (*rabi* or winter crop) and “millet - rice” (*kharif* or summer crop). Winter

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<sup>24</sup> This could be interpreted as a response to the historical need of maximising expected agricultural production in the presence of limited trading opportunities and constraints of labor availability.

crop of barley-wheat is sown in October, just after the rainy season and harvested in mid-summer (April) before the hot, dry period. While wheat is the preferred crops and may be sown in two-thirds of the available land, other crops like *sarson* and *rai*(mustard), *sonta* (cowpea), *tor* (pigeon pea), *masoor* (lentil), *kauni* (foxtail millets), *oggal* (buckwheat), onion and garlic are also produced. By mid-April after harvesting the wheat and barley crops, the fields are ploughed and planted with the summer crops which include the dry rice and two hardy millets - *khoda* or *mandua* (finger millet) and *jhangora* (barnyard millet). At the same time are *urad* (black grams), *gahat* (horse gram), *bhatt* (soyabean), *chulai* (amaranth) are inter-cropped in the fields. A few decades back *jhangora* and *mandua* were planted in roughly equal land as rice, but of late, rice has replaced these two millets. Intercropping of legumes with subsistence crops provides a balanced composition for the soil and keeps down weeding. Harvest of these crops begin in late September and continues to the end of October. Other vegetables and crops grown in plots close to village habitation sites in the rainy-season include *mungri* (maize), pumpkins, beans, corn, ginger, chilli, cucumber, brinjal, ladyfinger and gourds and green leafy vegetables. Some wet rice is grown in the few irrigated fields in Birkatal valley.

Chart 5.1 shows a standard two-year (related to 2000 – 2002 period) crop rotation on the rainfed terraces of the villages. Only three crops are grown per unit of arable land every two years, with either *tally* or *mally sar* remaining fallow for six months each *rabi* season (December to March). These fallow lands are rotated between *mally* and *tally sar*. For example during 2000 *mally sar* will be left fallow and in 2001 *tally sar* will remain fallow.

**Chart 5.1: Standard two-year (2000 – 2002) crop rotation on rain-fed terraces in Bunga and Daurn**

Years	Crop Season	Crops Grown in each category of Land	
		Tally Sar	Mally Sar
I. 2000 – 2001	<b>Kharif</b> (April–Oct 2000) (SUMMER CROP)	<b>Dry Rice</b> (April/May– Sept 2000)	<b>Mandua</b> (June/July – Nov. 2000) <b>Jhangora*</b> (April – Aug/Sept 2000)

Cond/.....



	<b>Rabi</b> (Oct 2000 – April 2001) (WINTER CROP)	<b>Wheat/ Barley*</b> (Oct 2000 – April 2001)	<b>Fallow</b> (Dec 2000–March 2001)
II. 2001 – 2002	<b>Kharif</b> (April – Oct 2001)	<b>Mandua/ Jhangora</b> (June – Sept 2001)	<b>Dry Rice</b> (April/ May – Sept 2001)
	<b>Rabi</b> (Oct 2001 – April 2002)	<b>Fallow</b> (Dec 2001–March 2002)	<b>Wheat/ Barley</b> (Oct 2001 – April 2001)

**Note:**

1. \* During summer crops *urad, gahat, bhatt, chulai, mungri* is grown or intercropped.
2. \*\* Winter crops oilseeds like *sarson and rai, sonta, tor, masoor, kauni, oggal*, onion and garlic is intercropped or grown
3. Barley (*jo*), *jhangora* and *mandua/ koda* is grown on inferior quality land
4. Dry rice or “satti” is mostly grown.

The sequence is a traditional pattern that is almost religiously adhered to. Poor quality mountain soil not only necessitates adequate manuring (seasonal manuring) but also needs to be left fallow for a season. This systematic method of rotating land between fallows helps in preserving the soil fertility, allows soil recuperation and also possesses the advantage of allowing livestock to graze on stubble without damaging crops growing in the other *sar*. Entire hillsides are planted with a single crop and rotated in the same sequence. Villagers are not willing to experiment with any alternatives as they believe that this traditional pattern to be most suitably adapted to the local agro-climatic conditions. Thus the type of land available limits the nature and extent of cultivation. No cash crops are grown in the village. Raising crops chiefly for trade is unknown, although two generations back a surplus of wheat, rice, ginger, onion and coriander were reported from the villages.

The villages thus reflect the mixed crop-livestock subsistence farming system that predominates in the region. All the specificities/ peculiarities of the mountain agricultural system like terracing, “verticality” (exploiting a range of vertical ecological belts and fields), crop and cropland rotation, seasonal manuring, and farming with simple farming equipment govern the production system.

### *Pattern of livestock holdings*

Our data shows that barring 8 households (7.8 percent) who have no animal asset, the remaining 94 households (92.2 percent) have domesticated some animals. Livestock is maintained for provision of manure (all animals), draught labour (cattle), dairy produce (buffaloes and cows) and cash-needs / economic security (mainly goats and few sheep). Hence the economy of the region necessitates having some livestock. Of the 8 households in the two villages who did not own any livestock, three did not cultivate any land, three cultivated very small pieces of land and two belonged to very old almost assetless women.

### **Land ownership**

All the 102 village households own some land, ranging between 0.10 and 12.5 acres in size, with the average size of landholding being 3.52 acres. There are no landless households even amongst the Doms. Keeping in mind the peculiarities of the terrain and on the basis of few agricultural studies done in the region<sup>25</sup>, we developed six categories of land.

However the proportion of households owning small size holdings (0.01 to 3.00 acres) is greater than the households owning large pieces (3.01 to over 5 acres). Thus 63.8 percent of the households have only up to 3 acres of land against 36 percent owning more than 3 acres of land. Table 5.3 provides the picture of distribution of households by land owned and caste.

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<sup>25</sup> Agricultural Census in India classify the agricultural holdings into 14 classes, which are further grouped into six categories ranging from 0.02 hectares each (sub-marginal) to 10.00 hectares each (medium). According to this classification system, most agricultural holdings in our study villages are sub-marginal, marginal or small (see National Council on Agriculture Interim Report in soil survey and soil Map of India, N.Delhi Ministry of Agriculture, Agrarian Reform part XV p.150 and 209). However compared to the plains, the size of the landholdings in the Garhwal hills is small. Keeping in mind the peculiarities of the terrain in hill areas, a small operational holding of 1.00-2.00ha each is considered big. Studies done in Himalayan region consider 2 hectares (or 4.94 acres) as basic economic holding for an average household (Bora, 1996). Hence this classification is not suitable in the hill areas and we therefore develop our own categorization, based on few agricultural studies done in the region. Though we find that differences in land ownership among the households are not very large, six size-classes or sub-groups are made, since we feel using smaller categories will be more useful in analysis as it will bring out finer differentiations. (For details see: Kishore and Gupta (around 1977) Rural Area Development - Research planning and action in Naurar Watershed in Bhikhiasen block of Almora District, UP, 1976. Department of Agricultural Economics. Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Agriculture and Technology, Pantnagar, Nainital.; Pokhriyal (1993): Central Himalayan Agriculture, Delhi: Indus Publication; Bora (1996) Himalayan Migration. A study of the Hill Region of Uttar Pradesh. Delhi: Sage Publication).

**Table 5.3: Distribution Of Household According To Land Ownership By Caste Status.**

Land in acres	Caste			Total
	Rajput	Brahmin	Dom	
0.01-1.00	6 [13.3]	4 [11.8]	7 [30.4]	17 [17.7]
1.01-2.00	13 [28.9]	8 [23.5]	7 [30.4]	28 [27.5]
2.01 - 3.00	8 [17.8]	11 [47.8]	1 [4.3]	20 [19.6]
3.01 - 4.00	3 [6.7]	3 [8.8]	3 [13.0]	9 [8.8]
4.01 - 5.00	5 [11.1]	3 [8.8]	-	8 [7.8]
> 5.00	10 [22.2]	5 [14.7]	5 [21.7]	20 [19.6]
<b>Total</b>	45	34	23	102

Note: [ ] shows percentage of column total

Even within this marginal-holding economy, land distribution is not equitable between the three major caste groups. The difference between the high and low castes is particularly sharp. The majority of Dom households (60.9 percent) have land ranging from 0.01 to 2.00 acres only, as against 42.5 percent Rajputs and 35.5 percent Brahmins in this category. A significant proportion of upper caste households have the largest holdings of 4.00 to 5.00 acres. They also tend to have best quality land with higher yields. A significant percentage (33 percent) of Rajputs own more than 4 acres of land as compared to Brahmins (23 percent). Though even nearly 22 percent of Doms too own more than 5 acres of land, it may be pointed out that the quality of this land was poor compared to the land of the Brahmins.

It is important also to point out that up to a third of the land owned in the two villages may be uncultivated *banjar* land. Interestingly *banjar* land is not to be confused with land left fallow under crop rotation. It is land that has remained uncultivated for almost over two decades. Today this land is covered with bushes and thick undergrowth. Each family can point to several pieces of their fields, which have turned *banjar* due to disuse. Thus ownership figures exaggerate the extent of productive land and also the extent of land really operated, upon which we really need to focus. This point will be taken up in detail a little later in the context of the impact of migration.

## VILLAGE HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF MIGRATION

We now move on to ascertain the contemporary migrant sections of village households and examine their further breakdown in terms of caste, landownership categories, main occupations and land cultivated. We are further interested in household structure and composition, particularly from the point of view of labour availability and the sex ratio of labour. Finally we examine the changing character of the village household economy in terms of the roles of household production, remittance and wage labour.

### Social Pattern of Migration

As per our household survey, 71 percent (i.e.72 households) of the 102 households could be classified as currently migrant households and 29 percent (i.e.30 households) are non-migrant households (see Table 5.4)<sup>26</sup>. As table 6.4 reveals, migration is not specific to any economic or caste group. Every land ownership and caste group has migrant households however differences exist. Overall, out of 45 Rajput households, 71.1 percent are migrant. The corresponding percentage for the Brahmins is as high as 82.4 percent. For Doms the figure is 52.2 percent. Out of the total out-migrant households, the largest proportion are of Brahmins (44.9 percent), followed by Rajputs (38.9 percent) and Doms (16.7 percent). Out of 30 migrant households, 43.3 percent are Rajputs and 36.7 percent are Doms. Proportions of migrant households were significantly higher than non-migrant households in all land size categories, except 0.01 to 1.00 acre of land ownership, where migrant and non-migrant households were almost equal (47 percent and 53 percent respectively).

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<sup>26</sup> As mentioned in Chapter II The definition of an out-migrant household for this study is a household in which at least one household member (migrant) has moved from his / her village to another place for the last six months preceding the survey, with the intention of long stay and /or settling there to work /gainful employment or livelihood. Households in which women had migrated due to marriage were not considered as migrant households. A non-migrant household was defined as a household that did not have any migrant at present time, i.e. at the time of the survey. This category of household may include a return migrant, i.e. a person who was living and working outside the village earlier, but had subsequently returned to live in the village. Discussions with villagers and cross- checking with relevant households revealed that 12 families have permanently migrated from Bunga while the number of such families in Daurn is 9.

**Table 5.4: Distribution Of Households According To Landownership, Caste And Migration Status**

Migrant Status	Rajput	Brahmin	Dom	Total
<b>1 acre of land owned</b>				
OM	4 (50.0) [66.7]	2 (25.0) [50.0]	2 (25.0) [28.6]	8 (100) [47.1]
NM	2 (22.2) [33.3]	2 (22.2) [50.0]	5 (55.6) [71.4]	9 (100) [52.9]
TOTAL	6(35.30)	4 (23.5)	7 (41.2)	17 (100.0)
<b>2 acres of land owned</b>				
OM	10 (47.6) [76.9]	7 (33.3) [87.5]	4 (19.0) [57.1]	21 (100) [75.0]
NM	3 (42.9) [23.1]	1 (14.3) [12.5]	3 (42.9) [42.9]	7 (100) [25.0]
TOTAL	13 (46.4)	8 (28.6)	7 (25.0)	28
<b>3 acres of land owned</b>				
OM	7 (43.8) [87.5]	8 (50.0) [72.8]	1 (6.3) [100.0]	16 (100) [80.0]
NM	1 (25.0) [12.5]	3 (75.0) [27.2]	0	4 (100) [20.0]
TOTAL	8 (40.0)	11 (55.0)	1 (5.0)	20
<b>4 acres of land owned</b>				
OM	3 (37.5) [100.0]	3 (37.5) [100.0]	2 (25.0) [66.7]	8 (100) [88.9]
NM	0	0	1 (100.0) [33.3]	1 (100) [11.1]
TOTAL	3 (33.3)	3 (33.3)	3 (33.3)	9
<b>5 acres of land owned</b>				
OM	3 (50.0) [60.0]	3 (50.0) [100.0]	0	6 (100) [75.0]
NM	2 (100.0) [40.0]	0	0	2 (100) [25.0]
TOTAL	5 (62.5)	3 (37.5)	0	8
<b>&gt;5 acres of land owned</b>				
OM	5 (38.5) [50.0]	5 (38.5) [100.0]	3 (23.1) [60.0]	13 (100) [65.0]
NM	5 (71.4) [50.0]	0	2 (40.0) (28.6)	7 (100) [35.0]
TOTAL	10 (50.0)	5 (25.0)	5 (25.0)	20
<b>Overall</b>				
OM	32 (44.4) [71.1]	28 (38.9) [82.4]	12 (16.7) [52.2]	72 (100) [70.6]
NM	13 (43.3) [28.9]	6 (20) [17.6]	11 (36.7) [47.8]	30 (100) [9.4]
TOTAL	45 (41.1)	34 (33.3)	23 (25.5)	102

Note: OM: Out migrant households; NM: Non-migrant households  
( ) row percentages ; [ ] column percentages

## Occupational Status

Table 5.5. further tells us that irrespective of the migrant status of the households, the practice of agriculture is universal. Brahmins and Doms also perform caste occupations, but consider them as subsidiary.

**Table 5.5: Resident Households Ascending To Migration Status And Main Occupation**

Main Occupation	Household Status*	
	Migrant	Non-Migrant
Agriculture	68 [94]	28 [93.0]
Animal Husbandry	24 [33.3]	12 [40.0]
Agricultural Labour	5 [6.9]	2 [6.6]
Non-agricultural Manual Labour / Caste Labour	19 [26.4]	12 [40.0]
Petty Business	4 [5.5]	4 [13.3]
Government Service	-	1 [3.3]
Private Service	1 [1.3]	-
Total	72	30

\* Multiple responses: percentages do not add upto 100

Table 5.5 shows that though an overwhelming percentage in both migrant and non-migrant households report agriculture as main occupation, a significant change is that they combine it with other means of livelihood. Animal husbandry remains important, more so among non-migrant households. Availability of local wage labour opportunity is scarce and irregular. One finds that non-migrant households take greater recourse to it. Petty businesses like teashops, flourmill, grocery shop and tailoring shops are set up by both kinds of households, though proportion is higher among non-migrants. A key change in the village is that traditional occupation has become extinct and wage labour substitutes caste labour. There is a demand for masonry, carpentry and ploughing which are now offered on wage labour basis. A few households do practice *dadwar*. Priestly services of Brahmin households are rendered for both cash and kind.

## Educational Level

**Table 5.6: Education Status Of The Village Population In Migrant And No-Migrant Households**

Educational Level	Migrant			Non-migrant			Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Literate (read & write)	6 [6.11]	13 [7.6]	19 [7.0]	6 [8.6]	4 [5.5]	10 [7.0]	29 [7.0]
Primary	46 [46.3]	56 [32.6]	102 [37.6]	31 [44.3]	24 [32.9]	55 [38.5]	157 [37.9]
Junior high school	23 [23.2]	30 [17.4]	53 [19.6]	17 [24.3]	14 [19.2]	31 [21.7]	84 [20.3]
High school	5 [5.1]	3 [1.7]	8 [3.0]	3 [4.3]	4 [5.5]	7 [4.9]	15 [3.6]
Intermediate	2 [2.0]	2 [1.2]	4 [1.5]	1 [1.4]	-	1 [0.7]	5 [1.2]
Graduation and above	1 [1.0]	3 [1.7]	4 [1.5]	1 [1.4]	1 [1.4]	2 [1.4]	6 [1.4]
Illiterate	16 [16.2]	65 [37.8]	81 [29.9]	11 [15.7]	26 [35.6]	37 [25.9]	118 [28.5]
Total	99	172	271	70	73	143	414

Note: Total number of children below school going age in migrant households is 23 males and 23 females. In non-migrant households it is 1 males and 10 females. Therefore total children 46 in migrant and 22 in non-migrant, i.e. 68 total.

It would be interesting to look at educational level of our resident population in migrant and non-migrant households (see Table 5.6). The data reveals that largest chunk of population (male and female) is primary educated (40 percent). There is not much difference in terms of educational level between migrant and non-migrant households, however there is gender disparity in both groups of households. Female illiteracy is much higher than males in both groups (38 percent in migrant and 36 percent in non-migrant). However there are a noticeable number of females who are primary educated (33 percent in both migrant and non-migrant households) and a small number are even graduate (about 1 percent).

## Migration And The Cultivation Of Land

We have seen that 100 percent of the village households own land. Irrespective of the size of land owned or migration status, almost all households take part in agriculture.

However there has been a trend towards decreasing cultivation as a cumulative impact of land degradation and migration.

### Relationship between land owned and land cultivated

If we compare the size of land owned to size of land cultivated for each household, we find that the total land cultivated by a household is not necessarily restricted to its ownership size. Table 5.7 shows the variations in the distribution of households according to land owned and land cultivated. In all landownership categories (except 0.01 - 1.00 and 3.01 - 4.00), the numbers of households cultivating land are less compared to land owned. In the exceptional categories 0.01 - 1.00 and 3.01 - 4.00 acres, the numbers of households cultivating these sizes of land swell up compared to ownership figures. The highest percentage increase (30.6 percent) from land owned to cultivated is in 0.01 - 1.00 acre category, while the highest fall (33.37 percent) from land owned to cultivated is in the category of more than 5 acres of land.

**Table 5.7: Comparative distribution of households according to land owning and land cultivating status**

Land categories	Land owned (LO)	Land Cultivated (LC)	Percent increase or decrease from LO to LC
0.01 - 1.00	17 (7.7)	32 (31.4)	+ 30.6
1.01 - 2.00	28 (27.5)	24 (23.5)	- 7.7
2.01 - 3.00	20 (19.6)	15 (14.7)	- 14.3
3.01 - 4.00	9 (8.8)	12 (11.8)	+ 14.3
4.01 - 5.00	8 (7.8)	6 (5.9)	- 14.3
> 5.00	20 (19.6)	10 (9.8)	- 33.3
N.A*	-	*3 (2.9)	-
Total	102 (100)	102 (100)	

Note: \* 3 households did not cultivate land

Villagers state that the variation in land owned and cultivated figures are brought out due to several reasons. Most important is disuse of land, which converts it into *banjar* land. This lack of convergence is also due to increase in levels of land leased in and leased out. Overall there is a trend towards decline in area under cultivation in the last fifty years. Older residents state that in earlier times double or maybe three times of the present land was being cultivated. But since last two or three decades, pieces of land situated far away



from the village particularly are not being ploughed. They relate this to the geographical integration of villages and their people with the outside world. Subsequent migration of adult men resulted in decline in agriculture due to declining labour power. At the time of survey, many respondents said that their net cultivated area had decreased with the out-migration of their family members.

*In our time we did big kheti. Now all our fields are lying deserted. Our villages have become deserted. Everyone wants to go to the city. Who will farm our fields? Soon our fields will become totally "banjar" and only wild boars will roam around the village. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

The net result of this disinterest is reflected in the highly eroded agricultural lands in the village. Only 33.38 percent of the total area is cultivated and *banjar* land is close to 22.42 percent. Further, the figures of land cultivated by households do not bring out sharecropping, tenancy contracts, etc. Of the 102 households, 7 households (6.9 percent) lease out land to others to cultivate, and 27 (26.5 percent) lease in some plots of land for cultivation. All land leased is non-irrigated type; mostly up to two acres (67.7 percent). Leasing in or out of land is always leased for sharecropping. In the sharecropping arrangement in this region, the owner's participation in cultivation process is nil. He neither contributes his labour, nor seeds or manure etc., but only pays the taxes for the land. The share taken by the owner is usually one-third and hence the system is popularly called *tihari*.

**Table 5.8: Shifts From Ownership To Cultivation Categories In Migrant And Non-Migrant Households**

Land Categories	Ownership Status	Cultivation Status			
		Same	More	Less	No cultivation
<b>Migrant</b>					
0.01 - 1.00	8	8 (100)	-	-	-
1.01 - 2.00	21	12 (57.1)	2 (9.5)	6 (28.6)	1 (4.8)
2.01 - 3.00	16	7 (43.8)	2 (12.5)	7 (43.8)	-
3.01 - 4.00	8	5 (62.5)		3 (37.5)	-
4.01 - 5.00	6	2 (33.3)	1 (16.7)	3 (50.0)	-
> 5.00	13	2 (15.4)	-	11 (84.6)	-
Total	72	36 (50.0)	8 (11.1)	27 (37.5)	1 (1.4)

Contd/....

<b>Non-Migrant</b>					
0.01 - 1.00	9	7 (77.8)	2 (22.2)	-	-
1.01 - 2.00	7	3 (42.9)	2 (28.6)	1 (14.3)	1 (14.3)
2.01 - 3.00	4	2 (50.0)	-	1 (25.0)	1 (25.0)
3.01 - 4.00	1	-	-	1 (100)	-
4.01 - 5.00	2	1 (50.0)	1 (50.0)	-	-
> 5.00	7	5 (71.4)	-	2 (28.6)	-
Total	30	18 (60.0)	5 (16.7)	5 (16.7)	2 (6.7)

Note: ( ) denote percentage from respective OM and NM landownership figures

Table 5.8 above shows shifts in land ownership and land cultivated in terms of migration status of the households. We find that almost same percent of migrant and non-migrant households shift out of their ownership categories.

Approximately 50 percent migrant and 60 percent non-migrant households cultivate the same amount of land that they own. But of the remaining 50 percent in migrant households the majority i.e. almost 38 percent households cultivate less and only 11 percent cultivate more than what they own. Compared to this, in non-migrant households we find that those owning less land (.01 to 2 acres) lease in land and hence eventually cultivate more than what they own. This is true of 51 percent households from this category reporting more cultivation than ownership size. Only 5 households from non-migrant group cultivate less land than what they own; two such households own more than 5 acres and hence feel they are unable to cultivate all of it. (see Table 5.8)

Table 5.9 shows land currently cultivated by migrant and non-migrant households. Irrespective of migration status of the households, both groups cultivate proportionately equal amounts of land as evident in the table. In the larger land cultivated category of above 5 acres, we find that non-migrant households exceed migrant households.

This is important to keep in mind from point of view of our study, for land cultivated presages the nature and extent of work burden (particularly of agriculture and livestock) on the women of these two types of households.

**Table 5.9: Distribution Of Households According To Land Cultivated And Migration Status**

Total area of cultivated land in acres	Household Type		Total
	Migrant	Non-migrant	
0.01 – 1.00	23 [31.9]	9 [30]	32
1.01 – 2.00	18 [25]	6 [20]	24
2.01 – 3.00	10 [13.9]	5 [16.7]	15
3.01 – 4.00	11 [15.3]	1 [3.3]	12
4.01 – 5.00	5 [6.9]	1 [3.3]	6
> 5	4 [5.5]	6 [20]	10
N.A.	1 [1.4]	2 [6.6]	3
Total	72	30	102

Note: N.A. refers to households who do not cultivate; [ ] shows column percentage

### **Household and Family: Changing Structure and Composition**

We now consider the structure and composition of peasant household in the context of migration. This is a dimension of great significance in a household and family labour based production system. We consider changing structure and age-sex composition of the household. Villagers pointed out that rural Garhwal families were traditionally large in size and joint in nature. Today we find the average household size in the study area is smaller at 4.78 persons per household. Changes in family size were closely linked to a trend away from large, extended households towards much smaller domestic units. Case histories suggest that labour migration tends to accelerate the division of households into nuclear units. The term nuclear is not used here in the urban sense. There is no local term for the nuclear family. The unit consisting of just parents and children is not recognised or distinguished as a separate one. Indeed a traditional process of separation has existed as part of the deconstitution and reconstitution of joint families. Households have been separated upon the death of the father. Or, a son and his wife and child have set up independent hearth and home in an adjoining plot for reasons of living space and convenience. Such "nuclearisation" however did not mean severing of links. Strong work and familial ties were maintained.

Migration and urban influence have aggravated and changed the character of this natural village process. The usual pattern has been for migrant families to separate from the non-migrant unit with dependants. Old parents and unmarried sisters usually reside with migrant's nuclear unit. Thus there are not only a high proportion of nuclear, but also nuclear-broken, stem type nuclear in migrant households (for further explanations of these terms see table 5.10). Among non-migrant households too, the proportion of nuclear families is high. This is due to migrant family members breaking away and suggests that migration has triggered off a new type of nuclearisation. Migrant families tend to be larger, stem type due to dependence of a parent or requirements of labour.

Thus the structure and composition of the families in the village are more open to changes than is presumed. Hence definitions of households or classification of family type are particularly problematic in a situation where household membership and residential units are more fluid. We observed these processes in the region during our one-year stay in the village. A family, which at one point is termed joint, becomes nuclear due to a son's migration. He may go away alone or along with his wife and children. The very family over time may become joint again by the return migration of daughter-in-law with her children. Visit by the migrant or temporary return-migrants also question the basis of simple classifications. Changes in socio-economic positions of brothers often generate intrafamilial tensions, which hasten the partition of households. This explains their presence in the non-migrant category.

Table 5.10 shows the distribution of migrant households between varying family types. It reflects the character of spatial fragmentation of migrant families at any given point of time. They are either nuclear (20.8 percent), nuclear broken (26.4 percent) or stem type (36 percent). The other types of families are separately indicated. The table shows that non-migrant families are largely nuclear (63.3 percent).

**Table 5.10: Distribution Of Households According To Type Of Family**

Family Type	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Nuclear	15 [20.8]	19[63.3]	34[33.3]
Nuclear broken	19 [26.4]	-	19 [18.6]
Stem Type I	16 [22.2]	4[13.3]	20 [19.6]
Stem Type II	10 [13.9]	3[10.0]	13[12.7]
Joint Type I	1 [1.4]	-	1 [1.0]
Joint Type II	3 [4.2]	1[3.3]	4 [3.9]
Single Woman	2 [2.8]	1[3.3]	3 [2.9]
Widow + unmarried children	3[4.2]	2 [6.7]	5 [4.9]
Husband, wife + grandchildren	2 [2.8]	0	2 [2.0]
Husband, wife + married (divorced daughter) + grandson	1 [1.4]	0	1 [1.0]
Total	72	30	102

**Note:**

1. Nuclear Family: Father + Mother + Unmarried children
2. Nuclear broken family: Father (migrant), therefore only Mother + unmarried children
3. Stem Type I: Father + Mother or Father / Mother + Married son + son's wife and children
4. Stem Type II: Father + Mother or Father / Mother + Married son + son's wife and children + any other unmarried children (i.e. son's siblings)
5. Joint Type I: Two or more married brothers with their families staying together
6. Joint Type II: Either or both parent + with two or more married brothers with their families staying together
7. Single: Woman alone (widow, deserted, divorced, unmarried)

Figures in ( ) denotes row percentage ; Figures in [ ] denotes column percentage

**Female Headed Households**

Male out-migration creates conditions for female headship of households, particularly when another male is not present. With almost 71 percent households being classified as migrant, one expected a high degree of female headedness. But as discussed in the methodology chapter, in most migrant households male headship is culturally assumed even in the absence of men. Commensurate with patrimonial system, acceptance and recognition of women as "head" is difficult. The concerned woman herself hesitates to do so. Ambivalence on part of woman about her own status often hides the real situation, which is that she is the de-facto head. On probing however, it was found that out of the 72 migrant households, 58 percent are female-headed. Of the 30 non-migrant households almost 83.3 percent are male-headed and barely 16.67 percent are female-headed. These five households are of widows staying with children / without children (see Table 5.11).

These 72 migrant households as a whole sent out a total of 130 migrants<sup>27</sup>. This figure refers to the main migrant and not the migrant's dependants (i.e. the migrant's wife and children)<sup>28</sup>.

**Table 5.11: Distribution Of Households According To Headship**

Headship	Migrant	Non-Migrant	Total
Male-headed	30	25	55
Female-headed	42	5	47
Total	72	30	102

### Age-Sex Composition of Migrant and Non-Migrant Households

Male out migration has created imbalances in age-composition and sex ratio and there are marked variations between migrant and non-migrant population with respect to both. Table 5.12 which provides the detailed figures reveals that with respect to the percentage of male members in adult working population of 16 to 55 years there are 30.8 percent in the migrant and 46.4 percent in the non-migrant residents. In fact in the 26-35 and 36-45 years age groups the cases providing percentages are only 4.9 percent and 0.8 percent among the migrant residents. The corresponding figures for non-migrant are 9.8 percent (8 number) and 13.4 percent (11 number). So younger working-age men are in short supply in migrant households as compared to non-migrant.

<sup>27</sup> Almost on an average, there are 1.8 migrants per family. To this if the main migrants dependants are included, the figure becomes 3.3 migrants per family.

<sup>28</sup> Since our focus of the study was not the migrants themselves, but their place of origin and the family members that they left behind, we did not consider it important to collect great details about the migrant's migrated family and often we found procuring precise details on the migrant's wife, children and other dependants difficult due to paucity of informational details that the migrant's family living in the village had. Hence realizing that for the purpose of answering our research questions data pertaining to the migrant himself will give us the required information, we are only presenting that data. However for details on demographic situation of resident as well as migrant population see Appendix A 5.1

**Table 5.12: Age-Sex Distribution And Sex Ratio Of Migrant And Non-Migrant Population**

Age	MIGRANT				NON-MIGRANT				Grand Total
	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio	Male	Female	Total	Sex Ratio	
0 - 5	23 (50.0) [18.9]	23 (50.0) [11.8]	46 [14.5]	1000.00	12 (54.5) [14.6]	10 (45.5) [12.0]	22 [13.3]	833.33	68
6 - 10	22 (50.0) [18.0]	22 (50.0) [11.3]	44 [13.9]	1000.00	13 (52.0) [15.9]	12 (48.0) [14.5]	25 [15.2]	923.08	69
11 - 15	20 (47.6) [16.4]	22 (52.4) [11.3]	42 [13.2]	1100.00	11 (40.7) [13.4]	16 (59.3) [19.3]	27 [16.4]	1454.55	69
16 - 25	19 (32.2) [15.6]	40 (67.8) [20.5]	59 [18.6]	2105.26	14 (51.9) [17.1]	13 (48.1) [15.7]	27 [16.4]	928.57	86
26 - 35	6 (19.4) [4.9]	25 (80.60) [12.8]	31 [9.8]	4166.67	8 (36.4) [9.8]	14 (63.6) [16.9]	22 [13.3]	1750.00	53
36 - 45	1 (4.2) [0.8]	23 (95.8) [11.8]	24 [7.6]	23000.00	11 (55.0) [13.4]	9 (45.0) [1.08]	20 [12.1]	818.18	44
46 - 55	11 (37.9) [9.0]	18 (62.1) [9.2]	29 [9.1]	1636.36	5 (50.0) [6.1]	5 (50.0) [6.0]	10 [6.1]	1000.00	39
56 - 65	11 (47.8) [9.0]	12 (52.2) [6.2]	23 [7.3]	1090.91	5 (55.6) [6.1]	4 (44.4) [4.8]	9 [5.5]	800.00	32
66 - 75	6 (54.5) [4.9]	5 (45.5) [2.6]	11 [3.5]	833.33	3 (100.0) [3.7]	-	3 [1.8]	0	14
Above 75	3 (37.5) [2.5]	5 (62.5) [2.6]	8 [2.5]	1666.67	-	-	-	-	8
Total	122 (38.5)	195 (61.5)	317	1598.36	82 (49.7)	83 (50.3)	165	1012.20	482

Note : ( ) denotes rows percentage ; [ ] denotes column percentage

Sex ratio = female per thousand male

Sex ratio differences are even more glaring. For the migrant household population, sex ratio stands overall at 1598 and for non-migrant at 1012. Looking at age specific sex ratios, we find that the sex ratio is much higher among migrants than among non-migrants in every age group except 11-15 years. It leaps up to 23000 at the highest in the age group of 36-45 years. Most significantly for the same age group, it is averse to women and in favour of men among non-migrants at 818.

Further re-classifying the data in terms of number of adult men / women currently available to migrant and non-migrant households, we find that 47 percent of migrant households function without the availability of a single adult member. Conversely in non-migrant households, an adult male is available in 93 percent of the households (see Table 5.13 below).

**Table 5.13: Number Of Adult Males (Above 18 Years) Per Household**

Adult Males per household	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
One male	26 [36.1]	18 [60.0]	44 [43.1]
2 – 3 males	12 [16.7]	9 [30.0]	21 [20.6]
3 – 4 males	-	1 [3.3]	1 [0.9]
No males	34 [47.2]	2 [6.7]	36 [35.3]
Total	72	30	102

Note: [ ] shows column percentage

Further commensurate with the pattern of relationship between family type and migration status, we find that there are at least two to three women in 45 percent migrant household whereas in 77 percent non-migrant households, there is only one adult woman. This is the situation only in 45 percent migrant households (see Table 5.14 below).

**Table 5.14: Number Of Adult Females (Above 18 Years) Per Household**

Adult Females per household	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
One female	33 [45.83]	23 [76.67]	56 [54.9]
2 – 3 females	37 [51.39]	6 [20.00]	43 [42.16]
3 – 4 females	2 [2.78]	1 [3.33]	3 [2.94]
Total	72	30	102

Note : [ ] shows column percentage



## The New Village Economy: The Role of Wage Labour, Remittance and the Reorganisation of Work

Table 5.5 has shown that though households persist as production units, they have necessarily sought alternative sources of livelihood and income to meet needs. Remittance is a source available to migrants, but wage labour has emerged as an option for both migrants and non-migrants. Villagers are compelled to sell their labour power even while practising agriculture.

Agricultural wage labour is primarily male and labourers are generally hired during the ploughing season. The two main forms are daily wages or seasonal contracts with specific families. In absence of traditional *halias* and shortage of adult men to plough, the biggest avenues of wage labour deployment are ploughing and sowing. Gradually over time, poor men from upper caste families have started to plough for wages. Most still find this derogatory because of its low caste association. Hired male labour is largely Dom (55 percent). There are 33.3 percent Brahmins and 11.1 percent Rajputs who do this work. The daily wage rate (*dihari*) of the ploughman in Bunga and Daurm is Rs.50/- per day.

Non-farm wage opportunities are few in and around the villages. Sporadic public work like road building, or construction provides few days of employment. The Gram Sabha may hire village men and women on daily wages for constructing village road, school or *panchayat ghar* etc. Besides being very irregular and a meagre source of cash, such work is rare. Village women do not get wage work outside their village and they generally hesitate to compete with men. Besides sending women to work outside their own villages is considered “demeaning”. It is generally seen that unless the public work is located in their own village, villagers do not get any work. Caste Hindu peasants do not like to work on faraway sites. Lower caste families are willing, but find it hard to get work since the local people resent them as both outsiders and low caste. For instance, from Bunga or Daurm no villagers found work in government work in the adjoining Magadha village.

Self-employment in caste related services, artisan commodity production and petty trade (flour mill, grocery shop, teashop etc) generates some income for families owning such enterprises. Village-based commodities and services are other sources for self-employed

Doms (blacksmithery, carpentry etc). House-building work is also occasionally available to Doms. A small transportation business of load carrying on ponies did not find work for even 4-5 days in a month.

Contract labour is distinguishable from wage labour in terms of mode of payment and the organisation of labour. Contract labour is commonly procured in the villages for the construction of houses, cattle shed, and roads and for ploughing the fields. Most of the labour is recruited from caste groups who specialise in this work. For instance, masons mostly come from Goddi village, carpenters from Birkatal etc. Contract labour for ploughing is provided by peasants from lower and upper caste alike. Agricultural contracts include seasonal contracts made between the ploughman and a specific family where the ploughman is paid a fixed amount to plough all the fields of the family. The contract rate per season ranges from approximately Rs.100 to Rs.300 depending on the size of the field and it includes all rounds of ploughing as per the requirement of the crop. On an average, most ploughmen earn Rs.250 per season. Seasonal contract payment is also sometimes made in kind. For instance, a small field may be given to the ploughmen to cultivate in lieu of the work done.

### **Remittances And Its Impact On Household Economy And Income**

Our data reveal that approximately 70 percent migrants remit money. It is remitted through many means: through money order, or brought by the migrants themselves when they come home on holiday, or is sent with friends, relatives or neighbours returning from cities.

Like income, it is observed that even remittance amounts are invariably under-reported by some of the households, particularly the better off and the very poor. Family members of migrants reported that wages are so low that few can afford to wholly support their families from their salaries. Remittances are not often in the form of cash. Migrants also carry goods like rice, wheat, pulses, sugar, spices, oil and clothes etc They prefer to carry these items as they are cheaper in plains market than in hills / villages. But the cost of these is not accounted when calculating the transfer of resources through migration.

In most households, the amount remitted is very small. Among our 95 migrants who remit money, majority i.e. 46 percent remit only upto Rs.2000/- per annum. Only 22.1 percent migrants remit between Rs.4,000/- to Rs.5,000/- and a very small percent of migrants (9.5 percent) remit between Rs.5,000/- and Rs.10,000/- annually. The average remittance per migrant is very low – approximately Rs.2,975 per annum. However eliciting and estimating amounts and levels of incomes earned is always a difficulty in social research. On the whole, villagers were unable to provide accurate data. Rather they constantly drew attention to their deprived conditions and paucity of resources and possessions.

Nevertheless we persisted in our enquiry and asked villagers to provide a rough assessment of their different sources of annual income and their total annual earning under the various heads. The findings are presented in Table A 5.2 in the Appendix and must be viewed with some caution. It shows the percent distribution of the primary source of cash income for the 102 households as reported by the respondents. The table reveals that the main source of income is remittances and pensions. A substantial amount of money is transferred into the economy. Even in the currently non-migrant households, pension of the “some-time migrant” holds the largest share. Pension is a present benefit of past migration and is an important source of household survival. Wage earnings are the next important source. Agricultural income constitutes the smallest source. Other sources of income are the varied forms of low paying self-employment. These may be governed by the traditional labour exchange systems indicated earlier.

### **The Benefits Of Migration**

Though amount of remittances are generally small, their value to rural families is immense. In many migrant households, having little access to cash incomes, even small transfers of cash have high utility. For many households, remittances usually covered costs of daily needs. Our enquiries and observations confirmed that remittances are initially spent on family maintenance. Once stability is established, they are used to enhance economic and social status. The money is used to build a new house or cowshed, purchase domestic animals, hire ploughmen, or start small commercial activity. Purchase

of land is no longer considered worthwhile due to low returns. However a few migrant households have purchased land for construction of a new house, cattle shed and shop.

The uniformly dilapidated appearance of village houses, disguise significant differences in wealth within them. Wealth is to some extent reflected in the house and its belongings, but the difference between houses of the well off and the poor is still not as marked as in non-hill areas. This is partly because differences in wealth are less, but also consumption patterns inhibit a conspicuous display of wealth.

Housing structure have begun to show the impact of remittances in last two decades (see Table 5.15). Use of cement, mortar and brick was introduced in Bunga and Daurn, tin and cement roofs replace thatched and slate roofs. These new types of houses are called *pacca ghar* or *lintern walla makan*. Houses with cemented roof and concrete floor are status symbols and signs of affluence, which have come to dot the traditional landscape of *patal*(slate roof) and mud-stone structures. About 24.5 percent houses (25 houses) are either partly made of cement (usually the roof of a room), while the rest of the structure continues to be the old type or are completely made of cement and bricks, with even cemented flooring. Most such houses are of migrant households, showing the impact of remittances. There are three houses belonging to scheduled castes, which are *kutchra* or hut-type where the entire roof is simply thatched, with not even *patal* roofing. These are also migrant households, indicating wide variation in migrant incomes and remittances. In poorest households, the entire remittance amount is mainly spent on buying food, clothes and other essentials.

**Table 5.15: Distribution Of Households According To Housing Structure**

Type of house	Migrant	Non-migrant	Total
Cement	7 (53.8) [9.7]	6 (46.2) [20.0]	13 (100) [12.7]
Cement + Patal	9 (75.0) [12.5]	3 (25.0) [10.0]	12 (100) [11.8]
Pucca (Patal)	53 (71.6) [73.6]	21 (28.4) [70.0]	74 (100) [72.5]
Patal + kutchra	2 (100) [2.8]	-	2 (100) [2.0]
Kutchra (non-patal)	1 (100) [1.4]	-	1 (100) [1.0]
Total	72 (70.6)	30 (29.4)	102

## Consumption Pattern Of Remittance

Remittance amounts are generally spent on a range of consumption expenditures – food, clothing and various other consumer items and commodities are bought. Table 5.16 provides an insight into the differences between migrant and non-migrant households with respect to each item. The proportion of owners is markedly higher among migrants than non-migrants in the range of ownership of consumer goods popular in the villages. Money is also spent on marriages, other lifecycle rituals and religious ceremonies.

**Table 5.16: Consumer Goods Ownership By Migration Status Of The 102 Households**

Asset	OM	NM	Total
T.V	28 (73.7)	10 (26.3)	38
Radio	40 (66.7)	20 (33.3)	60
Gas	25 (78.1)	7 (21.9)	32
Kerosene stove	33 (75.0)	11 (25.0)	44
Electricity	27 (69.2)	12 (30.8)	39
Solar Energy	1 (100)	-	1
Scooter	1 (100)	-	1
Jeep	1 (100)	-	1
Steel Cupboard	7 (70.0)	3 (30.0)	10
Furniture	36 (72.0)	14 (28.0)	50
Fan	7 (70.0)	3 (30.0)	10
Mixer/Iron	9 (81.8)	2 (18.2)	11
Water drum	9 (75.0)	3 (25.0)	12
Wall Clock	47 (68.1)	22 (31.9)	69
Sewing Machine	3 (50.0)	3 (50.0)	6
Flour Mill (Stone)	2 (66.7)	1 (33.3)	3

Note: ( ) denotes row percentage

Total OM households = 72 nos (70.6 percent) ; Total NM households = 30 nos. (29.4 percent)

Increase in livestock population, coupled with changes in composition of livestock holding is a discernible trend in Bunga and Daurn. Villagers revealed that while the number of bullocks has declined (due to male out-migration), the cow population is more or less stabilised. But buffaloes and goats have increased in number. Migrant households own more bulls, cows, buffaloes and even goats, indicating the ability of these households to invest in this productive asset. Table 5.17 clearly indicates that proportions of migrant households are higher in each category of livestock ownership (except horses)

indicating higher investment capacity of migrant households. Data in both these tables and observations point to the relative increase in standard of living of migrant households.

**Table 5.17: Livestock Holding In Migrant And Non-Migrant Households**

Migration Status/ Livestock	Bulls	Cows	Buffaloes	Goats	Sheep	Horses
OM household	30 [61.2]	59 [70.2]	33 [70.2]	31 [72.1]	7 [87.5]	-
NM household	19 [38.8]	25 [29.8]	14 [29.8]	12 [27.9]	1 [12.5]	2 [100.0]
Total household	49	84	47	43	8	2

Note: OM=out migrant household; NM=non-migrant household; [ ] denotes column total percentage

In terms of annual family expenditures, migrant households indicate a higher spending capacity. The Table 5.18 shows distribution of the households according to expenditure incurred in one reference year. Their percent expenditure was higher on every stated head.

Migrant households absolute expenditure was higher than non-migrant households on every item. However as a percent share of total expenditure, migrant and non-migrant households vary slightly while expenditure on food, medicines, conveyance and school fees are same in both the groups, migrant spend relatively more on LPG, kerosene and electricity. Non-migrants on the other hand spend a larger chunk on clothes. Probably goods brought by migrants makes it unnecessary for them to spend on clothes.

Migration has thus improved the economic status of migrant households. The positive impact is for individual migrant families, not for the economy as a whole. Few invested their money in land in order to raise the productivity of their farms. Remittances are used for consumption, and to an extent to provide working capital to acquire assets like livestock. Long-term investments in land and agriculture are not made. Remittances thus may fail to stimulate development of village economies or could even be judged as precipitating further economic decline of the region. Villagers agree, “ Though money

entered Bunga and Daurn in the form of remittances and pensions, but food, clothes and a burst of house building swallowed this money.”

**Table 5.18: Annual Expenditure-Wise Distribution Of The 102 Households**

Heads of expenditure	Migrant (Annual expenditure in Rs.)	Non-Migrant (Annual expenditure in Rs.)	Total (Annual expenditure in Rs.)
Food	4607000 [59.1]	174300 [61.7]	635000 [59.8]
Fuel (kerosene, LPG etc)	59230 [7.6]	18360 [6.5]	77590 [7.3]
Electricity	41230 [5.3]	8240 [2.9]	49470 [4.7]
Clothes	38140 [4.9]	28720 [10.2]	66860 [6.3]
Medicines	133145 [17.1]	39800 [14.1]	172945 [16.3]
School Fees and other expenses	40610 [5.2]	9065 [3.2]	49675 [4.7]
Conveyance (travel out of village)	5550 [0.7]	3800 [1.3]	9350 [0.9]
Others	600 [0.1]	0	600 [0.1]
Total	779205	282285	1061490

[ ] denotes column percentage

Remittances increase inequality. Migrants become elites in village - contributing to further village stratification and income inequity. The more important variation between households in wealth today stems less from the amount of land owned, than from the amount of cash earned by male migrants. Yet very few families uproot themselves completely and abandon their village home forever. Participation in the cash economy does not mean total commitment to it. The main reason for this is that even a small amount of land cultivated is security against loss of a job and unemployment. Many know from bitter experience that jobs are hard to come by and that they might suddenly find themselves out of work. They also know that sickness or old age would leave them destitute in the city. Thus they retain an interest in the village and their land. Moreover wages are often so low that few can afford to support their families on their earnings

alone. To make ends meet, a cash income must usually be backed up by participation, in some form or other, in the subsistence sector of the economy<sup>29</sup>.

Thus, the blending of temporary or permanent labour migration and continued cultivation of family land and animal rearing has become of way of living for the villagers. Growing unemployment and increasing cost of living do not permit migration benefits to transform the subsistence basis of village economy. On the contrary male out-migration over the long term has undermined agricultural production, and created scarcity of labour for the village. This is solved by either increasing labour force participation within the household or by hiring labour from elsewhere. Thus as we shall clearly see in the next chapter, persistence of remittance economy backed by subsistence agriculture is at the cost of women, and also now of the aged, children, sick and other vulnerable persons left behind in the villages to labour under extremely backward conditions of production. The developments overall have serious consequences for gender division of labour and labour dynamics within the households.

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<sup>29</sup> But in addition to all this, there are other less tangible reasons why few people would care to settle permanently in the city. Partly this is the result of a strong emotional attachment to the hills, and partly because so few of them put down real roots in the urban environment. Even those who have been employed in the city for twenty years or so tend to remain villagers at heart, and most of their contacts outside working hours are with other Garhwali people.



**Chapter VI**  
**GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR AND**  
**WOMEN'S WORK: CHANGING STRUCTURES**

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The focus is examination of the relationship between changing village economy and divisions of labour with specific reference to shifts in the gender divisions of labour and women's work within the wider context of the breakdown of the ecology-economy link. The impact of macro-processes of change on village and household economy, in particular that of male out-migration on the structures of gender division of labour will be a central concern. The chapter also explores the consequences of changing work patterns for gender power relations and women's changing status in village society and culture.

The main discussion around the themes of gender division of labour and nature and quantum of women's work is organised in three sections in terms of three major domains of women's productive and reproductive work: (1) agriculture (2) animal husbandry and (3) domestic work. We consider within each, the shifts in the gender division of labour, factors associated with the shifts, and the new forms of labour organisation taking shape under the impact of male out-migration and ecological degradation. The final section examines the consequences of these gender divisions of labour and women's changing workload, and their economic and social status. It highlights increases or decreases in workload, changing cultural valuations of work and of changing patterns of work control. We also attempt to examine in the context of changing pattern of work, cultural ideology and migration remittance, changes in the character of changing gender relations. They provide some indication of new patterns of authority and autonomy in work and familial life.

Most of the women's work in the village primarily consists of three main sets of subsistence activities: (i) cultivation of subsistence crops; (ii) care of animals, and (iii) domestic work. The daily routine drawn from life patterns of our thirty women roughly depicts the typical workday of our village women:

*By the first light, women usually rise. They go down to the kitchen and start their work. Morning is usually devoted to the work in and around the house for subsistence of their families. Between 4:00 to 5:00 a.m. the hearth is cleared, the fire is lit, one round of water fetched and tea is made. Breakfast is usually a quick cup of tea and the left over rotis from the previous night's meal. This is interspersed with opening the cattle shed, milking cattle, taking them out, watering and giving them fodder and pounding the rice. Meantime women start preparing the food. Food preparation entails several processing tasks: winnowing*

*of grains, cleaning grains and pulses of stones, making of butter and sour milk etc. The standard mid-day meal for the poor and the not so poor is rice and dal. Roti and some sort of vegetable (mostly potatoes) are cooked for the evening meal. Typically enough food is prepared to last until women return from the forest and field in the afternoon. By 8:00 a.m., children are fed breakfast, "made ready" for school. Soon after that, women eat and prepare to leave for the forest and fields. Since the fields have to be manured, the woman first stops to clean the cowshed and collect the gobar to fertilise the fields. By mid-afternoon children arrive from school, usually prior to the time of their mothers' return. Upon mother's arrival, they are organised to bring firewood, water, fodder and help with domestic chores. She then eats and "rests" for a while in the house - the threshed grains which are drying in the courtyard are winnowed, husked and stored. Thereafter she returns to the fields, and then goes to the forest to graze or collect fodder. By evening the women return home with head loads of fodder / grass to feed the cattle. After a cup of tea, begins the preparation for the evening meal. Between the tasks they may go to milk the cattle or tend to them. After the meals, the kitchen is cleaned, utensils washed and then its time for her to sleep. By now 16 – 17 hours on an average have lapsed since she woke up!*

This case study reveals first and foremost, how blurred is the distinction between women's "productive" and "reproductive" labour. Work in the three intersecting domains of cultivation, care of animals and domestic work requires that women's lives be "fluid and flexible". The continuum between work in the field, tending to animals and housework, makes it hard to separate actual work time spent in "productive" and "reproductive activities". The myriad activities cut across more exclusive definitions of what constitutes agricultural, animal husbandry and domestic tasks. Men may participate in one or two of these types, but women move more quietly across the different forms of labour. Thus the categorisation of chapter into three broad sections of agricultural production, animal husbandry and domestic work shown here as tools of convenience for organising our data.

## **AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND THE CHANGING DIVISION OF LABOUR**

### **Men's Work and Women's Work in the Agricultural Systems of Bunga and Daurn**

As discussed in Chapter IV, in the montane<sup>1</sup> mixed-farming system, the agricultural system cannot stand on its own, atleast not in any long-term sustainable sense, without

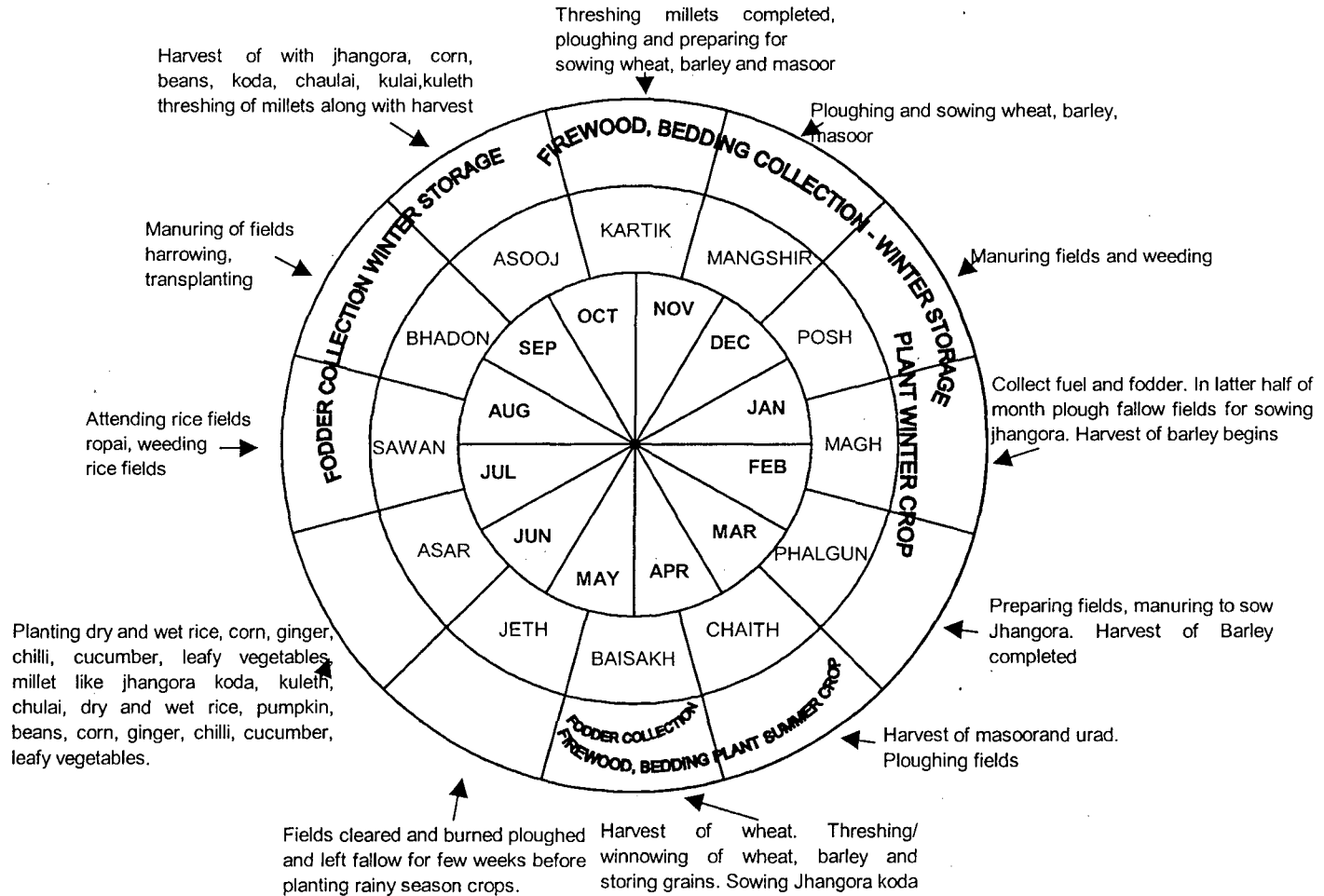
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<sup>1</sup> Montane is a term used for referring to systems prevalent in the mountains

inputs from the forest and animals. A strong livestock-farming-forest linkage makes animal husbandry not simply an activity that is supplementary to agriculture, but an intrinsic part and complementary to montane agriculture. Women play a central and predominant role in linking these systems to make for a viable agricultural system. Thus a broad definition of agriculture related work must include all of the activities connected with both crop and animal production, irrespective of whether the final products constitute “use value” for the family consumption (subsistence production) or “exchange value” i.e. selling or bartering in intra-village trade (commodity production). It is for convenience in handling the data that we have separated agriculture and animal husbandry work. This complex inseparability (depicted in Figure 6.1) frames all productive activities for the villagers and governs labour inputs in daily work.

As we shall see, these specific montane production strategies determine the division of labour by gender as well as lead to a specific intra-family organisation of labour. It also has implications for the arduousness and conditions of work that prevail within each agricultural season. An understanding of different crops and agricultural operations is necessary to understand gender division of labour in agriculture as the amount and intensity of work varies with agricultural season and crops grown. In the previous chapter we profiled the farming system and the crop production pattern in the study villages, which is briefly recapitulated in Figure 6.1. Though the household survey data presented below pertains to work performed in a single agricultural season of wheat crop, we draw upon data collected through our observations, in-depth interviews, discussions and conversations with informants to portray the conditions of work for other crops and other seasons.

**SUMMER CROPS (KHARIF)**



**WINTER CROPS (RABI)**

**FIGURE 6.1: ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL-LIVESTOCK-FOREST WORK CYCLE IN BUNGA AND DAURN**

**Chart 6.1: Main Types Of Women's And Men's Agricultural Work**

	Agricultural Tasks	Women's Work		Men's Work	
		Tools	Type of Work	Tools	Type of Work
1	Clearing the field <i>Dharan karna</i>		Manual removal of stones, thorns & leveling of field Collection & burning of twigs		
2	Manuring <i>khad dolna</i>		Preparing manure Carrying multiple head loads from cattle shed to field. Manual spreading on fields		
3	Ploughing & leveling <i>Hal aur patta lagana</i>			Oxen & Plough	Plough and Leveling field
4	Sowing		Transplanting <i>Butai, ropai</i>		Broadcasting seeds
5	Weeding & Hoeing <i>nirai aur gurai</i>	Hoe <i>kudali</i>	Pulling out weeds & grass Digging and turning wet soil with hoe.		
6	Guarding		Group drumming & shouting to scare birds & animals from fields " <i>jogai</i> "		Construction of <i>vadu</i> & keeping night & day guard of crops
7	Harvesting <i>Katai</i>	Sickle <i>dharati</i>	Cutting crop & tying in bundles and stacking		
8	Transporting harvest		Carrying head loads of crops to house / threshing ground (" <i>khaliyan</i> ")		
9	Threshing <i>Mandai</i>	Sticks <i>Lathi</i>	Manual beating of crop with stick.	Oxen & Plough	Driving oxen over wheat sheaves/ crops. Trodding & crushing rice crop with feet.
10	Winnowing	Bamboo & Iron Scoop	Removing chaff from grain with scoop.		
11	Pounding & Hulling <i>kutna</i>	Heavy wooden pestle & stone mortar	Process of de-husking grain by pounding with heavy wooden pestle & use of feet.		
12	Storing <i>bhandaran</i>	Bamboo baskets " <i>dubloo</i> "	Storing grain in huge bamboo baskets.		
13	Repair of terraces			Masonry tools	Building field terrace walls; cutting & burning wild growth
14	Repair of <i>guls</i> (irrigation channels)			Masonry tools	Building & repairing mud diversion channels / ditches
15	Repair of tools			Axe for wood	Procure wood to repair wooden Handles & plough (Blacksmith repair)

The crop production process has been divided into 12 field-related tasks and three maintenance tasks that are necessary to carrying out agriculture. Agricultural tasks can be broadly divided into two groups on the basis of who primarily performs the task - males or females. The details of who performs the task, the work involved in each task and the tools used is depicted in Chart 6.1

### **Declining Subsistence Migration And Gender Division Of Labour**

Today women of Bunga and Daurn either exclusively or predominantly take responsibility of seven out of the twelve field-related tasks listed above (i.e. more than 58 percent of the agricultural work). Table 6.1 clearly shows that while women did the entire range of manual field related tasks, men solely perform operations incurring the use of draught animals like ploughing and levelling of the fields. In addition they take main responsibility of maintenance and repairs of the terraces. Contemporary patterns find a close correlation with gender role definitions that were depicted in the third chapter. However today we find that four agricultural activities (irrigation, guarding crops, repairing irrigation canals and agricultural tools) show an absence of strict gender segregation. Likewise a task like threshing which is not purely a male or female dominated task is at present largely done by women. Men only perform threshing operation if bullocks are to be used.

Given the small land differentials in the villages, the size of land cultivated has a negligible impact on the gender division of labour. Table A6.1 in the Appendix shows the gender division of labour in different classes of peasantry. However, moving to the issue of the relationship between migration status and the gender division of labour, Table 6.1 reveals that women of migrant households continued to be responsible for all tasks traditionally considered female responsibility. Land clearance, manuring, weeding, harvesting<sup>2</sup>, winnowing and storing are carried out by women in migrant as well as non-migrant households. It would be important here to spell out the exact nature of each task to understand the level of arduousness.

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<sup>2</sup> All but one migrant household where a man helps his 69 year old wife, as they are the only 2 members residing in the house.

**Table 6.1: Gender Division Of Labour In Agricultural Activities In Migrant And Non-Migrant Households (In Percentage)**

	Agricultural Activities	Sex	Migrant household (Percent)	n	Predominantly male or female task	Non-migrant household (percent)	n	Predominantly male or female task	Overall (Migrant + non-migrant)	Total (n)	Predominantly Male Or Female
1	Land Clearance	M	2 (2.9)	69	f	2 (7.1)	28	F	4 (4.1)	97	F
		F	67 (97.1)			26 (92.9)			93 (95.9)		
2	Manuring	M	-	69	F	-	28	F	-	97	F
		F	69 (100)			28 (100)			97 (100)		
3	Ploughing/ Levelling	M	69 (100)	69	M	28 (100)	28	M	97 (100)	97	M
		F	-			-			-		
4	Sowing	M	67 (97.1)	69	m	28 (100)	28	M	95 (97.9)	97	M
		F	2 (2.9)			-			2 (2.1)		
5	Weeding	M	-	69	F	-	28	F	-	97	F
		F	69 (100)			28 (100)			97 (100)		
6	Irrigating	M	12 (54.5)	22	m=f	9 (90.0)	10	M	21 (65.6)	32	Mf
		F	10 (45.5)			1 (10.0)			11 (34.4)		
7	Guarding	M	33 (55.9)	59	m=f	21 (77.8)	27	Mf	54 (62.8)	86	Mf
		F	26 (44.1)			6 (22.2)			32 (37.2)		
8	Harvesting	M	1 (1.4)	69	f	-	28	F	1 (1)	97	F
		F	68 (98.6)			28 (100)			96 (99)		
9	Transporting	M	1 (1.4)	69	f	2 (7.1)	28	F	3 (3.1)	97	F
		F	68 (98.6)			26 (92.9)			94 (96.9)		
10	Threshing	M	16 (23.2)	69	Fm	13 (46.4)	28	f=m	29 (29.9)	97	FM
		F	53 (76.8)			15 (53.6)			68 (70.1)		
11	Winnowing	M	-	69	F	-	28	F	-	97	F
		F	69 (100)			28 (100)			97 (100)		
12	Storing	M	-	69	F	-	28	F	-	97	F
		F	69 (100)			28 (100)			97 (100)		

Contd/..



II:	Maintenance activities:										
1	Land Terracing	M	62 (89.9)	69	m	27 (96.4)	28	m	89 (91.8)	97	M
		F	7 (10.1)			1 (3.6)			8 (8.2)		
2	Repair "guls"	M	14 (63.6)	22	Mf	9 (90.0)	10	m	23 (71.9)	32	Mf
		F	8 (36.4)			1 (10.0)			9 (28.1)		
3	Repair "Tools"	M	37 (53.6)	69	m=f	25 (89.3)	28	m	62 (63.9)	97	Mf
		F	32 (46.4)			3 (10.7)			35 (36.1)		

Note and Key:

n = number of households where activity is carried out; ( ) denotes row percentage

M : tasks performed exclusively by males (100 percent)

f : tasks performed exclusively by females (100 percent)

m : tasks performed predominantly by males (90 percent or more)

F : tasks performed predominantly by females (90 percent or more)

M=F : Tasks with approximate equal (50-50) participation

Mf: Tasks more male oriented than female for tasks not exclusively or predominantly any one sex dominated

Fm : Tasks more female oriented than male for tasks not exclusively or predominantly any one sex dominated

Manuring<sup>3</sup> being entirely a female activity, women complain of constantly “ascending and descending” while moving back and forth from their homestead to their farms. Both size and location of the field are important variables in determining the arduousness of this task. While weeding during a season takes about three to four hours per day for 15 – 20 days, hoeing which is the next important operation requires a constant forward movement in a squatting position for an equally long period each day. Together they are highly fatiguing tasks and cannot be avoided if the crop growth is to be healthy. The task is particularly hard during the rainy season when women do this work despite being wet or cold. Harvesting is the most critical and busiest time in the women’s agricultural calendar. The fruit of their hard work is ready - but it must be harvested and stored quickly to prevent the rain from spoiling the crop or being eaten by birds and wild animals. Besides, delay in reaping also means delay in sowing in the next crop. This in the hills means a lot - seeds may not germinate in time or may not germinate at all - if not sown on time. As far as harvesting is concerned, the operation of paddy is very different from that of wheat. The reaping process of rice requires women to stoop or cut the rice plants close to the ground. For dry land paddy, women sit on their heels in a squatting position, shifting themselves by inches, as the reaping proceeds.

While harvested wheat is carried by women to the threshing ground (*khaliyan*), rice is threshed in the reaped fields. Winnowing<sup>4</sup> is dependent upon the wind and can only be done during hours of the day that are favoured by a suitable breeze. The de-husked wheat is stored and ground into flour in the nearest flourmill or *atta-chakki* as per the families’ need. Dehusking of rice (hulling and pounding) is a laborious and elaborate task usually performed by women. Usually this work is done in twos, with both women bringing the heavy wooden pestle ( 5 to 7 feet and 3 inches in diameter)<sup>5</sup> up and down in stone mortar (*ukali*) in turns

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<sup>3</sup> Preparing the manure involves a long process, which includes collecting leaves from the forest, laying the cattle bed, clearing the shed and storing the decomposed, rich manure. The floors of the cattle sheds are thickly covered with *timul* leaves (a locally available broad leaf tree) daily, which forms the bed for the cattle, on which the wet litter of the previous night drops. Although the droppings are removed daily, yet a considerable quantity of dung together with urine becomes mingled with these leaves. This decomposes and forms a solid mass that turns into rich manure. In summer the sheds are cleaned out for manure once a week but in winter once a month. This manure is usually stored in the courtyard or outside the cattle shed.

<sup>4</sup> Grain mixed with the chaff is lifted over the head in the *supa* and is slowly allowed to fall to the ground. This action aided by the gentle wind allows the heavy grain to fall straight to the ground, while the chaff is blown to a distance – so two distinct heaps are formed. The chaff or husk is fed to the cattle.

<sup>5</sup> The paddy grains are filled in the cavity of the mortar and then pounded with the pestle by lifting the pestle up and bringing them down again upon the grains. As they pound the grains they move round the mortar and try to push the grains scattered towards the mortar cavity with their feet. Sometimes they use a broom to collect the scattered grains.

upon the grain. Intermittently women winnow the pounded rice to remove the chaff. Being a laborious and elaborate method, women usually pound the rice after sunset or at night to avoid the hot sun. The general practice is to hull as much rice that is required for daily use of the family. Threshing of millets is done with huge wooden clubs with which the ears are beaten with all their might. Processing of millets requires more strength and is more tedious than threshing paddy. Storage is wholly women's responsibility. Besides this grains must also be carefully selected and stored as seeds for the next season. Selection of seeds is a very skilled job and usually the most knowledgeable, older women of the house are responsible for this task.

In marked contrast to traditional female tasks, male tasks depict a markedly changed picture in migrant households. With respect to terracing, irrigating, guarding, threshing and repairing *guls* and tools, a striking new gender-differentiation has emerged with most of this work being done by women. They are thus expected to increase or intensify their own labour inputs in agriculture. Significantly, the only task that is change resistant is ploughing. Culturally considered taboo for women, ploughing continues to be performed by men, usually hired men.

More migrant household women (44.4 percent) as compared to non-migrant (22.2 percent) bear the added responsibility of guarding fields at night over and above the traditional task of *jogai*<sup>6</sup>. They have very little choice between leaving the fruit of their labour to fate or taking up guarding fields themselves. Women are compelled to guard, taking small children with them even in harsh weather conditions. In non migrant families men take responsibility for the customary 'vadu' method of guarding. Susheela Devi, (52 year old) wife of a migrant from Bunga recollects the time when her daughter was four years old:

*My husband was away and I had separated from my in-laws family. I had sown paddy in 'mallisari' (field below). I had to go to guard the field at night. It was 'bhado' (August) and I had made the 'vadu'<sup>7</sup> (bamboo shelter) on the field. At night around eight or nine pm, I went there with my daughter to guard the field*

<sup>6</sup> Women and children go around several times in day and night, drumming and shouting to scare birds and animals from fields.

<sup>7</sup> Vadu refers to a small platform with umbrella-like cover made of bamboo and leaves erected in the fields for men to stay in to guard.

*from wild boars, bear etc. During the night there was heavy rainfall and a big storm came. My "vadu" disappeared in the storm. I was unable to return home because the field is almost at an hour's distance. Nothing is visible at night. I just stayed on the field, clutching my daughter to my chest and crying. When the morning light was out, I returned home. After this, my daughter fell very sick. (Susheela, 52 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

As against the traditional pattern of gender division of labour indicated in Chart 1, threshing in migrant households is primarily the lot of women. In 44.4 percent of migrant households women are today taking on the responsibility of manually threshing with sticks as compared to only 23 percent in non-migrant households. Also threshing paddy by treading on the grain stacks with their feet (traditionally a male task) is at present largely done by women in migrant households. Similarly the tasks of irrigating the fields and repairing the *guls*, have also fallen on women in 54.5 percent of migrant households as compared to 36.4 percent non-migrant households. Furthermore in migrant families, women have taken on the repair of terrace walls, or have had to depend on the help of some male relatives or wait for the male migrant to return home.

The case of manuring the fields is probably the most indicative of impact of male migration. The traditional pastoral system locally called *goath* is virtually extinct because of the absence of men under the system. Cattle were impounded in the fields for three-four months under the care of adult men<sup>8</sup>. As a village elder informed:

*All families practiced goath about three decades back. Sometimes four or five families would combine and pen their cattle by turns in their respective fields. The cattle dung, urine and pounding of the fields with their hoofs provided rich, deep manure to the fields. Most of the adult men in the village moved with the cattle with just one or two adult men remaining in the homestead. Men slept in the shed along with the cattle, while at each end of the shed a fire was lit to ward off the bagh (or leopard) (Govardhan, 69 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

The method eliminated the difficulties of distance, transport and want of bedding for the cattle shed. An agriculturally enriching and economical method, it required young men in-charge of the cattle to camp there.

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<sup>8</sup> *Goath* system required the cattle to be fed and penned in temporary sheds (called *pallao* or *pharkas*) constructed on the field for three-four months. This shed was moved from the field along with the cattle, depending on where the manuring was required. This way the cattle were forced to cover the fields systematically with their dropping.

*This practice was regarded as so beneficial that as many animals as possible were collected – sheep, goats, cows, buffaloes and bullocks – no matter whether they were milch or dry. Their numbers were either increased by purchase or by borrowing dry cattle from those who did not practice this system. The surplus stock of cattle was reduced by selling them in November, when the manuring is over.” (Roshanlal Bhatt, 63 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Not a single household in Bunga today practices *goath* due to shortage of young men, though few households from Daurn do. In its place, women are now forced to carry larger bundles of leaves as bedding for the cattle who are housed in the shed and huge manure baskets to the fields. It has meant longer and more frequent trips by women up and down the hill in order to adequately fertilise the fields.

A further detailed analysis of the labour processes within each of the agricultural activities, suggests that the gender division of labour is not very rigid. Especially when it comes to so-called male tasks, female assistance is demanded. Men may be normatively and actually responsible for some of these tasks, but women assist in various ways within the labour process itself. For instance while men always lead the team of oxen ploughing the field, women follow closely behind, breaking the mud clods, shaking soil free from roots of weeds that are turned over, collecting the dried grass, leaves, etc. Similarly, men broadcast the seeds, but when seeds take root, separating the saplings (*dora*) before re-planting (*butai*) or transplantation (*ropai*) is the task for women in all crops. Also while threshing with oxen is primarily a male job, before men can commence, women prepare the threshing floor (*khaliyan*) by freshly plastering the floor with mud and cow dung. Moreover while men drive yokes of oxen round and round over the sheaves, women rake away the straws with sticks. They also sweep up the grain.

Similarly, though repairing the terraces is primarily men's responsibility, women and children provide support and assistance. They carry stones and boulders from neighboring ravines and mud for the repairs. Hence they take on part of the heavy manual labour. Additionally women have to keep the terrace walls free of wild scrub growth which must be cut and burnt as often as possible. Women thus claim that the work of maintaining and repairing terraces is far more difficult and laborious than actual construction. Likewise with respect to the male work of building *guls* and maintaining

them, it is women who carry most of the building material like mud, gravel, stones etc. When the *guls* dry up, most commonly only women carry water in copper pitchers (*bantha*) for watering the fields. Men seldom assist them, though at times young boys may help. For fertilising the fields, while men may purchase and prepare the fertiliser, in the actual work of spreading the fertilisers and pesticides they may demand the assistance of adult females.

This labour of women goes unaccounted, but adds quantitatively and qualitatively to women's work burden. These agricultural tasks performed by women are ongoing for much of the year and require almost daily attention. Men's major involvement in crop production is ploughing and sowing which requires less than two weeks labour per season and most of the time it is done in early hours of the morning when the sun is not up. Repair work is usually done in the winters, after the rains have stopped and people have ample free time. Women thus emerge as the central actors and certainly as more burdened within the agricultural labour process.

In terms of usage of tools too there is a gender difference. Women's work is mostly done manually or with use of small implements like hoe and sickle, whereas practically all of men's work is performed with help of draught animals. This fact has led to the conclusion that women's work is "unskilled" and men's work is skilled and hence men's work is considered more productive than women's. The tasks that are carried out by men are usually considered more important by both men and women, as compared to those tasks performed by women. In reality however, the tasks that women carry out are equally vital to the production process and often a pre-condition for men's work.

In general, women in migrant households not only performed more tasks, but long-term male out-migration resulted in added responsibilities. In non-migrant households, male heads controlled the entire agricultural production process and held primary responsibility for their own and combined tasks. They keep a watch on what, when and how the women work suggesting greater direct control of women's labour. A few men may even help womenfolk in clearing the fields, harvesting and in transporting the harvest - an assistance that is never impending for migrant households. Only single

women undertake the primary responsibility of threshing, guarding and irrigating, usually widows.

### **Intra-Household Re-Organisation Of Agricultural Labour**

For a further understanding of changing work patterns, it would be important to consider a further repercussion of migration viz. the re-organisation of intra-household labour. What work and how each member does it is influenced by age, sex and hierarchical position in the households. These factors in turn are governed by demographic composition, size and type of household. Overall, the impact is such that along with women, girl children and older men have to bear the brunt of the extra workload in migrant families. In non-migrant households, for as many as 12 agricultural tasks the predominant age group of the primary worker is 35 – 44 years irrespective of sex. This is true for all tasks except guarding fields, where women, even the middle aged members (35 to 44 years) took main responsibility. In migrant households on the other hand, the age of the worker ranges from 25 – 64 years. For male dominated men of an older age group (45 – 55 years) tasks take the major responsibility. More older men (aged 55 - 64) have to execute laborious tasks of irrigating fields or threshing. In female dominated tasks like land clearance, manuring, weeding and winnowing, younger women take main responsibility (who may be wives, sisters, sister-in-law of the migrant). Guarding the fields and harvesting the crops is done by middle-aged and older women. Storing is predominantly the work of the oldest women.

Presence of young children in the family means many more hands that assist. Socialisation of children into gender division of labour begins early in life. Darshini Devi aged 85 summarised the importance of children for this economy thus:

*Children perform many small odd jobs and run errands for the elders, help in the fields and the domestic work, and graze the cows and goats in the nearby forests of village. Boys and girls grow up in the family, giving a helping hand to the adults of the family. By the age of 7-8 years they are expected to perform small jobs inside and outside the house. When the girls are about 8-9 years old they begin to accompany their mothers and elder women to the fields. Initially they go to the fields with food and water. Once there, they participated fully in agricultural work (kheti ka kam). Many women said that their daughters by the age of 12 years, through observation*

*and by working along with older women had learned many of the women's tasks in the field like clearing, manuring, weeding and hoeing. Watching the elders at work and then emulating them, the girls similarly learn harvesting. They don't become proficient in the art of 'katai' (harvesting) - it is too difficult for their small hands, so they cannot cut much of the crops. But even so they try to do their bit following the verbal instructions by older women in the field. But by the age of 15-16 they begin to independently harvest the crop. Infact by this age they help in a range of agricultural and related work like sowing potatoes, manuring the fields, helping in the 'ropai'(sowing paddy), 'katai' (harvesting), going to the jungle for fodder and fuel, bringing home the harvested crops from the fields etc. By the time they are 16-17, the appropriate age to marry, they are proficient / skilled.*

*Boys generally do not perform agricultural jobs like weeding and hoeing; neither do they do the harvesting. Sometimes however they may perform few female jobs - in case there is no other available help. A mother may coax her son to dump manure in the fields, though all may not necessarily obey their mothers. But they do so only when absolutely unavoidable, as they consider it below their dignity to perform these tasks. Boys take the animals to the forest for grazing. This is often their main task and they may sometimes bring back firewood. They may help their fathers with ploughing and sowing. By the time boys are 12 to 15 years old they are initiated into ploughing. On rare occasion they may even begin to plough earlier. One 12 years old boy had begun ploughing when he was 10 years old since his father was weak as a result of two operations. But increasingly boys are reluctant to do agricultural tasks. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Joint or extended households with more women members, for instance, mothers-in-law, sisters-in-law and daughters-in-law, generally distribute work amongst them. The presence of daughters-in-law particularly decides the sharing of familial responsibility in all households. The heaviest burden falls on younger women, in particular daughters-in-law who are under much pressure to fill the gap left by their husbands. Junior daughters-in-law usually have to take on the major share of extra work, regardless of the fact that they already have a heavy workload<sup>9</sup>. Changes in women's work are thus structured by their position within the household.

Women with young, unmarried daughters are able to delegate some of the responsibilities to their daughters. Young, unmarried girls assist, particularly in tasks that are time and labour intensive. Presence of adult sons may facilitate shifting responsibility of some

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<sup>9</sup> Another outcome of the extra burden and inequitable distribution observed is that the youngest daughter-in-law is forced to take on a full workload through the period of advanced pregnancy and childbirth.



male tasks to them, but with most younger boys dreaming of moving out, their assistance is limited.

Generally, older women have commanded power and respect that go with age. They exercise some choice over their labour inputs and are often relieved from laborious farm activities and entrusted supervision work.

*It is common to see all adult women and girls busy with different chores right upto 12.30 p m. Only people available in the house are men, very small children and old women. But even amongst the old women, those who have a daughter-in-law are privileged. They have the luxury of sitting home in the sun or go to some neighbours house to chat. The entire hard, laborious work is transferred to their daughters-in-law, giving them respite from arduous, back -breaking farm, forest and water related tasks. Goli dadi (62 years) is mostly seen sitting on the entrance of the first-floor room overlooking the village, supervising her grandchildren, yelling and directing them to do this or that. This is her main work. Her daughter in law and grandchildren do all the outside work.*

However there are now cases where older women's authority appears to be weakening.

*Chandramati Devi, (69 years old) finds it very hard to do much outside agricultural, livestock or domestic work. She had no cash income for herself and is solely reliant on the goodwill of her migrant son. Her daughter-in-law resents her inability to help. She constantly curses and abuses her.*

Old women with poor bargaining power are under pressure to intensify their labour inputs and demonstrate their utility within the house in order to maintain goodwill. Since labour is the only source of security, the failing ability to work becomes a source of tremendous anxiety. Similarly single old women, widows or those whose daughters-in-law are not staying with them also suffer great hardship. Despite old age they are compelled to work for survival.

### **New Labour Arrangements: Hired And Reciprocal Labour**

The need for labour in agricultural tasks for which family labour alone is not found sufficient, is met by new combinations of reciprocal or hired labour. Almost an equivalent number of migrant households in both "low" and "high" land cultivated category depend on wage labour even for tasks like ploughing and sowing where labour is generally hired. In contrast, non-migrant households in all three categories do not hire

ploughmen, and even reciprocal labour though present, is negligible (see Appendix Table A6.1). Form of labour procurement – hired or reciprocal – varies by gender and from task to task.

Dependence on outside labour is highest for “male tasks” of ploughing, levelling and sowing. Hired labour is used to a very small extent in repairing the terraces and *guls*. Overall in the village agricultural labour economy, reciprocal labour is more dominant than wage labour. Reciprocal labour exchange is more common in non-migrant households compared to migrant households (Table 6.2).

**Table 6.2: Distribution Of Migrant And Non-Migrant Households According To Who Performs Each Agricultural Activity (Primary And Assisted)**

Agricultural and related activities	Family	Hired	Reciprocal + labour exchange	Family+ Hired	Family + Reciprocal labour	Total
<b>MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS</b>						
1. Terracing	40 (58)	12 (17.4)	11 (15.9)	3 (4.3)	3 (4.3)	69
2. Clearance	66 (95.7)	-	-		3 (4.3)	69
3. Manuring	66 (95.7)	-	-		3 (4.3)	69
4. Plough/ level	27 (39.1)	29 (42.0)	11(15.9/	1 (1.4)	1 (1.4)	69
5. Sowing	27 (39.1)	30 (43.5)	9 (13.0)	3 (4.3)	-	69
6. Weeding	68 (98.6)	-		-	1 (1.4)	69
7. Irrigating	18 (81.8)	-	4 (18.2)	-	-	22
8. Guarding	49 (83.1)	-	7 (11.9)	-	3 (5.1)	59
9. Harvesting	63 (91.3)	-	-	-	6 (8.7)	69
10. Transporting	64 (92.8)	-	1 (1.4)	-	4 (5.8)	69
11. Threshing	64 (92.8)	-	-	-	5 (7.2)	69
12. Winnowing	66 (95.7)	-	-	-	3 (4.3)	69
13. Storing	67 (97.1)	-	-	-	2 (2.9)	69
14. Repair “guls”	17 (77.3)	1 (4.5)	4 (18.2)	-	-	22
15. Repair “tools”	63 (91.3)	-	5 (7.2)	1 (1.4)	-	69

Contd/..

Agricultural and related activities	Family	Hired	Reciprocal + labour exchange	Family+ Hired	Family + Reciprocal labour	Total
<b>NON-MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS</b>						
1. Terracing	23 (82.1)	-	2 (7.2)	-	3 (10.7)	28
2. Clearance	24 (85.7)	-	-	-	4 (14.3)	28
3. Manuring	27 (96.4)	-	-	-	1 (3.6)	28
4. Plough/ level	25 (89.3)	-	1 (3.6)	-	2 (7.1)	28
5. Sowing	25 (89.3)	-	1 (3.6)	-	2 (7.1)	28
6. Weeding	24 (85.7)	-	-	-	4 (14.2)	28
7. Irrigating	9 (90.0)	-	1 (10.0)	-		10
8. Guarding	25 (92.6)	-	2 (7.4)	-		27
9. Harvesting	26 (92.9)	-	-	-	2 (7.1)	28
10. Transporting	26 (92.9)	-	1 (3.6)	-	1 (3.6)	28
11. Threshing	25 (89.3)	-	-	-	3 (10.7)	28
12. Winnowing	23 (82.1)	-	1 (3.6)	-	4 (14.3)	28
13. Storing	25 (89.3)	-	1 (3.6)	-	2 (7.1)	28
14. Repair "Guls"	9 (90)	-	1 (10)	-		10
15. Repair "Tools"	24 (88.7)	-	2 (7.1)	-	2 (7.1)	28

NOTE: same as Table 6.3

Not a single non-migrant household employs wage labour for male tasks, though a few may acquire reciprocal exchange labour. In migrant households, approximately 21.7 percent households use some form of hired help for terracing and almost 43 and 48 percent of migrant households respectively hire help for ploughing and sowing. Besides, almost 20.2 percent households have to depend on reciprocal labour. For the other four tasks, even though these households do not hire labour, they seek reciprocal help.

Thus migrant households depend on outside reciprocal hired help, especially for ploughing and sowing as compared to non-migrants. Two factors viz. resource capacity of the migrant

households and higher rate of male migration in the working age group appears to be mainly responsible. The earlier chapter showed that 47.2 percent migrant households (34 households) did not have adult males (18 years and above). Data further show that of the 29 migrant households who ploughed with hired labour, 24 had no bullocks too and had to depend on others. Since a majority of migrant household (86.6 percent) received remittances, they could expend money on hired help. The cumulative impact of these factors result in 42 percent of migrant households hiring ploughmen and another 16 percent relying upon reciprocal exchange labour. On the other hand, 93 percent of non-migrant households have at least one adult male family member in the village and a majority (63.3 percent) possess at least a pair of oxen and are hence dependent on family labour.

Hiring households are higher among the upper castes. Almost 34.5 percent Brahmins and Rajput households hire help compared to only 13 percent Dom households. Doms depend more on reciprocal exchange labour (34.8 percent) in comparison to hired labour (13 percent).

### **New Labour Relations: Implications For Women**

The new forms of organisation and relations of labour in agriculture accentuate women's work burden in new ways. Inter-household reciprocal labour relations locally called *padiyaal* is now largely restricted to female agricultural tasks, hence reciprocity is repaid by women's work alone. Being interwoven throughout the work that women do, women continue to be expected to expand labour inputs as payment towards others' labour inputs. They pay through labour even for borrowing bullocks. When unable to pay, women must give their own labour in exchange for male assistance. Unlike the past when groups of women performed *padiyaal*, it is restricted today to a single reciprocal exchange partner. Women move from field to field. Men help on their own land alone and never during reciprocal labour on others' land. Men's hired or reciprocal work is always remunerated - either in cash or kind.

Reciprocal commodity exchange also works similar to *padiyaal*. Trading of bullocks for some service or commodity during planting season is common. Explaining this, Poonam said:

*Today in the absence of adult males, very few migrant families maintain bullocks because to train the "young calf" to plough a man is needed. Women from households who own bullocks are better-off than those who don't as they can at least exchange their bullocks with other families who don't own them, in lieu of getting their fields ploughed. They are thus assured that their fields will be ploughed. Only three or four migrant families in Bunga and Daurn own bullocks today. All of them are very old now; they were bought and trained when the men were at home. (Poonam, 31 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Hardship is most severe for women running independent households. Their husbands do not send remittances large enough to enable them to hire help and hence they depend on reciprocity of male kin. As Sarita, relates

*My brother-in-law ploughs our fields. But in return I have to work on their fields. I assist my sister-in-law in all field activities. Besides this when my husband visits the village he gets clothes and foodstuff for his brother's whole family. If he buys rice for his own family, he gets the same amount of rice for his brother's family too. (Sarita, 49 yrs, Rajput, Daurn)*

Reciprocity thus appears to be an euphemism for exploitation !

Old women, single women, widows who do not have any permanent source of cash income to hire ploughmen also find themselves under great physical strain. They are compelled to exchange their own labour for ploughing operation, adding to their drudgery.

Hired labour includes daily wage labour and a seasonal contract. Since there is always a paucity of men and oxen for ploughing during peak agricultural seasons, hired labourers charge exorbitantly high wages. Besides wages, the hiring household provides the labourer with morning tea and breakfast (*roti* and *sabji*), a pack of *bidi* (local cigarettes) a matchbox and fodder for bullocks. Fixing up ploughmen and dates for work, cooking for hired men and arranging for the fodder are women's responsibilities. Besides the organisation and management of labour, women find it difficult to negotiate the contract amount. Taking advantage of the labour shortage, women complained that ploughmen in particular, demand exorbitant wages.

*Ploughmen always expect us to assist them while they works with the bullocks. We have to follow them, breaking the mounds of mud and removing the waste from the field. Isn't this assistance for which at least they should give us some*

*concession? But on the other hand they frequently demands temporary ownership of trees like "bhimal", a chief fodder tree, for their own use. Of course all this for no payment! In addition they threaten not to plough our fields in the next season! This way they keep us on tenterhooks, begging them to continue ploughing our field (Anita, 34 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Women are distressed by these mercenary attitudes of the ploughmen who also may not satisfactorily fulfill the contract. Men do not listen to them and do less work. Despite all their daily needs being met they often devote only part of the contract time to work. Due to a general shortage of labour, the ploughman (particularly the poor, low caste worker) makes contracts with several families within and outside the village in demand season. He may proceed to plough his own field. Women are afraid of rebuking them, in case they refuse to plough. Thus, they have no alternative but to put up with the harassment. Their inability to exert any authority over men is a function of their lack of social power.

In rainfed agriculture where timely ploughing and sowing is important to raise productivity; especially in *kharif* operations, timing is closely related to crop output. For crops like rice, the field has to be ploughed thrice before sowing. The delays caused by ploughmen adversely affect the yield of migrant family's crops. It has been observed that production per acre is more in non-migrant families than in the migrant households.

Another significant issue brought forth by women is the poor quality of tillage and sowing work done by hired or reciprocal male labour. The extra workload of repairing the damage is shifted to female workers, especially since they are already performing complementary operations in tillage and sowing. Women have to do the hard labour of breaking the mounds, hoeing and weeding. Cultural taboos break down

Older women from Bunga recollect how ploughmen from Ghaikhal, the scheduled caste village, tilled their fields under the *khalkiya-gusai* system. Today the system is broken and workers have to be remunerated in cash. Taking their services today has its own operational problems, due to persistent caste taboos. Separate utensils and water for cleaning also have to be carried to the fields for the Doms. These utensils have to be doubly cleaned, meaning more work for the upper caste women.

Hired labour thus brings with it more labour for the already overburdened women. Inability to hire labour results in fallow fields. The ultimate effect is on the food security of the household. For most peasant women the situation therefore has meant increased responsibility, added burden and a precarious existence.

### **Dom Women: Combining Agricultural And Artisan Work.**

Dom women are engaged in agriculture and traditional caste work. Within artisan production, women's and men's productive labour is delineated by caste and gender. Men in general are more directly involved than women, yet women's degree of involvement varies from total participation in the production process (as in basket-making) to partial or supplementary involvement (as in pottery, ironsmithery) to total non-participation (as in masonry). In activities like ironsmithery, women pump bellows and often deliver the finished work. Potter women carry, mix clay, shape pipes and deliver goods, besides performing dancing and drumming. Tailor caste women assist in sewing clothes. Besides, they accompany men when they drum in the village asking for the *dadwar*.

Dom women are also involved in subsistence agriculture. Moreover sale of labour in agricultural production demands not just work of men, but also of the women. Dom women assist upper caste women in clearing the fields, weeding, and harvesting for which they typically receive payments in kind such as grains, vegetables. Or they are granted the right to cut grass or lop "fodder trees" belonging to the upper castes. While absence of wage-labour opportunities creates a negative situation, generally Dom women are more badly affected. Their work being heterogeneous and flexible, they fare worse than high caste women as well as same caste men.

### **WOMEN IN ANIMAL HUSBANDRY**

In considering women's work in animal husbandry the impact of ecological degradation needs to be taken into account along with male out migration. Except 8 households (7.8 percent) who have no animal asset<sup>10</sup>, the remaining 96 households (92.2 percent ) in

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<sup>10</sup> Of these 6 (75 percent) were migrant and 2 (25 percent) non-migrant households, three of which (37.5 percent) did not cultivate land, 3 cultivated very small pieces of land and the other two belonged to very old single almost asset less women. Caste wise 5 of these households were Brahmins, 2 (25 percent) Doms and 1 was a Rajput household.

Bunga and Daurn own some “*dangars*” (domestic animals). Village-based animal husbandry tasks are extremely difficult in the hills. Ecological degradation directly affects animal husbandry particularly the collection of forest produce. Changes in agricultural cultivation patterns has further degraded forests. Since animal husbandry is largely their responsibility, women have to bear the brunt of these negative changes.

As we have seen, with the exception of grazing and tending small animals, each animal husbandry task is assigned to women. Table 6.3 below gives the current situation, highlighting differences between migrant and non-migrant households. Except for grazing and care of small animals, all the other tasks are overwhelmingly women’s tasks viz. tasks like cleaning the cowshed, preparing fodder, stall-feeding, fodder collection and milking.

**Table 6.3: Gender Division Of Labour For Animal Husbandry Activities By Migration Status Of The Household (In Percentage)**

Activities	Sex	Migrant (percent)	Total	Predominantly male or female task	Non-Migrant (Percent)		Total	Predominantly male or female task	Overall (Percent)	Total	Predominantly male or female task
1. Grazing	M	23 (46.0)	50 (100)	Fm	20 (74.0)	7 (25.9)	27 (100)	Mf	43 (55.8)	77 (100)	Mf
	F	27 (54.0)							34 (44.2)		
2. Cleaning Cowshed	M	--	66 (100)	F	--	28 (100)	28 (100)	F	-	94 (100)	F
	F	66 (100)							94 (100)		
3. Fodder Preparation	M	--	66 (100)	F	--	28 (100)	28 (200)	F	-	94 (100)	F
	F	66 (100)							94 (100)		
4. Stall Feeding	M	--	66 (100)	F	--	28 (100)	28 (100)	F	-	94 (100)	F
	F	66 (100)							94 (100)		
5. Fodder & grass collection	M	--	65	F	--	28 (100)	28 (100)	F	-	93 (100)	F
	F	65 (100)							93 (100)		
6. Milking	M	--	65	F	--	28 (100)	28 (100)	F	-	93 (100)	F
	F	65 (100)							93 (100)		
7. Care of small animals (goat, sheep etc.)	M	18 (52.9)	34 (100)	MF	9 (69.2)	4 (30.8)	13 (100)	MF	27 (57.4)	47 (100)	MF
	F	16 (47.1)							20 (42.6)		

Note:

1. Gender division of labour for animal husbandry work is defined in terms of who took the primary responsibility
2. Key for deciding gender predominance of tasks same as for agricultural activities.
3. Figures in parenthesis show percentage.



What has changed is that the male migration has added further burden. Whereas men and boys continue to undertake the primary responsibility of grazing and tending to animals in most non-migrant households exclusively taking on these responsibilities in migrant households. The table reveals these differences. Mulling over these changes, a women captures the thoughts of others:

*When there are no men in the homes, then this is bound to happen. But besides migration of our adult men, sending boys to school has meant an ever-increasing burden on women for animal husbandry tasks. Only during school vacations the young children can be seen grazing. In effect this task has also fallen on our shoulders. (Vijaylakshmi, 31 yrs, Brahmin, Birkatal)*

The forests of Bunga are the largest as compared to other hamlets. Yet women estimate that a trip to the forest for fodder collection ten years ago took two hours as compared to the four to five hours today. The situation is the worst for the women of Daurn which has no forest of its own and those of Goddi whose forests are completely degraded.

Today due to smallholding cultivation, fodder obtained from agricultural fields in the form of crop by-product is very limited. Even grass formerly available from currently fallow fields in the rainy season is in short supply as "current fallows" are decreasing. Smaller amounts of land are under cultivation, and long-term fallows, which are not of any use, are on the increase. Thus except a few families with large landholding who are able to cut much of their daily fodder needs from around their fields, the majority have to make extra trips to the forest, adding tremendously to workload and work pressure. Decline of the *goath* system referred to earlier has erased men's role in cattle rearing.

Increasingly required to graze the cattle, poor fodder quality necessitates women's labour in stall-feeding as well. Stall-feeding requires almost daily collection of fodder leaves and grass from the forest and from village pastures or the fields. Men do not assist at all in this activity. Collecting and carrying fodder in the hills is no small task. Women have to walk long distances on difficult and rugged terrain, climb big trees, and enter deep down in the bushes to collect the daily requirement of fodder. The trip to the forest takes at least two to three hours and a bundle of fodder may weigh anything from 20 to 35 kilos. Some relief is provided in the rainy season when field fodder is easily available and when

women have to expend less time and energy. Additionally, pastures and forest grass has also to be cut at fixed times of the year and dried and stored for winter fodder. Besides this, women stock up the dry, paddy grass (*poyal* or *parkhunda*) on the trees. Storage for lean periods is also women's responsibility.

Furthermore, fodder needs are only partially extracted from common resources. Women meet the remaining preparing special cattle feed called *pinda*. Making *pinda* involves mixing finely chopped fodder leaves<sup>11</sup> with husk, *mandua*, *jhangora*, *atta* etc. and then cooking it on slow fire. Plough bullocks and milch cattle are usually given *pinda* twice a day. The amount of *pinda* prepared or grass cut and the times expended on these tasks vary. The larger the cattle head or fewer the helping hands mean women's work for more extended period of time.

Today buffaloes have replaced cows, as milk obtained is much more. This change which has occurred to a greater extent in migrant families due to high cost, is also at the cost of women. Hill cows being small in size can be taken to graze in the hill slopes. Buffaloes cannot negotiate steep mountain paths. They need to be stall-fed on forest leaves and agricultural residues which increases fodder requirement. Women reported that each buffalo eats around 20-25 kg of grass and needs at least 20 litres of water per day. In any event the shortage of grazing grounds, fear of leopard (*bagh*) and dearth of manpower, have resulted in greater degree of stall-feeding. The collecting and cleaning work for women has compounded due to a number of factors. As Shakhambhari explained:

*Maintaining buffaloes means so much work for us. Men tell us that they give much more milk and "gobar" dung. But where does this milk come from? It is our blood that we burn in collecting and carrying these twenty-thirty kilos of grass and water! And then we don't even get a drop of milk to drink - after all it's the men and boys who must drink hot milk before they sleep. And this buffalo is a fussy being! It does not eat all types of grasses and leaves that our "desi" cows eat. And even if it's mixed in the "pinda" and given, it falls sick. That means more work and headache for us. In any case they are more prone to falling sick. If it dies it will mean more than my death - it cost us Rs 7000/-! And as if these men don't know - manure made from cow dung is superior to buffaloes dung. (Shakhambhari, 64 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

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<sup>11</sup> Feed is made of *timla*, *genthi*, *umar*, *gular* leaves cut into fine pieces using a special knife called *chulesu*. This is then mixed with *jhangora*, *mandua* and *atta* and cooked in a big copper vessel called *pinda*-hence its name.

Care of young calves and sick animals has primarily been women's work. In an area where the veterinary services available are negligible, women's knowledge is valuable.

Cleaning the cowshed (*sanni*) is another cumbersome task usually carried out by girls. Dung is cleared by hand and stored in heaps outside the cattle shed for manure. The droppings have to be removed daily and fresh bedding of dry leaves, pinewood needles has to be laid out at least once in ten-twelve days. Providing the bedding and smoking the cowshed to keep mosquitoes away are also women's jobs. Milking the cow or buffalo is older women's responsibility while processing of milk into curd, buttermilk, ghee etc is younger women's task<sup>12</sup>.

Tending to small animals (goats, sheep), a relatively easy task because it does not involve stall-feeding, is men's task. As one male from Daurn stated:

*Goat is essential for sacrifice at all-important religious events. It is also financially lucrative. A small goat can fetch as much as Rs. 600. Goat is self-sustaining. We do not have to bother much. They graze themselves and they multiply very fast.*

Selling and buying of livestock is male work<sup>13</sup>. Selling a livestock can bring in between Rs.1000 to 6000. Men also generally market surplus milk or any other animal product not being consumed by the household. Livestock rearing is a family affair without any hired help. Some reciprocal labour relations especially with extended family members for grazing activities and reciprocal commodity relations (fodder, grass, cow dung etc) with family, friends and neighbours and low caste do exist. Nevertheless women do the bulk of the work of animal maintenance regardless of class and caste positions.

### **Labour Procurement And Re-Organisation Under Animal Husbandry**

As we have seen, animal husbandry involves family labour. Girls and boys are socialised from young age to perform the varied tasks. Only in situations of contingency a household might take assistance from an "outsider". For tasks like grazing and milking, a

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<sup>12</sup> Extra milk is set into curd. Women prepare buttermilk and some families also make clarified butter or ghee, which may be used at home or may be sold.

<sup>13</sup> Selling a *dangar* can bring Rs. 1000 to Rs. 6000.

few migrant households have come to depend on reciprocal labour (10 percent and 1.5 percent respectively)(Table 6.4).

**Table 6.4: Who Performs Animal Husbandry Related Tasks In Migrant And Non-migrant Households (In Percentages)**

Activities	Responsibility	Migrant	Total n =	Non-migrant	Total n =	Overall	Total n =
1. Grazing	F	42 (84)	50 (100)	24 (88.9)	27 (100)	66 (85.7)	77 (100)
	R	5 (10)		-		-	
	F+R	3 (6)		3 (11.1)		11 (14.3)	
2. Cleaning Shed	F	62 (93.9)	66 (100)	26 (92.9)	28 (100)	88 (93.6)	94 (100)
	R	-		-		-	
	F+R	4 (6.1)		2 (7.1)		6 (6.4)	
3. Fodder Preparation	F	64 (97.0)	66 (100)	28 (100)	28 (100)	92 (97.9)	94 (100)
	R	-		-		-	
	F+R	2 (3.0)		-		2 (2.1)	
4. Stall Feeding	F	63 (95.5)	66 (100)	28 (100)	28 (100)	91 (96.8)	94 (100)
	R	-		-		-	
	F+R	3 (4.5)		-		3 (3.27)	
5. Fodder Collection	F	63 (96.9)	65 (100)	28 (100)	28 (100)	91 (97.8)	93 (100)
	R	-		-		-	
	F+R	2 (3.1)		-		2 (2.2)	
6. Milking	F	61 (92.4)	66 (100)	28 (100)	28 (100)	89 (94.7)	94 (100)
	R	1 (1.5)		-		-	
	F+R	4 (6.1)		-		5 (5.3)	
7. Caring for Small Animals	F	34 (100)	34 (100)	13 (100)	13 (100)	47 (100)	47 (100)
	R	-		-		-	
	F+R	-		-		-	

**KEY:**

1. F = Only Family members perform this task
2. F + R = Primarily the family members perform the task, but they are assisted by reciprocal exchange labour.
3. ( ) = Figures in parenthesis show percentage from total
4. Total n = number of households who practice that task

For instance in times of sickness or delivery, women may need help (mostly from) their own extended family members. Other women with very small children may not be able to cope, especially if belonging to nuclear households.

*Sundari Devi (aged 28) involved her mother-in-law in caring for her cow. The older woman would feed and care for the cow, and in return is able to use its products (milk, curd and ghee). The "gobar" (bedding mixed with dung) is given to Sundari to fertilize her fields, while also shared with her mother-in-law's other son's field. Sundari benefited from the "gobar", yet was not responsible for*

*fulfilling any of the cows' needs. This freed up considerable time for her, as she is the mother of four young children. The mother-in-law benefited from the use of cow's milk. Further, she also received some grains from the other son's field in lieu of the manure she provided.*

We find that in non-migrant households middle-aged women (35 – 44 years) perform varied animal husbandry tasks, and a slightly lower age group of women in the migrant households (25 – 34 years). However even in the migrant households the skilled tasks of fodder preparation and milking of cows and buffaloes is mainly the work of middle-aged women (35 – 44 years), the same as in the non- migrant households.

When women have to take on male tasks of grazing animals or tending to them, it is the younger or older women who do so. The middle aged peasant women, as we have earlier seen, are loaded with agricultural tasks in migrant households. Where men continue to do these tasks, it now falls on the shoulders of old men. Even very old men aged 70-plus, have to step in as substitutes for their migrant sons. There is a marked tendency among young boys to shirk this work.

### **DOMESTIC LABOUR: WOMEN'S EXCLUSIVE DOMAIN**

Domestic work, cross culturally the traditional domain of women, is also culturally legitimised in Garhwal as exclusively women's work. It includes the whole range of reproductive activities and productive activities of "use value" - the bearing and rearing of children, care of the aged and sick, cooking, storing, cleaning utensils, washing clothes at the spring, filling and bringing water, collection of fuel wood, knitting, stitching and mending clothes, as well as undertaking tasks related to marriage and religious ceremonies of family, kith and kin.

Participation of boys and men in these activities is minimal. As a rule, adult men do not carry water on their heads, cook, clean utensils, wash clothing, sweep and re-dung the floors. Nor do they bathe the children or prepare them for school. Men took little part in domestic work; mostly work related to building repairs, construction and marketing.

Although some gender sharing exists in the subsistence production tasks dealt with so far, the responsibility for domestic tasks falls mainly on the women's shoulders. Migration

status has not made for any fundamental alterations in the gender division of labour (as evident in Table 6.5). The alterations are within rather than between genders.

**Table 6.5: Gender Division Of Labour For Domestic Task By Sex And Migration Status Of The Households (In Percentage)**

	Sex	Migrant (percent)	Total	Predominantly male or female task	Non-Migrant (Percent)	Total	Predominantly male or female task	Overall (percent)	Total	Predominantly male or female task
1. Cooking and other related task	M	1 (1.4)	72	Fm	0(0)	30	F	1 (1.0)	102	Fm
	F	71 (98.6)	(100)		30(100)			(100)		
2. Serving food	M	1 (1.4)	72	Fm	0(0)	30	F	1(1.0)	102	Fm
	F	71 (98.6)	(100)		30(100)			(100)		
3. Cleaning utensils	M	1 (1.4)	72	Fm	0(0)	30	F	1(1.0)	102	Fm
	F	71 (98.6)	(100)		30(100)			(100)		
4. Sweeping & Cleaning house	M	1 (1.4)	72	fm	11 (36.7)	30	Fm	12(11.8)	102	
	F	71 (98.6)	(100)		19 (63.3)			(100)		
5. Washing clothes	M	1 (1.4)	72	F	0(0)	30	F	1(1)	102	Fm
	F	71 (98.6)	(100)		30(100)			(100)		
6. Fetching water	M	8 (11.1)	72	fm	4 (13.3)	30	fm	12(11.8)	(102)	
	F	64 (88.9)	(100)		26 (86.7)			(100)		
7. Fuel wood collection	M	2 (2.8)	72	Fm	0(0)	30	F	2(2.0)	102	Fm
	F	70 (97.2)	(100)		30(100)			(100)		
8. Repair of house/cowshed	M	60 (88.2)	68	mf	30(100)	30	M	90(91.8)	98	Mf
	F	8 (11.8)	(100)		0(0)			(100)		
9. Childcare	M	2 (4.8)	42	Fm	0(0)	19	F	2(3.3)	61	Fm
	F	40 (95.2)	(100)		19(100)			(100)		
10. Caring of elderly/sick	M	5 (15.2)	33	fm	3(37.5)	8	fm	8(19.5)	41	Fm
	F	28 (84.8)	(100)		5(67.5)			(100)		
11. Buying household goods	M	45 (62.5)	72	mf	29(98.6)	30	Mf	74(72.5)	102	mf
	F	27 (37.5)	(100)		1(1.4)			(100)		
12. Growing vegetables (home garden)	M	12 (17.6)	68	fm	8(27.6)	29	fm	20(20.6)	97	fm
	F	56 (82.4)	(100)		21(72.4)			(100)		

Note:

1. M = Male; F = female

2. Total = n i.e. number of households performing that task

3. Key same as other tables

Factors like size of the family, availability of members (male or female) and nature of relationship between them determined whether work got distributed between women or not. The most striking aspect of this category of work is that labour of older children, particularly girls is most frequently substituted for adult woman's labour. This helps in releasing time for the adult women for agricultural and animal husbandry related tasks.

Moreover the domestic cycle of a woman also dictated whether she would have grown up daughter or mothers-in-law or daughters-in-law to assist her.

In order to understand the difficulties that women encounter in fulfilling these domestic responsibilities in this terrain and amidst her multiple roles, we give a descriptive account of the different domestic tasks. We also attempt to highlight differences between nuclear and extended; smaller and larger; migrant and non-migrant households.

A women's day begins with housework. This work, concerned mainly with the satisfaction of basic household needs such as fetching water, preparing food, washing clothes etc. contrasts sharply with the domestic labour of the classical urban housewife. Hill women's labour involves actual production process under hard environmental conditions. The division between these "production" and "reproduction" activities however, is not very clear in this rural setting.

### **Cooking And Other Household Responsibilities**

Daughters-in-law or daughters as the case may be, usually do the daily cooking. Prior to cooking, several processing tasks have to be done like pounding rice or millets, cleaning grains and pulses of stones, making butter and sour milk etc. Pounding in the stone mortar is the most tedious and time consuming job. Today this is not a daily task, but about three-four decades back pounding and grinding wheat flour in the stone mill was a task to be performed nearly every day in most households. These days paddy and millets - enough for a couple for a weeks' use - are pounded and husked at a time and stored away. Women usually go once a month to the flourmill to grind wheat. At a very young age, mothers delegate the domestic tasks to their daughters, saving their own time for heavier jobs. Serving food is done by the most senior women with the male members and children being served first. From the age of five years, girls are socialised for a life of hard labour. From about age four onwards they look after younger siblings, fetch and carry, clean and run errands. Cooking begins from 6-7 years with simple tasks. Initially they may not "sit at the *chula*", but they learn early to boil rice, make tea etc. By 12 years, girls are capable of cooking a full meal.

*Suman (aged 38) narrated how during her confinement her daughter was compelled to cook at age of 7 as there was no other adult woman in the house. When she had to*

*grind the masala paste she would seek her aunt's (chachi) instructions. She would put the rice to cook on the stove, but had to call her chachi to help take it off the fire. It was trouble for the chachi who was busy with her own work but there was no other way till she learnt to do these tasks by herself.*

Sisters-in-law or mothers-in-law take over cooking during harvesting season, when the daughters-in-law are busy in the field. Men too cook, but only for the restricted period of menstrual pollution or during their wives confinement or illness. In exceptional cases husbands and sons help their wives and mothers, fetching water and other odd jobs. They are the frequent target of jokes.

Cleaning the kitchen and wash the utensils (*chowka-bhanda*) after each meal is the young girls' responsibility. This is particularly a tedious affair in hill households due to the acute shortage and preciousness of water. Utensils have to be scrubbed and cleaned using small quantities of water and taking care to utilise every bit through use and re-use. Vessels are first rinsed with little water, which is saved in a plastic bucket for the use of domestic animals<sup>14</sup>. They are next wet with a small amount of water and scrubbed with ash or soap. Clean water is used to rinse, which is again saved for wetting other utensils. Upto twenty minutes each time are required to wash vessels in this manner.

Sweeping and cleaning the house is the daily work of children, especially older daughters or occasionally adult men and women. Adult women are solely responsible for periodic cleaning viz. *lipai*. Houses are thoroughly plastered with mixture of cow dung, fine yellow earth and water. Young girls collect this yellow earth, which is generally stored in every house, on their way back from school. The earth is broken, dried and then run through a sieve to remove stones and other coarse matter.

Child care i.e. feeding, bathing and nursing of children is women's work. Children's school admissions are dealt with by men, but women must ensure that the children go to school. Other household women look after the children when mothers are away in the fields. Socialisation into community norms and roles is similarly woman's responsibility. Male assistance is sporadic.

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<sup>14</sup> Even the water used for washing the millets, rice etc. is poured into the plastic cattle – tub.



Childcare is a difficult task for single adult women in migrant households. In fact it is neglected due to lack of time and energy. Young girls often take charge of caring for her younger siblings. In non-migrant households no one younger than 21 years took primary responsibility of childcare. In 84.8 percent migrant households women alone take on the main responsibility of care of the old. In comparison, non-migrant household women have others help.

Washing clothes at the spring is primarily women's work, though men may wash their personal clothes while bathing. Moreover due to water shortage, it is not a daily chore but is only done once or twice a week. Washing children's clothes and other household linen along with her own is women's work. Grown up girls often share this responsibility with their mothers.

Fetching water is the most arduous and time-consuming of women's tasks due to distance, the steep terrain, water shortages and daily requirement. Water is collected and stored for varied purposes like drinking, cooking, washing, at times even bathing and for livestock. As described in the earlier chapter, despite the presence of piped water<sup>15</sup> in a few hamlets, the main sources of drinking water for majority of the households are the natural spring or *gadderas*. Water is generally carried on the head in heavy copper pitchers (*banthas*) weighing 20-30 kg. Adult women get assistance from young children, both boys and girls in meeting the water needs of the family. Even children as little as 4 to 5 years old carry one or two litres of water in plastic containers. Girls carry many more *banthas* per day compared to their brothers.

Natural springs are located far from the hamlet and several trips have to be made to fulfill daily water needs. Requirement per family ranges from two to seven–eight *banthas* of water per day. The quantity varies according to family size, number of stall fed animals and the season. Water is scarce in summer with *gadderas* drying up. Trips have to be made to far away water sources. Spring waters are usually shrunk to a small trickle which prolongs the work. Vijaylakshmi recounted her troubles last summer:

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<sup>15</sup> This piped water has not resolved the water problem for even these households as most of the time either the tap dries up or the pipeline gets broken. Hence households have to fall back on the *gadderas*.

*We go one kilometer to the "gaddera" for water, as that is our closest source. Even if we go at 5 in the morning we have to wait because the water level in the summers is very low and it takes very long to fill one "bantha". Many times there is no water in this "gaddera", and then we have to turn back and go in the other direction. There is "raggaria" down in the valley- we have to wait there too as there are a lot of people there as this is the only source that does not dry up in summers. It often takes us two hours to get water. And then in summers we need a lot of water for the animals as well. (Vijayalakshmi, 26 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Firewood collection for cooking which involves gathering, transporting and chopping of firewood is another heavy daily task. Girls begin doing this work at age ten or twelve and continue till old age. Men may attend to this task only in the winter months and when large quantity of wood is required for farm implements or for construction. Different patterns are adopted by the households in collecting the fuel wood and these patterns are determined by family size and its composition, need and availability of fuel wood, season, distance of forest, time at disposal. In the winter months from November till February, women mostly daughters-in-law and older daughters, spend entire days in the forests cutting small branches and trees. Fallen or drying trees too are axed and split and left to dry for a month. It is men's work to axe trees. Women of migrant households have begun doing this work themselves, if they fail to coax their sons to assist them. At home, the wood is further dried and stored for use in the monsoons and winters.

Firewood collection is also a dangerous work. Women enter forests risking attacks by wild animals. Wood gathering is generally done in groups. On an average the load of wood carried per trip is about 22 to 25 kilos and can range from 10 to 40 kilos. On an average a distance of 3.5 kms is daily covered with these head loads. The distance is fast increasing due to depletion of forest cover.

Family break up reduce requirements of fuel and consequently of the workload. The availability of kerosene oil (for lighting) and LPG for cooking in households which can afford them has also led to reduction in the fuel wood consumption. The majority of households using LPG and kerosene are migrant (78 percent and 75 percent respectively). However while firewood collection decreases, use of LPG cylinders involves other work. Women are the ones who carry empty and filled gas cylinders to and fro from the Pipal dali bus stop. Not a single man was observed doing this !

**Making torchwood** for use as torchlight was a typical women's task, from the times when there was no electricity and households depended entirely on torchwood. Making torchwood is a strenuous and cumbersome process, which requires chopping of branches of the *Bhimal* tree, drying them and then retting in dirty pool of stagnant water. After a fortnight begins the process of removing and re-soaking, after which the fibre (*sural*) is pulled from the stalk and used to make ropes. The pith (*chilla*) is dried in the sun and makes excellent torchwood. Several trips to the forest and several hours of work at the dirty, smelly, disease-laden swamps are required. Women are soaked in this dirty water and suffer insect bites. Today availability of kerosene and electricity, however erratic, has reduced dependence on torchwood and reduced the load of making large quantities of torchwood.

**Cultivation of vegetable gardens** in smaller patches of land outside the homesteads has been essential to subsistence. Both men and women are engaged, but again, women undertake the greater responsibility. Seasonal vegetables, turmeric, onions, green chillies are commonly grown for household consumption etc<sup>16</sup>. A common practice is to plant near the utensils washing place where water regularly collects.

Storage of vegetables is a women's important subsistence task. Women slice and dry them or store them whole for household consumption in winter and summer when fresh vegetables are not available.

On the whole, few men take primary responsibility for female tasks. In as much as 87.8 percent of the households, female members generally had the main responsibility of fetching water in their households. Migration status of the household does not make much difference to the overall pattern. However under the impact of migration some men have begun to selectively undertake female tasks – sweeping the house, fetching water and maintaining the vegetable garden.

**Market-related activities**, such as selling and purchasing household and other foods, are predominantly men's tasks. Traditionally women purchase some of these wares from the

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<sup>16</sup> This seasonal cultivation of vegetables, never guarantees a regular supply but vegetables in monsoon seasons are a welcome change to the monotonous diet of dal rice or dal chappatis.

*pheriwallas* (hawkers). But men, usually husbands, sons, fathers-in-laws, or sometimes even male neighbours, have done the marketing on their behalf.

Today in majority of non-migrant households, men continue to take this responsibility. However in many migrant households, both men and women may share the responsibility: men take primary responsibility of market related tasks in 63 percent migrant households compared to 97 percent of non-migrant households. Several women from the latter have not even visited the nearby market town of Rishikesh.

Changes in this overall trend are visible due to new responsibilities thrust on women, as well as enhanced exposures of younger girls through education and developments around the villages. Many younger women who are de facto household heads and whose children are too young to provide much help have little choice but go into the bazaar. Generally though, women avoid going to Rishikesh and prefer to restrict their trips to the ration shop at Binak or to small shops in nearby villages of Nail and Diuli.

Additionally migrant household women also have to deal with bank, post office and less often, court activities. Women themselves look upon all these jobs as “men’s work”, and them as unwanted extra pressures upon their already tight and overburdened schedules. Arranging and negotiating sale and purchase of physical assets like land, cattle and agricultural surplus are also problematic areas. Women bemoan that this work requires time as well as education.

**Household repairs**, viz. mending or building the family house and cowshed etc. are male tasks. Low caste wage and contract labour may be procured for this work. Men supervise the workers, while their wives, daughters and sons are required to assist them. Hired labour expects the hiring family to assist in carrying materials to the site of work.

*Rukmani Devi's (Brahmin, Bunga village) new house is being built in a new location. She engaged two mason-carpenters from Goddi village (in a contract) to build her house. While these two men sat building a wall of the house, placing and mortaring stones – Sartia's family members, kin, neighbour- women, men and children scurried up and down carrying the felled trees, slates for roofing, stones from the older sites, clay from Goddi, mixing mortar and clay. Their exhausted appearance were in striking contrast to those masons who often sat and waited for the material to be brought!*

Women shoulder an almost exclusive responsibility of each domestic task. Table 6.5 reveals that in both non-migrant and the migrant households in ten out of listed twelve tasks women either exclusively or at least predominantly take the primary responsibility. Men take responsibility only for repairs in the house/cowshed or doing marketing for the household, which were also conventionally their tasks.

Overall we find that in non-migrant households, majority of tasks are performed by women (and some men) in the age group of 24-44 years. Fetching water and sweeping and cleaning the house are the only two tasks that are generally younger members tasks. But in migrant households, the work tends to be distributed between 15 – 64 years age group. This perhaps indicates a strategy for bigger migrant families to spread domestic work amongst its resident members, to make possible the time for adult women to concentrate on more productive activities like agriculture and animal husbandry.

We also observed that many of the domestic tasks require co-operation of different family members. Women more than men in the house provide this assistance. This co-operative nature of domestic work often led to occasions of conflict, tension and competition among the women. These are more pronounced in extended families, between mother in law and daughter-in-law.

The low salience of men's role in housework also makes the presence of older children, particularly girls, beneficial for the women. But over the last two to three decades, school enrolment and attendance have also increased. Most girls in Bunga and Daurm complete education upto class VIII. Mothers claim that not much help is expected out of the school going children, though they perform minor tasks of fetching water, cleaning the house, utensils etc. But it is observed that before going to school and after school, girls bring water, make tea, clean the house, wash utensils and sometimes even cook food. And on return from school they attend to farm work, fetch water, fodder and fuel wood and cook the evening meal etc. Boys on the other hand were increasingly reluctant to do any domestic, animal husbandry or even agricultural tasks. Few may assist in marginal ways, others in mending or building the family house and cowshed etc. The only task they do regularly in the absence of their fathers is marketing. Boys generally are freed from the

domestic tasks. On return from school, they have more time to play, chat and rest as compared to their school going sisters.

Thus we can conclude that domestic work requires a great number of functions to be performed in and around the house in an inter-related, integrated and co-ordinated fashion. This requires women to evolve an efficient routine and to co-ordinate and seek co-operation of family members. But much of this co-operative division of labour is between women. Therefore domestic work, one of the most monotonous, socially least valued activities is done almost entirely by the village women, with near oblivion of men.

### **CHANGING PATTERNS OF WORK AND IMPLICATIONS FOR GENDER RELATIONS AND WOMEN'S STATUS**

There are thus marked shifts in the gender division of labour particularly for migrant households. The consequences of these shifts have been an increase in women's responsibility for family livelihood and increase in the load of their agricultural, animal husbandry and domestic work. Older women and men and younger school going girls have had to increasingly step in to share the burden of the migrant wife or mother. Together they take on work earlier designated as male, suggesting the dilutions of gender segregating cultural norms and practices. Hired and reciprocal labour is deployed to take charge of strictly male tasks. For the non-migrant women, along with continuities in caste labour, change in work is signified by shifts to new types of work such as wage work, assistance/management of petty business, efforts at which have to be intensified for economic gain. Women in general cope with effects of declining local economy or shortage of male labour or both. In the following section we explore social status implications of this changing work scenario for women. The analysis is based on several unstructured interviews and structured observations conducted during the entire period of field work in the villages. We have attempted to gather this into a coherent analytical statement.

The changes in intra-household labour allocation due to male migration has had a significant impact on both gender hierarchy and women's bargaining power. Male migration within prevalent notions of gender roles and practices has allowed men to

reduce their labour in domestic agriculture, leaving women and older people more responsible for this family subsistence work and thereby further lowering their status. These additional responsibilities are redefining traditional gender roles, divisions of labour and women's bargaining power.

The withdrawal of male labour from agriculture through absence or low inclination has sharpened gender-based divisions. Gender and also age shape the reorganisation of labour. In extended households, the extra work burden falls disproportionately on women. Within this unequal gender division of labour only a few tasks are defined as being exclusively male. The definition of women's work, on the other hand, encompasses many more tasks including all the housework and child-care. Women thus are expected to cope with the shortage of male labour. Daughters-in-law are under greater pressure to fill the gap left by their husbands and, because like most women, they already had a heavy workload, even small changes generated an impact. Tensions result due to hierarchy and the inequitable distribution of workload. Gender inequity in the extended households results in an increase in the work of aged women who have a weak fallback position.

Meeting one need (the need for cash) creates another (the need for labour). The double burdens of each kind of work is liable to fall on the wife and if this is so during the period when she is also bearing children, her load is multiple. The next chapter throws light on these aspects.

Women of nuclear households are particularly overburdened. They may be the sole caretakers of young children as well as elderly in-laws even if not residing with the latter. Work on family land is compulsory to provide at least some food grain security for families. No remittances are received during the lean period. Given the cultural glorification of women's work, the extra work generated by male absence is rarely considered to be putting an unfair or untenable burden on women. In a few households one daughter at least is kept out of school usually after completion of primary or junior high school to enable the mother to cope with work. There are a few such examples in the villages, though different reasons are cited for discontinuance from school.

Most adult non-migrant men do at least a minimum amount of work such as ploughing and preparation of the fields for sowing, though they may avoid all other work that can be done by women or children. Men, both migrant and non-migrant, drink a lot and quarrel. Avoidance of work by men is not an uncommon phenomenon. It is often associated with high alcohol consumption. Some men avoid familial and work responsibilities by involving themselves in social or political activities. Migration appears to have contributed to this trend and even provided a degree of social legitimacy and status to men's actions.

Evidently, age old notions of gender roles and practices and gender inequities in access to material resources provide a continuing rationale and basis for many migrant men to reduce their labour without any negative repercussions whatsoever. On the contrary, men are privileged to exercise their options for leisure and impose their interests within the household. Their migrant status contributes to gaining of more favourable outcomes for themselves. Visits to the village are considered periods of rest and provide the added rationale for shirking of their traditional tasks. If questioned by women, they could respond with violence.

Women have few alternatives but to manage their extra work on their own. As the following chapters reveal, extra work is done at the cost of leisure and great cost to their health. Lack of independent access to material resources reduces the possibility of rejecting cultural notions. Women who are not perceived to work hard enough face the threat of abuse and violence from husbands and other in-laws. Other women also look down upon them as lazy and irresponsible.

Women thus can rarely avoid work. In Garhwali society, young girls thus are educated but are equally well socialised into the practice of hard work. Irrespective of the education levels they achieve as women, as girls and adults are still expected to do substantially more work than their male counterparts at home in all three domains. Moreover, the socialisation is closely linked to the conceptualisation and valuation of women's role as "worker" and for most women, entitlements and security within the household are linked to hard subsistence work and the work of bearing and rearing



children, preferably sons. Various practices and social structures reinforce this socialisation and economic valuation of women's labour power. As Chapter III highlighted, women's labour power had a socially recognised economic value in traditional Garhwali society and marriages were arranged for households to obtain additional female labour. This mindset still dominates. If girls are encouraged for education as they are in contemporary Garhwali society, it is with the prime motive of finding migrant husbands so that they may escape the drudgery of village life. However, the general trend which is also substantiated by our data, is that most educated women whether married to migrants or not, are unable to make this escape.

Male migration can exacerbate the inherent tensions within a patriarchal conjugal household. Given the structure of age and gender relations and stereotyped expectations, women-women relations within the household are perhaps more vulnerable to such changes and problems. Women's work burdens add to the pressure. Further, the practice of migrant male domination has a negative impact on sons. A majority of the boys commonly find excuses not to work or in some cases simply refuse to do the work even if their behaviour results in quarrels within the household. Boys are increasingly inclined to follow in their father's footsteps. The seeds of desire to migrate have grown firm. The result is that parents, or wife, or the young daughter are burdened with their work too.

Though women's labour intensified, their efforts at subsistence production are inadequate to meet survival needs of the household and herself. Migrant remittances as we have seen in the earlier chapter are inadequate for raising economic status and standards of living beyond a particular level. Currently migrant wives can be divided into two broad categories – the majority who fall in the low remittance bracket and the minority who fall in the high remittance bracket. Within each group, the younger wives have better control over remittance as compared to middle-aged wives. The best off are those who receive high remittances and are able to offset their workloads through access to labour saving technologies and to hired labour and commodity purchase.

Even though women are better educated and direct familial patriarchal controls over them has generally declined, this does not seem to be an improvement in terms of economic

well-being. Daughters-in-law today are successful in reducing familial pressures of parents-in-law. They are placed in a more secure and stronger position vis-à-vis their husbands. Most women prefer that husbands migrate in order to better the financial situation. Some also view male absence as temporary 'freedom'.

Older wives too do attempt to achieve some space within the inequitable structures. But on the whole, their behaviours and attitudes are shaped to maintain the patriarchal structures or is aimed at maintaining status. By intensifying their labour inputs, women try to hold men to their responsibility, i.e. of being the income earners and 'providers' for the family. However, in terms of their 'fall-back' position, they face higher levels of structural economic insecurity due to poor productivity and low remittance. Further, many have low access to remittance, a fact which further underscores their low status.

Old mothers are another category of women to whom migration income accrues to an extent. They have traditionally occupied a position of power within the household. Today as widows or aged women, with a low capacity for work, their position has tended to be weak. Remittances from migrants do provide older women with an independent source of cash enabling them to maintain their status as heads of household.

Unlike the collective nature of traditional agricultural or other income, migration earnings are earned on a visibly individual basis. Earnings from migration remittances provide some of these younger women a relatively independent source of income, which is visibly a result of their own husband's work and not reliant on the joint family resource base. When the income accrues to young wives, rather than older members within the extended household, it leads to an imbalance in existing power structures. The autonomous and individualised nature of migration earnings tends to reduce the power of the patriarch, usually the father or eldest brother, and also the power of older women. Likewise, younger women especially daughters-in-law are inclined to view their husband's wage earnings as a resource over which they too have an entitlement. As these women usually have poor access to resources within the gender hierarchical extended household, their interests often compete with the interests of other members who also expect to benefit from such cash in-flows. Their actions therefore pose a challenge to

prevalent gender and age hierarchies and existing resource allocation within the household. The resultant tensions and outcomes affect all family members, though gender and age are important mediating factors in determining the actual nature of impact on individuals.

Eventually, from a gender perspective, migrant men control most of the income. It is true that agricultural income is also generally controlled by men but given the present condition, women are able to exercise more control over agricultural produce, which amounts to little in concrete terms. The meagre earnings of the migrant and the geographically distant site makes migrant income all the more difficult for women to access.

**Chapter VII**

**HEALTH, HUMAN REPRODUCTION, PRODUCTION:  
THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND WOMEN'S  
EXPERIENCE OF CHILD BEARING**

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Women's workloads and patterns in the domains of social production as well as their caring activities of labour reproduction, in the household domain are intimately intertwined with childbearing. This chapter addresses issues arising in this complex interaction of the productive and reproductive tasks and their implications and consequences for the ill health or health of hill women. Garhwali culture, like patriarchal cultures elsewhere, epitomises child bearing as women's natural function. We begin the chapter with a brief examination of this socio-cultural context and the ways in which control of women's reproductive labour is organised. We then explore village women's experiences through the three broad reproductive stages: antenatal, natal and post-natal and women's perceptions of the child bearing process and the problems and difficulties that they encounter. Through women's own narratives we attempt an understanding of the linkages between women's work, nutrition and reproductive health. We also examine women's access to reproductive health services and how they manage their problems.

Essentially qualitative in nature, the chapter is based on in-depth interviews, group discussions, conversations with key informants and observations and illustrative case studies. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, care was taken to select women from migrant and non-migrant households of all caste-class groups. Both younger and older women were interviewed to capture generational change. The chapter has mainly drawn from the maternity and general health histories of forty-nine women in the field area. Out of this 26 women are from non-migrant households and 23 from migrant households. We try to incorporate a historical perspective in the analysis by comparing older and younger women's experiences to throw light on changing situation. The comparison of migrant and non-migrant household women highlights differences, their causes and directions of change. A special focus on Dom women provides an added dimension of variation.

## **SOCIO-HISTORIC CONTEXT OF CHILDBEARING**

It would be useful to begin with a brief account of traditional socio-cultural beliefs and practices that have governed all institutions and practices that affect the lives of women such as the material context of environment and economy of the people, the value and belief systems regarding birth, death, illness and the existing systems that deal with

illness and disease. As described in Chapter III, these women's perceptions and experiences of child bearing, illness and care have been shaped essentially by this socio-historic context of gender inequality and patriarchal control.

Child bearing was and continues to be a family event that is characterised by patriarchal control exercised by adult members over women in the conjugal family. Control over sexuality was traditionally exercised through early and arranged marriage and the socialisation into a patrilocal family system. The child bride was trained into her multiple roles under strict surveillance usually of mother-in-law and if need be, by violent control exercised by her husband and in-laws. From a far happier childhood in her natal family where the large burden of work is compensated by relatively greater freedom and availability of food and usually a great deal of motherly and familial affection, marriage forced the child bride into a life of striking contrast in the conjugal home.

Married mostly by the age of eleven or twelve in traditional times, there is no concept of *gauna*<sup>1</sup> in Garhwali society. Girls were immediately transported to their marital homes into the custody of in-laws and husband. They could exercise little control over their own sexuality, and the expectation was that they bear children immediately after puberty. Propagation of progeny - especially a new generation of sons - was the most wanted thing, along with work from the new *'buari'* (daughter-in-law). If she failed to conceive, or had no living children, she was subject to repudiation. The dominant patriarchal perception has been that the failure to conceive is woman's fault alone. Stigmatised as *'banjh'* (barren), life for the infertile woman held the dreaded prospect of her husband marrying again. Thus, even a couple of "barren" years resulted in an anxious and frantic search for a 'cure'. Immediate remedial action took place in the form of a traditional ritual performed at a considerable cost to the women's natal kin.

Immediate continuous pregnancies have been the established order of reproduction. The pattern continues with few changes even to this day. The young women have had little say in the number of children they must bear. Indeed children are regarded as a natural outcome of marital life and women are expected to bear as many as possible. They thus

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<sup>1</sup> "*Gauna*" refers to the ritual which marks the sending of the child bride after puberty to her husband's home.

routinely undergo several conceptions, often in quick succession, throughout their child bearing years.

Labour and delivery typically thought to be the most 'natural' of women's roles, continue to present a great risk for the woman and her infant. Most deliveries in Bunga and Daurn proceed in a seemingly routine fashion, but hide tremendous risks and morbidities. Women are customarily expected to deliver in their conjugal home. Going to natal village for delivery in Garhwal is not prohibited, but is certainly uncommon. Majority of deliveries take place in the husband's village itself and are attended by *sauras* kin (conjugal family) of the pregnant women.

Traditionally, birthing in Bunga and Daurn was an occasion of spiritual danger and considered socio-culturally a very polluting occurrence, with heavy emphasis on taboos, confinement and vulnerability to spirits ('*bhut*'). These beliefs and practices continue to mark the birthing process even to this day. Pregnant and post-partum women are believed to be especially vulnerable. Pregnant women are advised not to go into the forest and deep ravines as they may expose themselves to attack from evil spirits. Confining the mother to the delivery room after birth for a set number of days is also rooted in the same belief. Birth pollution, taboos, confinements and fear of evil spirits are also closely related concepts.

The supernatural world is manifested in *dosh* (or affliction), and the natural world, in *bimari* (illness/disease). *Dosh* is frequently traced to the interference of the supernatural powers like deities, spirits and ghosts. It is believed to be caused due to man's disturbed relations with the supernatural forces, interpersonal jealousies. Women identified three types of afflictions or *dosha*: *chhaya dosha* (evil spirit), *pitra dosha* (ancestral curse) and *isht dosha* (affliction of the family deity). It is believed that affliction can lead to dangerous consequences for the individual and/or family (*dosh lagna*). Difficulty of any kind - sterility (especially absence of male progeny), stillbirth, hysteria, disease and illness, death - is attributed ultimately to fate and more immediately to supernatural forces.

Maternity services and clinics came in the post-independence period when PHC services were set up but as we shall see, were very inconvenient to access and inefficient. Both government and private medical facilities are available to the people of Bunga and Daurm at the town centre of Rishikesh or further at Dehradun. None of these are within easy and regular access to the women, as they require a trip by bus or jeep to the towns several kilometers away. Even the government Satellite Allopathic Dispensary (SAD) at Duili entails several hours of walk for women from both villages. Moreover traditional access to midwives (“*dai*”) has been limited in this mountainous region. Since several decades, *dais* were too far between and too far away for their services to be accessed. It is only as recently as 1980 that a woman from Bunga village accessed a hospital for delivery. The gradual trickle of women into Rishikesh for birthing as well as gynaecological problems seem to have occurred as a result of the availability of a woman doctor in a Charitable Hospital. In general however, the trend of home deliveries continues despite the risks. Cultural beliefs about body fluids and processes, particularly those involved in menstruation and reproduction, affect the way women’s problems are managed. Furthermore, spiritual danger and pollution associated with birthing makes it less amenable to change.

## **WOMEN'S PERCEPTION OF PREGNANCY AND HEALTH**

### **Conceptions And Pregnancies: The Inevitable Burden**

In keeping with the culture of total control exercised by the in-laws over the daughter-in-law, interviews with our first generation women (60 – 85 years) bear out adequately the cultural expectation out of the daughter-in-law to bear children immediately on reaching puberty. These women were married at a very young age ranging from 11 to 15 years. The average age at menarche for our interviewees works out to 15 years. They were sent to their marital homes soon upon marriage in the pre-puberty stage itself. Women got their first periods in their conjugal homes. The total lack of control over their own sexuality is reflected in the tremendous family pressure placed on them to bear children immediately upon puberty.



Some of the women had difficulties in conception, which led to ill treatment, verbal abuse and even beating. The immediate remedial reaction came from by the natal family. They sought recourse to prevalent cultural remedies, so that their daughters would escape the tyranny of in-laws. 'Dosh pujas' like "*Rukmani Chaya*", "*Chal Chaya Puja*"<sup>2</sup> etc. were performed which were believed to be necessary to remove the "dosh" and help them conceive.

Most women however said that they conceived immediately after menarche, around the age of 15 or 16. Being young and immature, many times these women failed to discover they were pregnant till the physical symptoms such as nausea, giddiness etc. were felt. "Absence of menstruation" was often confused with the general condition of "irregular periods" which many women experienced. The conceptions however did not always carry full-term. Women miscarried or had still-births. There were also mothers who lost their first and later children in infancy. Death of an infant child also resulted in considerable ill-treatment of women. Conceptions normally followed in quick succession, and their number ranged from six to sixteen. Many times due to closely repeated pregnancies, they conceived during the period of lactational amenorrhea.

From the age at marriage reported by our next generation of women (45-60 years), the average was slightly higher at 13.8 to 15.8 years, though there were still few cases of women marrying at 11-14 years of age. The average age at first delivery was 19 years. The data suggest a declining trend, but of course cannot be considered reflective of the actual trends in the region. However this group of women show only a slight fall in total number of conceptions, as compared to the earlier conceptions and they still ranged high from three to thirteen and the average number of children per woman works out to 6.7. The cases of miscarriage, abortions, still births, deaths in infancy per woman, also seem to have somewhat declined - from 1.6 per woman in the older age group to 1.1 in this age group.

There seems to have been little change however in familial pressure to conceive early. Chandramati and Munni, for example, were abused for not conceiving within a year or

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<sup>2</sup> Dosh puja refers to several types of religious ceremonies conducted in the girl's natal home to calm or erase the effect of evil spirits which are the commonly attributed to cause infertility, death of infants etc.

two of marriage. Maheshwari's husband remarried as she failed to conceive and the children born failed to survive beyond two months. Families continued to seek refuge in the performance of "*dosh-pujas*" and such other rituals for the favours of children. Even relatively better educated women like Shakuntala (8<sup>th</sup> class pass) requested her natal family to perform "*dosh puja*" after six anxious years of inability to conceive. Though her mother-in-law did not physically mistreat her, she had to bear much abuse and taunt.

Our second generation of women were witness to the first signs of medicalisation of reproduction / birth in the region. Munni, a Brahman woman became the first in Bunga to be treated for infertility in the Kotdwara government hospital. She was taken for treatment at the behest of her brother who provided all assistance and also bore the cost. Thus, the shift to modern medicine was underlined by continuity of patriarchal expectations.

The next viz. the third generation group of women were aged between 35- 45 years. Their average age at marriage works out to 16 years and ranged from 14 to 16. The age at first conception was 20 years. The number of conceptions averaged 4.6 and ranged from 3 to 7. Only one case each of abortion and stillbirth was reported from this group. Four children also died in infancy. Within this generation, we also note the beginning of family planning operation among women with reproductive age group. Two women underwent tubectomy, but only after the birth of four live children.

The youngest group of women of our sample are those under 35 years. Only two women of this group, both Dom, married at 14 and 15 years respectively. The average age at marriage for this group is 19, indicating a steady overall trend towards later marriages in the villages. The pressure for immediate conception however, as yet persists. Almost all women conceived within two years of marriage, keeping the average age at first conception constant at 20.4 years. The total number of conceptions (average 4.4) also remained the same as that of their immediate seniors. Two women had six conceptions each. Cases of miscarriage, stillbirth and one infant mortality continued to occur. So did the performance of "*pujas*" and rituals for early conception and survival of the infants.

From this group, a few migrant wives reported condom use by husbands, but no method of family planning was regularly adopted by the women.

Despite the trend towards declining birth rate, there is a continuing occurrence of a large number of conceptions. The large number of conceptions is reflective of the strong desire to have sons. Sons are most valued as providers and as the best prospect of security during old age. Though women assert that they do not discriminate between boys and girls, the desire for male child persists for reasons of social approval and personal satisfaction. Several rituals are performed to assure the birth of sons. The preference for smaller family size did not flow out of women's decision. Husbands were the main decision makers, at times in consultation with their wives about limiting family size or / and spacing children. However, the control of in-laws, especially the mother-in-law seems to have considerably declined, leading to a sharp difference between the situations of the older and younger generation of women. From the perspective of eighty five year old Darshini -

*These days one cannot say much to the 'buaris' (daughters-in-law). They do as they think well. They may not want children immediately after marriage. The delay may worry the "sassu" (mother-in-law), but what can she say. They also say that one son is good enough - but is having just one eye sufficient! Sons are like eyes - at least two we must have. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

There still prevails a general antipathy to family planning methods. It is believed that these operations will make men or women weak and may weaken men's capacity to work. Women, it is believed, are already weak and operation will make them weaker<sup>3</sup>.

### **The Work Experience During Pregnancy**

*I am seven months pregnant. My belly has become so big. But I still have to do everything on my own - housework, animal work and farm work. Our village does not have its own forest nor water source, hence now we have to walk for about five kilometers into the hills to collect fuel wood, fodder and water. The walk itself is tedious and tiring. Then I have to climb trees in this state to lop wood and collect fodder. Carrying water is also strenuous. I find it all very hard. Sometimes my stomach starts paining, my lower back hurts and I feel exhausted. The sun also*

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<sup>3</sup> Only two cases of vasectomy are reported, that too after birth of 7-8 children. Similarly there are only two cases of tubectomy.

*makes me hot and giddy. It is not that anyone tells me to work, but I must do everything. If I won't work, who else would do the work? Here no one in the village ever gets much respite from work unless she is bedridden. Till you become very sick, no one will or can give you respite as each one is over worked and all must do their own work. (Suman 21 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi)*

Suman was one of the three women who were pregnant at the time of data collection. Her case is an apt illustration of the fact that the human reproductive burden has to be borne along with burdens of production and domestic labour. Indeed the expectation is that women combine reproduction and production work even during pregnancy.

The condition of pregnancy is not seen as a time demanding rest and care and has never permitted women to relinquish work. Though there do exist a large number of culturally prescribed work-related precautions, however, they seem motivated not by woman's well-being, but by the predominant concern to safeguard the foetus / unborn child. Traditional precautions advised women to avoid lifting heavy loads or do bending jobs for long duration. These are believed to cause entanglement of the foetus in navel cord or lead to prolonged labour. Grinding on the grind-stone or the "*chakki*" (stone flour mill) or bending upon the huge storage baskets ("*kothar*") to take out unpounded grain are not allowed in the advanced stages of pregnancy because it is believed that the child may die or turn over on the wrong side ("*ulta par jatta*"). Churning buttermilk ("*chas cholna*") is taboo, as it would harm the foetus. Equally, 'too much rest' is taboo. 'Too much sleep', a period of 'long-rest', of 'lying-down unnecessarily' are believed to cause difficult delivery. Post-delivery confinement lasting for eleven days is also considered as a period of rest.

Whatever may have been the practice of work taboos during older times, when fear and anxiety perhaps dominated worldviews about the reproductive process, they are now a thing of the past. Even the oldest women denied that these norms were ever truly or consistently practised. Indeed women had quite a disdainful tone when asked if their workload was reduced during pregnancy. They insisted that there was absolutely no change in the work quantum or hours. All kinds of work had to be done despite the aches and pains and other discomfoting symptoms. Sisters-in-law and mothers-in-law ensured

that the pregnant *buari* did not get an iota of rest. They were quick to abuse and accuse her of laziness if she attempted to snatch some rest.

As the previous chapter showed, in earlier times majority of the peasant households had large plots to cultivate. They remained joint for longer periods of time in order to organise labour for the enormous amount of agricultural work involved. In those days pregnant women had a very hard time. Krapu gives us a vivid account of the typical situation that seemed to have prevailed at that time for the pregnant young daughter-in-law.

*I was the youngest in my in-laws house. I remember my three sisters-in-law were older and physically stronger. They would beat me up. They always objected to all my work. They were never content and in spite of my best efforts, they would be unhappy and beat me. I remember even when I was pregnant I did all the work. I used to get problems while walking uphill and downhill. If I rested for long, my mother in law abused me, and called me lazy. Even at that time she would not give me anything to eat. Once I had gone to my natal home for my sister's wedding. I was three months pregnant then. I remember when I returned from my natal place, I carried back a big bundle of "arasa" and "halwa" (sweetmeats) for my in-laws family. I knew once it reached their hand I would not even get a small piece to eat. Therefore on my way to the homestead I dug a hole in the forest and hid this food. Next day I went to the forest with another village sister. We dug it out and ate it!*

*I remember that in each of my pregnancies I worked the usual hours. I used to get up at 3.00 a.m. and then for one hour grind "atta" and mandua. I used to grind one-one "soupe" (winnowing scoop) of wheat in the "chakki" (stone mill). Then between 4-6 a.m. I would get 3-4 pitchers of water. Thereafter for two hours I would pound rice and jhangora. Then at 10 a.m. I would go to the forest to get grass, fodder and wood. I would not be able to return till 2 p.m. After lunch they would again send me to the forest to get grass. I could return only till 6-7 p.m. (Krapu, 69 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Joint family living provided some possibilities of respite only of very heavy work during the last stages of pregnancy.

*In my last month of pregnancy, I was just not able to bend and carry heavy load. One day after I carried a big bundle of harvested wheat to the "khaliyan" (threshing ground), I developed severe pain in my belly. I just could not get up for a whole day. My mother-in-law who otherwise abused me, got worried that my baby may come down. She asked my sister-in-law to take over carrying bundles of wheat and fetching grass and fodder from the forest. Though I still use to go to*

*the field to harvest and carry water, and clean the cowshed. Still at least I got some respite after that episode. (Sureka, 76 yrs, Brahmin, Birkatal)*

Only in case of serious illness when women were completely bedridden, they did receive help with work:

*I was to deliver my second child. I became ill with pneumonia in the seventh month. My stomach swelled up and I could not move around. Soon I could do no work. When I became bedridden, my husband took over the work of carrying water, chopping firewood and grazing the animals. His mother who was staying separately milked the cow, cleaned the cattle and cooked for us. (Chandramati, 56 yrs, Brahmin, Birkatal)*

Despite having to carry a lone burden however, women themselves felt that they were better off living separately. As Sunita said:

*If a woman is not living in a joint family, she may take time off from work when she pleases and does not have to be forced into work. Though usually she cannot avoid doing work, as there is often no one else in the family to help, especially if she is the mother of a number of small children. (Sunita, 39 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Seasonal variation and household economic position influence the quantum and load of pregnant women's work which have a bearing on mother and child survival. Workload of women from large peasant families was accentuated in peak agricultural seasons. These are busy times and women in an advanced stage of pregnancy are caused great discomfort besides depleting her energies enormously. In the earlier chapter we drew attention to climatic extremes and the situation of working pregnant woman. Her plight in extreme cold or extreme heat and rains can well be imagined. In slack periods, women may not be required to work in the fields. However other activities continue as usual.

Women from less landed households and owning less livestock encounter shorter work hours. However, these families, mostly Doms are often the poorest and assetless. Their women however are compelled to work on others land and put in intense work on their own degraded lands. The less amount of land owned is hardly a panacea for the conditions of acute deprivation in which they live. The two case studies of Jasla and Saraswati given in the following section will show that they work like mules, with no food or care!

Clearly pregnancy brings no special advantage for the village women. Cultural precautions are not followed, as this would mean more work for the mother-in-law. The conditions give the pregnant women few options to control the nature and amount of works they perform. They may at the most adjust their activities, may sit down more where work permits, snatch some rest in between tasks or carry smaller head loads. Though work quantum may remain the same, women adjust the pace, posture or time to make it more bearable.

Women who have grown up daughters are generally relieved of heavy work such as carrying head loads of fodder, firewood or water. In certain difficult situations a sister-in-law or mother-in-law may also share the work, but these expectations depends greatly on the kind of relationships that exist.

Women who are wives of better-off migrants have good relations with their mothers-in-law have a relatively easier time. For instance Sudeshi who is married to a school teacher and has three children:

*I did not have any problem. I used to go for my check-ups to the ANM at Binak. If she was not available, I used to go to G.T. Government Hospital in Rishikesh. I got all my injections and took iron tablets. My mother-in-law also was supportive. I did not have to work like other women. We have a gas stove so I did not need to collect firewood. We have many fields, but the wage labourers only plough them. I normally do the weeding and other tasks. But in my pregnancy period, I did not pay much attention to the fields. We don't want our fields to become barren. But it's okay if the produce is not too much. I ate well too. I used to get vegetables and fruits from the lala's shop in Binak. When I went to Rishikesh, I used to buy Horlicks. Whenever my cow was not giving milk, I would buy 250 ml of milk everyday to drink. Pregnancies were not a problem for me. (Sudeshi, 30 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Women's work continues till the onset of labour. Women narrated several instances of the advent of labour while working in the fields or in the forest. Maheshwari started labour pain in the fields. She came home to deliver, but before lying-in she cooked *khitchri* (dal and rice cooked together) and made tea for her mother-in-law. She even collected the haystack for her bedding and sharpened the *dharati* (sickle) to cut the cord. Many others had similar experiences.

*The whole day I was winnowing the grains. In the evening, I had pain in my stomach. One woman in the neighborhood told me "don't you know you should have not done this work". After sometime my son was born. (Golli, 62 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

*The day my youngest daughter was born, that whole day I was in pain. I did all the work. In the evening, I told my mother in law "I am having pain so please call the 'byah'" (dai). Then I went and kept away all the things for delivery in the room. In the night I had my daughter. (Susheela, 52 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

*I made food during my labour. I did so myself, though I is trembling all the while. I also finished the rest of the household chores. (Jasla, 75 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

It is also not unusual for births to take place in the field. Onset of labour pain hardly deters women from continuing their work. They have a lot to finish always and they carry on till they can. Some are not even permitted to stop work by their mothers-in-law.

*Suman named her daughter Banmati as she was born in the forest ("Van") when she had gone to cut grass. After the child was delivered, she cut the umbilical cord with the "dharati" (sickle), wrapped the infant in her shawl, and walked back to the village, a distance of more than three kilometers. (Suman, 37 yrs, Jagari-Dom, Birkatal)*

Under such conditions, miscarriages and abortions regularly occur.

*Kavlo, reported a five month miscarriage "perhaps on account of too much work or perhaps because I had to lift too much weight." (Kavla, 40 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

*Sundari, said that "I lost my five month foetus because I had climbed the tree to lop wood and fodder." (Sundari, 70 yrs, Rajput, Daurn)*

*Jasla felt that she lost her three-month foetus because she had eaten goat's liver and thereafter carried a huge bundle of firewood. (Jasla, 75 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

Reproductive data on miscarriages/ abortions of all ever-married women in the age group of under 35 years of the village are alarming. Out of the total of 49 women twelve have had miscarriages and nine have had stillbirths.

However today in a few better-off migrant households, pregnant women do not have the same quantum of workload as their mothers-in-law had when they were young. Talking of her 24-year-old daughter-in-law who was five months pregnant, Kamla Devi said:



*Where our daughters-in-law work the way we were made to work! My son sends them money regularly. She does not even have to collect firewood because he has bought her a gas stove. She has a cow and a small field, she barely works hard. She even buys rice and wheat from the "dukaan" (shop). She is not even willing to pound rice. Pounding grains (kutna) is "good" in advance stage of pregnancy, as the downward action of paddy pounding enables the foetus to descend to the lower part. Too much rest is not good anyway for the pregnant women. She will have a difficult delivery. But where she will listen to me. (Kamla, 64 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

However as shown in the earlier chapter, decline in agricultural cultivation and the trend towards family division have escalated demands and pressures of work. Setting up an independent hearth and home places an added load on women in nuclear households. When pregnant, women have to shoulder all female responsibilities alone right till they give birth. In nuclear settings, they are accorded greater flexibility, which acts as the only source of relief. But the magnitude of work can scarcely permit rest or relaxation.

### **Food, Nutrition Work And Pregnant Women's Health Link: Women's Perceptions Of Links**

Pregnancy and heavy workload demand higher food and nutritional requirements. However, the widely prevalent reality in a hostile family environment for pregnant young *buaris* (daughters-in-law) is that of being underfed, undernourished and/or malnourished. Diet regulations operate only in the form of restrictions and taboos and not the providing of special nutrient-rich food. The women themselves are acutely aware of their nutritional deprivation. They also see the link between their general poor health and poor food consumption. Conceptions of women's bodies as tough, hardy and having incessant capacities for toil are not matched by cultural ideas that they require an adequate quantity of food to replenish their bodies and build energy levels. On the contrary, a gender discourse of diet operates, which neglects women's nutrition and prescribes less food requirements for women. Women's low cultural value has a bearing on even a basic necessity such as food. Their value does not change in the crucial years of pregnancy, childbirth and lactation. Nutritional deficiencies are thus a direct result of women's subordinate location in unequal gender relations. Social practices of food taboo curtail intake of adequate food and nutrient-rich food. There is an overtly sympathetic complex

of ideas concerning taboos, pollution and confinement relevant to various stages of the birthing process. However in actuality, malnutrition is inbuilt in women's lives. It is particularly harmful during the varied stages of childbirth when the hill peasant women's famed multiple role performance is at its most complex and difficult !

Economic constraints is exacerbated by unequal distribution of food in the family. Even households, which were capable of providing adequate amounts of food to women, did not necessarily do so. There was gross deprivation in the olden times despite the surplus produce. All women stayed with in-laws. As soon as her pregnancy was noticed, the woman was placed under the surveillance of the mother-in-law who had the sole authority over family diet. She decided which and what quantities of food were to be cooked, who ate how much or what. She alone distributed the food. Thus many of our older women including those from relatively prosperous backgrounds have memories of food deprivation.

*Ours was a rich peasant household. Our home was so big that it was known as "bungalow" in this region. We had plenty of fields and herds of cows and buffaloes. Despite that I spent my years in hunger. My mother-in-law did not even give me food to eat properly. Those days the mean mothers-in-law used to just give "paleau" (jhangora in buttermilk) to their daughters-in-law to eat. They seldom gave wheat flour roti or "daal". It was only possible to eat wheat flour roti or rice at a marriage in the village. Many a times if there were no buttermilk, she did not even give me "paleau" to eat. Then she would simply give me mandua in water to drink. It is difficult to remain hungry - so I used to fill my stomach with that also. The situation during pregnancy was no different. Even in those periods I was never given sufficient food to eat by my mother-in-law. She did not care. She used to abuse me and said that I ate like an elephant when what she gave me was not even sufficient for an ant! Many women in our villages will tell you similar stories (Krapu, 69 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga).*

A few who were not under the watchful eye or iron hand of the mother-in-law recollect being well-fed on home grown grain and dairy produce.

*Every time I was pregnant I had enough to eat. We had enough grain from our fields. And there were always a few cows that were giving milk. Ghee was in the house as usual. Other special things I did not have. Maybe fruit and vegetables would have been good. But where can we get those things here. At least not in our times. If you had enough from your fields to fill your stomach, you were lucky. Then I did not have a mother-in-law to ration out food to me. I ate what I wanted*

*and however much I wanted. Of course I avoided prohibited food – it would harm my baby. (Darshini, 85yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

On the whole, women from better off households, largely Brahmin and Rajput, were likely to get better intake of staple diet. If they had enough cattle, they drank milk when they could, but nothing else was available. Seasonal variation in food availability also influences diet.

Low caste women however generally did not get enough food to fill the stomach in their poverty-stricken households. As a rule they got nothing better than “*mandua roti*” to eat.

*There was nothing to eat. Even during my pregnancy, I just ate whatever I got – mostly mandua ki roti. Often I felt hungry and thought it would be good if there were some celebration in the village. I may get some “dal-roti” to eat or even some mutton. But for me it was mostly jhangora, mandua, paleau and “lal chai” (tea without milk). My mother-in-law saved up pulses, wheat and rice for the visitors and as bride price for marrying my sisters-in-law. (Jasla, 75 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

*During pregnancy and childbirth I did all the work like getting grass, wood and grazing animal in the forest. But despite all this labour, I was given very little to eat. Really speaking I don't remember getting a stomach full of food. The least desirable and left over food was given to me. My in-laws did not give me anything special to eat during pregnancy either. I was not given milk, ghee or any such healthy things to eat at all. Truly speaking I was always hungry. My mother-in-law also never explained me as to what I should do or what I should eat and what I should not eat. Whatever I was given to eat or whatever work I was asked to do – orders had to be followed. No one cared about what you wanted or needed. Under these conditions I gave birth to so many children. Because of this I am weak. (Saraswati, 55 yrs, Lohar-Dom, Birkatal)*

Food restrictions during pregnancy further aggravated the undernourishment. The foetus is considered to be ‘*garam*’ (hot) and hence pregnant women are not allowed to eat ‘hot’ things, which may accentuate heat and trigger off an abortion or harm the foetus. Foods like *jaggery*, green leafy vegetables, pumpkins, gourd, brinjal, urad dal, meat, eggs, fish are forbidden during pregnancy. Despite experiencing weakness and being aware of receiving less food, women themselves strongly subscribe to the prescribed diet restriction for fear of harming their unborn child. The beliefs continue to influence their actions even to this day. Food avoidance practices are even today voluntarily followed, even though earlier the mother-in-law enforced them.

Some women did not consider it important to change the type or quantity of food during pregnancy. They found difficulty in digesting much food under normal circumstances as well. Physical exhaustion seemed to cause a reduced appetite. Thus work burdens have another negative effect compounding the situation of inadequate dietary intake in pregnancy.

While male migration and nuclearisation increased women's workload, the changing situation has been a mixed one with negative as well as positive aspects. One the whole however, the food scarcity did have a direct negative impact on women's consumption.

Though agricultural decline resulted in declining food resources, the new familial condition accorded greater control to women of available food. Just as they were able to control and manipulate work, when women became *de-facto* heads of households, they had greater access to the grain store. The pregnant woman in such a household acquired the freedom to eat, as she desired, albeit in accordance with the household's economic condition.

*I set up a separate hearth when I was twenty-six years old. I was pregnant for the fourth time. I found that now I was in complete control of the food grain. I could eat dal and rice, something, which my mother-in-law never gave me to eat everyday. I could even drink milk as I had a cow which was giving milk. I had saved some ghee as well. On the whole it was much more peaceful. (Susheela, 52 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

However such positive aspects of nuclear households for women must not be overdrawn. Food security of women was deeply affected by the worsening situation. Fields did not produce enough to meet family requirements. The numbers of cows and buffaloes per households decreased, reducing the availability of milk for home consumption beyond what was required for tea. In households where extra quantities were available, women themselves felt that children or men must be given priority of access. Most women had several children and thus barely got enough food or milk whether pregnant or not !

*My in-laws were dead by the time I was pregnant for the third time. So we were living alone. Farming was average and I had many mouths to feed. Whatever food I had I shared it with my children. If there was some milk they would ask for it. How could I drink it then? I gave away even the small amount of milk or ghee in the household to the children. (Ghunti, 56 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

Control over food did not necessarily ease an unfavourable labour condition marked by lack of help. For instance take the case of Rakhi from Daur, whose husband worked in an Ambala hotel. At the time of fieldwork she was six months pregnant and lived with her two daughters aged four and three:

*How can I get complete rest? My children and animals will die of hunger. There is no one to take over from me. I had separated from my mother-in-law in my last pregnancy. Of course it meant that I had to do everything on my own now. But separating from her certainly gave me control over the granary. I can eat what I want and when I want. I also do work according to my will. I do not regret my move. If there is someone to do pregnant woman's heavy work – any woman will stop. But that is never possible in the village. (Rakhi 39 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

In today's times social vulnerability rooted in unequal gender relations combines with economic vulnerability to determine what a pregnant woman gets to eat. Our field observations reinforced the fact that on the whole few pregnant women ate any differently from what they ate when not pregnant. The general pattern of women's food consumption revealed that most women generally had three meals a day. In the morning they usually had a cup of tea with left over chappatis. Lunch consisted of dal and rice, and dinner of mandua or wheat rotis with dal or some homegrown vegetable, if any available. Women usually ate last after their husbands, children and parents-in-law had been fed. They were often seen sitting alone eating directly from the cooking vessel itself. Poor women often ate a little rice with green chillies and a very watery dal. Some even ate rice only with green chillies and salt. One old woman Kamla, (pointing out to her food), chuckled:

*Eating even this much my stomach swells up – it is more than enough for me – where is the question of becoming weak then. And if there is sufficient dal for the men and children that itself is enough (Kamla, 68 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

Kamala's sunken eyes, with her stomach sticking to her back and her bony hands with visible veins, told the story of her health.

In general, the huge imbalance between work and food is apparent for most women irrespective of caste and class. However most Doms as described in previous chapters continue to live in conditions of acute deprivation and poverty. Only some Brahmin, Rajput and few Dom households with better-off migrants may be in a position to provide

adequate food to women and a better overall quality of life. Apart from provisions and other things brought by migrants, these families are able to avail additional supplies from markets at Binak and Duili.

### **Perceived Health Problems During Pregnancy And Access to Antenatal Care**

Over and above the work that they do, pregnant women experience a wide variety of unpleasant symptoms and health problems that aggravate physical discomfort. Symptoms of *garmi* (heat) including nausea and vomiting, repulsion to odours/ itching in the genitals, burning while urinating, burning chest are all common complaints. Women also experience loss of appetite, lack of blood in the body (*khoon ki kami*), intermittent bleeding, and white discharge through most of the pregnancy period. Few also stated fainting and experiencing blackouts. Swollen legs and ankles, back pain, pain in the stomach, general weakness are other reported problem. Additionally many pregnant women suffer from *rathundo*, a form of night blindness and *chhaya*, a facial skin allergy. General illnesses like fever, pneumonia and dysentery also afflict them.

Nausea, vomiting, and repulsion to odours usually disappear after three months of pregnancy. Other conditions persist throughout. Explanations are sought in belief systems and local ideas about evil spirits and food and work taboos. Women believe for instance that *rathundo* or night blindness is an outcome of diet restrictions, which forbid them to eat the “desired” foods. When the prohibitions are removed after the delivery, the problem gets slowly corrected on its own.

*When I was pregnant with my son, my eyesight became poor. I used to get giddiness and I became weak and used to feel very cold. After he was born, my eyesight became all right and eyes also stopped paining (Shanti, 40 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi).*

Limping / “legs giving way” in pregnancy (*pav lachkana*) is a state attributed to the “wrong movement of the foetus” caused due to lifting very heavy loads. Symptoms are accentuated while doing agricultural work or collecting fuel and fodder. As Munni explained:

*“Pav lachakna” happens more to women who have to carry heavy loads. If heavy load is lifted off the ground without help, there are more chances of affliction with pain, because the stomach gets compressed due to bending and the foetus gets affected (Munni, 59 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga).*

Similarly *chhaya* which takes the form of black marks on the face is believed to be a condition brought upon pregnant women by “*chaya dosh*”. Only appeasement of this evil spirit with a specific ritual can cure it!

Yet significantly, women felt that many pregnancy related problems were rooted in their general poor health, weakness (*kamzoori*) and/or anaemia (*khoon ki kami*). Weakness is experienced as constant state throughout pregnancy and readily attributed to many conceptions, over work and poor diet. As the case of Guddi aptly illustrates:

*Guddi is a frail, anemic looking 32-year-old Dom woman. Theirs is one of the poorest families in Bunga. Rais, her husband owns just one nalli of land. He works as a wage labourer doing any kind of work, which will fetch some money. During ploughing season, he ploughs other fields. Guddi got married at the age of 19, and subsequently for five years, each year she delivered a child. Guddi has no major health problem but she is very weak and suffers from severe pain in her back and joints. She is aware that her poor health is a result of five conceptions in quick succession, poor food to eat and life full of drudgery. “My life is full of drudgery – even after working hard there is always too little. Each childbirth was followed with pneumonia and weakness began to creep in my body. Ours is a very poor household. We did not even have money to buy a cow. If we had a cow, I could drink milk and regain some strength. Now my body is so weak.” Guddi feels that the excessive workload and poor diet that she had to live with thorough her pregnancies caused her poor health. “Now my body is perhaps worn out. As a result of life of hardships I am weak and sick all the time– as if I have no strength. I am now not able to even do household work properly.” (Guddi, 32 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga).*

Pregnant women regard most health problems pregnancy as “little” problems (*thori-thori pareshani*). Being perceived as “small”, by family members and the woman herself, the symptoms are unlikely to entitle her to either rest or medical care. Many of the problems are attempted to be countered by the observance of dietary restrictions and other taboos. A balance between “hot-cold” foods is maintained to prevent adversity. Rituals prevent attacks by evil spirits. Moreover many of the problems are believed to be self-limiting and usually self-correcting after women have given birth. They thus must simply be endured. Medical treatment in pregnancy is generally considered unnecessary.

Pregnant women rarely consult the PHC (Primary Health Centre), dispensary, hospital or private clinic. Visit to *vaid*s or *dai*s for consultations are seldom made. In any case such decisions do not rest with the woman herself. Financial constraints inhibit the seeking of medical care. Most cannot afford to go to doctor, or need to borrow money. Medical check-ups or follow-ups by an ANM (Auxiliary nurse midwife) are almost absent as health practices. Manori is eight months pregnant. She says:

*"ANM never visits us in the village. She has not done any check-up nor has she explained me anything. Even to get the children immunised we have to go to them. I myself visited her a couple of times. But on most occasions she was not at the centre. But I persisted and hence took two injections and she gave me some medicine for 3 months. But she has not done any examination. What examination? They don't even touch us. How will they examine us?" Manori hopes she will not have any problem in her delivery. "If there is any big problem, then hopefully my family will take me to Rishikesh. Here there are no arrangements. Otherwise I will just die". (Manori, 21 yrs, Guri-Dom, Goddi)*

For cases of foetal distress ("*bachcha khisakna*") and abdominal pain women may seek advice of the *dai* in Mohanchatty. *Dai*s of this region never conduct any internal examination. They claim to be adept at identifying foetal parts through physical touch. They also claim to have the skills of manipulating the position of the foetus by massaging. This is stated to relieve the pain and distress of the pregnant woman. If such indigenous methods fail to relieve the woman's suffering, family members may avail of the allopathic medical services. In such cases, a doctor, *vaid*, RMP (Rural medical practitioner) or chemist dispenses the medicines.

For illness not directly connected with pregnancy, such as fever and cough, local healers are sometimes consulted or women are treated with medication from doctor, chemists, RMP or self-declared doctors. Treatment is often abandoned if the woman does not recover fast.

*Kavlo developed high fever in her sixth month of pregnancy. It became so bad that it led to pneumonia. Soon she became bed-ridden. Her husband, an auji-drummer-tailor in the village first went to the "bakki" (local healer) in Ghaikhal who told him to sacrifice a cock. That would calm her "grahas" (stars) and she would become all right. But nothing of this sort happened. So Amir Chand went to the RMP in Duili and bought some medicine. But Kavlo's condition only worsened. Another RMP and *vaid* from Mohanchatty was consulted. But*



*medicines were not helping. What else could they do? Kavlo delivered prematurely a month earlier. The child died in 3-4 days. Kavlo remained in bed for another 2-3 months while she took all kinds of treatment. Somehow she got on her feet. (Kavlo, 40 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

As stated earlier the public health services are located at considerable distance from the two villages. The sub-centre at Binak is the closest for the two village women, but it is seldom opened. The ANM stays at village Umra that is 13 kilometers away from Binak. The SAD (State Allopathic Dispensary) at Duili is located about 12 kilometers from two villages. It can take upto four hours to reach Duili. The PHC at the Block head quarter Yamkeshwar is much further (28 kilometers) and more poorly connected. Direct bus services to Yamkeshwar are unavailable. A four-hour bus drive has to be first taken upto Amola village after which a private jeep has to be hired to carry the patients to Yamkeshwar. The long travel may turn fruitless if the PHC medical officer is not available or neglects to conduct a proper examination of the patient. The PHC in any case has no gynaecologist or obstetrician. There are never sufficient drugs and / or facilities for pathological tests etc. Hence patients usually have to access these services at Kotdwara or Rishikesh. The gravity of the situation can be judged by the fact that in our study villages, not a single person had ever availed PHC services at Yamkeshwar. With such a poor outreach, people are almost denied modern health care. Only as recently as 2001, a private medical college (viz. Himalayan Institute Hospital Trust, Jolly Grant, Dehradun) has started providing services through bi-monthly health team visits to a few Health Centres opened in the Block. One such Health Centre was recently opened at Magatha village as well. However, these are basically in the nature of family planning services, and the primary responsibility lay exclusively with the outreach staff.

Women on their part also have very little awareness about the ANM and her responsibilities. They have little understanding of dangers in childbearing being often caused by the negligence and the need to take tetanus toxoid vaccinations. Even in recent years only three women in the age group of upto 25 years reported visiting the SAD in Duili for antenatal check-up during their pregnancy period. Mamta, 31 years old, is Class 10 pass and is married to a schoolteacher. She has had 3 deliveries upto now.

*Throughout my pregnancies I use to go for all the checkups and also took the injections. If ANM in Binak was not present, I went to the Dispensary in Diuli. I know that ANM does not come for house visits, but these check-ups are important, so I went there on my own. (Mamta, 31 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Very few women went for prenatal check-ups too. Those who have taken the injections have visited the SAD at Diuli or the sub-centre at Binak to get them; though relatively more women report getting their children immunised. This owes partly to the view that pregnancy and childbirth are “god-made” natural phenomena, which does not require any outside intervention. However non-utilisation of prevalent services is also a question of the quality of service in rural Garhwal. In general, the services are unsatisfactory. Since the sub-centre at Binak is mostly shut and the ANM is rarely present, there is no possibility of antenatal or high-risk mothers check-up and least of all attended deliveries. Women are generally sceptical about the benefits of government services. If the situation demands, they prefer to consult private practitioners in Rishikesh. But visits to Rishikesh depend on money, time and willingness of women’s family members to organise them. Multiple social and structural constraints foreclose the possibilities of health care of pregnant women.

### **WOMEN IN LABOUR: DANGERS AND DISTRESS**

Beliefs of spiritual danger, pollution and vulnerability to spirits continue to determine practices around the birthing process even today. Since birthing is considered a “common” knowledge, it is felt that everybody is able to manage a delivery. Women may resort to services of public and private health personnel for various ailments, but in matters of childbirth they at most consult kinswomen and other knowledgeable senior women in the village who are experienced in delivering children. Even if a few women attend “check-up” during pregnancy, very few will be present for birth itself in institutionalised set-up.

Pregnant women usually inform mothers-in-law or other kinswomen of the onset of labour. Thereafter they enter the delivery room and they prepare for the delivery. Older women of the family or neighbourhood are traditionally charged with the management of labour and delivery. At times it is carried out by the labouring woman herself.

Knowledge about the labour process is passed on from one generation of women to the next and women learn through self-experience. No outside help is generally asked for and the attending kinswomen usually provide emotional and physical support to the woman in labour. The inexperienced are usually assisted in the descent and delivery of the babies, especially for initial deliveries.

In the olden days, women gave birth in the cattle shed on the mud floor. This practice is now nearly extinct. They may have relinquished the cowshed, but labouring women are still allotted the worst room in terms of hygiene and ventilation. It is separated from the main residential area since birthing is a polluted process. To ward off evil spirits, an old knife or sickle is placed under the pillow of the woman. Darshini, now 85, throws light on a typical birthing scenario:

*Our deliveries take place in our homes. In my time we delivered in the cattle shed away from the house. Today things are better. Usually the room on the ground floor behind the kitchen where we store firewood and have bath is used for deliveries. A bed of dry straw is provided for the woman to lie on, as the ground is damp. It is an uncomfortable place as the room is damp, dark and often filled with smoke from the kitchen. But the labouring daughter-in-law (suili) cannot deliver elsewhere as she is very polluting.*

*Older women of the village perform the delivery, especially if it's the first time. We rarely call a dai – for many kilometers you will not find a single dai. We make the woman in labour sit and apply force by pressing both hands on the ground that is laid with "paraal" (haystack). As a result of the pressure, the child comes out on the floor. The delivering woman cuts the umbilical cord with "dharati" (sickle) herself. After that a warm water bath is given to the newborn and the mother. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Virtually all women experience such a delivery even to this day. There is no momentousness of the occasion unless it is the daughter-in-law's first delivery. Village women and neighbours take turns to look in upon the labouring woman and lend psychological support and encouragement. Help is necessary to heat water and milk, make tea and massage the woman when she is in pain. The numbers of non-family women present at birth is usually a function of the number of children the woman has delivered. The more births a woman has had, fewer members are present.

By the time a women reaches her fourth or fifth delivery she is experienced enough to conduct it herself. If she anticipates any difficulty, she may call upon a kinswoman for assistance.

*I returned home after harvesting jhangora. The pain had started. I went and gave my cows their feed. Then I heated some water, pulled out an old saree, I sharpened the sickle and prepared a bed for myself in the delivery room. I lay in pain for five hours. By that time my labour pain became intense. It was so much that my clothes became completely wet. I had begun cooking food for my children, but I just couldn't continue. I went into the delivery room and lay on the floor. Soon I was wild with discomfort. I was very much uncomfortable. I had never experienced so much discomfort and pain in my earlier deliveries. So I called out to my elder daughter and I sent her off to my aunt who lived 6 – 7 houses away. My aunt came with two more women. She gave me some warm tea to have and massaged my stomach gently with some oil. Then they helped me to squat on two bricks and encouraged me to push. With their assistance I finally delivered my baby in the wee hours of the morning. (Munni, 59 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

After the baby is delivered, the birthing woman herself cuts the umbilical cord, as it is perceived to be a polluting thing. In fact the body of the birthing woman, the baby, the placenta and umbilicus are all regarded as defiled and defiling. Disposal of the placenta, washing of soiled clothes and re-plastering of the mud floor are the work of the delivering woman. It leads to immense weakness and vulnerability to fever. Munni described the physical stress or discomfort of the lone new mother:

*After I gained some consciousness, my aunt gave me some warm water for my bath. I bathed the baby and myself. It was the month of January – it was very, very cold. I had to re-plaster the room with cow-dung and had to wash my clothes. I was feeling very weak and tired. Doing all this I shivered, but I had to do it. Next day I was down with pneumonia. The fever was very high. I was shivering and sweating at the same time. I became very sick. After three weeks when I became worse, my mother-in-law thought I would die. Then she sent my husband to Musrali to call a vaid. After taking treatment for almost one month, I was able to recover. (Munni, 59 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Only when some complication arises extra attention is paid. Complicated cases of prolonged or obstructed labour warrant the summoning of the dai. Older women like Shakuntala Devi remember two *dais* in the vicinity:

*Dais were called "byah" in our villages. Until four decades back a dai lived in Nail village which is 5 kms from Bunga. She served the villagers until she died.*

*There was another Dom Dai in the scheduled caste village Ghiyalgoan located 3 kilometre from Bunga. This woman did not like being called a dai, but attended a few births and would agree to deliver under duress if the dai from Nail could not be found. The dai helped the labouring woman to deliver and cut the umbilical cord. She bathed the mother and child and washed the soiled clothes. For this she was paid a sum of Rs.40 and presented with a saree. (Shakuntala, 66 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Ever since the death of these two dais, Bunga and Daurn have not had any. At present the nearest available dai for residents is a Dom woman living near Mohanchatty, a village at a distance of 10-12 kms making it very inconvenient. She is called for emergencies, especially in cases of extended labour.

*Mohanchatty is far. If we have to call her we have to rely on the men to go and fetch her. Moreover we must be ready to pay Rs.300-400. It is easier to put the pregnant women on a "charpoi"(string cot) and carry her to Rishikesh (Shakuntala, 66 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Alternatively an effort to call an ANM is made. However as one woman grumbled:

*ANMs are also seldom present, since they are located far away and when you need them most they cannot be contacted. Even if you are able to contact them, you have to plead them, beg them to come, besides pay them for their services. (Guddi, 39 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

As mentioned earlier the ANM for these villages stays in a far way village Umra (13 kilometers away). Women don't usually bother to call her since she is known to charge a hefty fee of a few thousand rupees. The only reported consultation was at the time of Mamta's second delivery.

*The labour had extended for more than 18 hours and my husband sent for the ANM. Though she took four hours to come, she assisted me in a difficult delivery and saved the child and my life. For her services she charged Rs. 3000/-. My husband could afford her fees because he is a schoolteacher in Pokharkhal. (Mamta, 31 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Village women are not perturbed by the absence of dais. As the following case studies reveal their expertise seems seriously deficient. Usually they were called for cases of prolonged labour which made families anxious. Prolonged labour is a commonly stated obstetrical problem, especially in the older days when the birthing woman was very young. Women recalled that in most case labour extended from to 8-10 hours to 16-17

hours. Most commonly labour is stated to be atleast for four hours. Women in labour would generally just lie-in, getting up occasionally to squat and push. Sometimes they drink the prescribed hot food to advance labour spasms and aid delivery. Seldom was any outside help sought.

*Radha a migrant's wife had extended labour for more than 12 hours. The dai from Mohanchatty was called. She came and massaged her stomach. The pain continued for another day but she did not deliver. The dai just packed up and went away. Radha panicked but the elder women consoled her. Next day she delivered with their help. (Radha, 36 yrs, Rajput, Daurn)*

Several young women had similar story to tell:

*Pinky, a 23-year-old Rajput woman was married to Gabbar Singh who worked in a factory in Shahadra, Delhi. He left his pregnant wife with his parents for the birthing of their first child. In the 7<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy she had a severe pain in her stomach. She went to the dai in Mohanchatty who examined her. The dai explained that the foetus had moved and hence the cause of her pain. So at the time of her delivery, the same dai was called. For two days the dai was confident of being able to deliver the baby, but when it was the third day, the labour pain increased and the baby did not come out. Then the dai left, leaving the labouring woman in a state of fright. However her mother in law and other women calmed her down. With their help she delivered the next day. Pinky feels that if her husband had taken her to Delhi, she would not have suffered so much. She would have delivered with ease in the hospital. (Pinky, 23 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

*Rekha a Rajput women from Birkatal had her first conception at the age of 19. In the 9<sup>th</sup> month she began severe labour pains, which went on for four days. On the fifth day, the dai from Mohanchatty was called. She vigorously massaged her stomach. Rekha delivered a dead girl, after that she fell very ill. Her left leg became numb and she could neither walk properly nor put any weight on this leg. At that time Rekha's husband was posted in Assam. She went away with him and got herself treated in the Military Hospital. (Rekha, 38 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

*In Rakhi's case, too the labour lasted long and the same dai was called who repeated the vigorous stomach massage. Nothing happened but Rakhi continued to be in immense pain. The family then decided to put her on a "charpoi" (string cot) and carry her to Rishikesh. She later delivered in the hospital, but the baby died. (Rakhi, 35 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

All four cases are examples of the dai's helplessness and ineffectivity in difficult labour and lack of support from the PHC. When faced with potentially high-risk circumstances,

it is clear that labouring women do not receive proper care. Apart from the physical pain and danger, they are under great mental and emotional distress about their infant's death.

As we have mentioned, modern health care services are not locally available. Thus the critical decision in an emergency is whether or not to call a *dai*/ ANM or carry the woman to a hospital in Rishikesh. Economic factors are crucial to this decision making. Costs have to be counted in terms of money and time and weighed in terms of perceived benefit to the "*buari*" and baby. The decision is generally not the prerogative of the woman concerned. The sole authority in these matters lies with the mother-in-law or senior most in-law or the woman's husband, if he is a non-migrant or is present at that time. The mother-in-law decides hospital treatment is necessary or whether the case can be handled at home without much expense and trouble through known indigenous methods. Besides the costs involved and distance, the need for an escort to take the woman to the hospital can serve as a deterrent factor. Equally importantly, someone is needed back home to take care of the woman's other smaller children as well as her work responsibilities. Not surprisingly therefore, women are taken to hospital only when the case is perceived by attending relatives as life threatening. Most women undergo home deliveries even when their actual condition is serious and may result in maternal or infant death. Health care seems thus also a matter of family dynamics.

In the course of our conversations with women, recurrent references were made to four cases of maternal mortality and infant mortality that seems to exist in women's collective memory and affected them greatly at the subconscious level.

*Kamla: her entire body had become swollen. She was taken to the doctor at Mohanchatty who administered some injection to induce pain. But after three hours, when nothing happened, he asked them to go ahead to a "bigger hospital" in Rishikesh. Kamla died on the way.*

*Sunanda: her baby died in the womb when she was full-term. Later Sunanda also died. It was during monsoons. Landslides had blocked the road to Rishikesh and hence she could not be taken.*

*Lata: She lost three babies. Towards her fourth pregnancy, she again had convulsions. The doctor in the hospital administered her some injections. She gave birth the next day, but this baby too died a few hours later.*

*Rukamani: She had a difficult delivery. There was excessive bleeding. She died a day later.*

Maternal death is much rarer as compared to infant death. There were few reported deaths of women during pregnancy and/or shortly after delivery. Though for majority of the women most deliveries were without complications, we found on probing that women had experienced problems, which could have become serious. In labour as well as delivery, women had felt breathless or as if something was constricting their breathing. Few found difficulty in squatting as their legs and feet had greatly swollen.

Eight month pregnant Manori (aged 21 years) exhibits the general health seeking behaviour of pregnant women in the village:

*I had nausea for four to five months and could not eat anything. I got swelling and found it hard to work. Therefore I went to Binak to the ANM. Only on my third trip there I found her. I took red tablets and some tonics from her. She did not do any check-ups, but just gave these medicines. I will not go to the hospital for birth. I will deliver at home. If there is some complication, I hope my relatives will take me to Rishikesh. Else I may just die. It's all in God's hand (Manori, 21 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi).*

Relatively speaking, the younger generation of women attempt to visit the sub-centres or clinics to avail themselves of packets of pills or bottles of tonics; they sometimes visit private or government practitioners for medicines, injections and for ailments that disrupt their daily work. But the same cannot be said about birth. Even today, the majority still have births at home attended by senior women. Hospitalisation is therefore almost always an emergency resort.

#### **POST PARTUM PERIOD: CONTINUING DEPRIVATION AND ILL-HEALTH**

In the post-partum period the miseries of birthing women continue unabated. Having overcome the risks of child-births, they now encounter the dangers of post-partum illnesses. Health problems emerge soon after delivery causing a lot of physical pain and distress. More tragically, they can also cause death. Given the conditions during pregnancy and childbirth, almost all kinds of reproductive health problems manifest themselves. Uterine, pelvic and stomach pains occur, which sometimes last upto a month



after delivery. Women neither seek nor get any treatment for this. The standard remedy is to eat “soft food” such as “*khichdi*”.

Most women fall ill with high fever, dizziness, shivering, and “pneumonia” (the word was used by women themselves) immediately after the delivery. Fever is often accompanied with diarrhoea making the condition worse. Given the unclean birthing environment and methods, infections are bound to occur. Older women however attribute these illnesses to attack of evil spirits:

*I had the delivery without any trouble, but the next day I developed fever. I was shivering with fever and also got severe diarrhoea. This continued for three days. My “mausi” (aunt) in the village told me that this was due to cold, which had got lodged in my tubes. When this happens evil spirits attacks the body and cause high fever of this kind. (Golli, 62 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

*Sutkia rog* is another kind of fever that afflicts parturient women and is regarded as fatal. The woman’s body swells up and she gets very high fever. Women identified *thand* (cold) as the main cause of this ailment since most women who deliver in the cold season contract it. Kavita who suffered with *sutkia rog* feels it was only by a stroke of luck that she survived!

*When I was delivering my fifth child I became very sick. I had labour pains for 3 days and my mother-in-law delivered the child with great difficulty. After a few hours my stomach swelled up and I got high fever. When I became unconscious, I was carried to Rishikesh and admitted in G. T. Hospital. When I reached the hospital the attending doctors told my husband that I was as good as dead. Any case they started my treatment. I remained bedridden for 3 months. (Kavita, 38 yrs. Rajput, Birkatal)*

*Ginthia* is another condition that afflicts women in the postnatal period. *Ginthia* causes severe pain in the legs accompanied by a painful pulling sensation in the calf. Women attribute this pain to “shrinking of veins” due to weakness, excessive cold condition and the occurrence of several poorly spaced pregnancies. Massaging the leg with cow’s “ghee” is supposed to ease the pain.

*My first-born was a son who died within few hours of birth. The next was still-born. When my third son died during birth, my mother in law got so angry with me that she said, “Let her die too”. She did not even heat some water for my bath. It was the month of January and it was freezing. I had to bathe and wash*

*in cold water. I was attacked by "ginthia rog". I just could not straighten my left leg. There was shooting pain and I got fever. A woman in the village saw my condition and felt sorry. She quietly gave me some cow's ghee which I use to hide and massage my leg. It took very long to get cured. Even today my left leg pains more than the right though both are now affected by "bai"(local term for arthritic type joint pain). I have never gone to a hospital for treatment. Medicines can't cure ginthia (Krapu, 69 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Excessive bleeding and foul smelling discharges are other common experiences. Bleeding for two or three days is considered "normal". It is positively viewed as "cleansing of the womb", and "discharge of unwanted, dirty, accumulated blood". Most women however experience severe bleeding for ten days or more, but nothing is thought of it.

Women also seem to suffer from a host of uterine infections that result in long-term bleeding or white discharge. The symptoms are described as *safed* or *laal paani parna* (red or white discharge) or *khoon parna* (bleeding). Women believe that this is a result of weakness caused by numerous pregnancies - their bones melt and get discharged. They also believe that if they eat hot food the condition worsens. Discharge increases and results in extreme weakness.

*After my son's birth I felt shortage of blood in my body (khaun ki bahooth kami). There was excessive white discharge. My bones were melting away and coming out of the body. Losing blood made me very weak. I became vulnerable to fever and body ache. (Shanti, 40 yrs, Gusai-dom, Goddi)*

During the lactation period, septic boil on the breast accompanied by fever is another painful ailment that women commonly suffer. Most women treat it themselves by making an incision with a blade and extracting the pus from the boil. Religious healing is also commonly sought for this particular ailment. Seeking treatment from a doctor is not even a remote thought.

*When my eldest son was born I had a boil on my breast. This infection was there because our god Nagraj got angry. On advice of the "bakki" I offered prayers to him. The boil got all right without any medicines. I didn't think it was necessary to go doctor. (Kamla 48 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

*Shakuntala's right breast got infected with a big boil. She first did some devta poojan but the boil did not heal. Soon it became septic and started to throb. She*

*then asked the "village doctor" to attend to it. He gave it an incision, removed the pus and put some local medicine - saatti (paddy) was burnt and applied on the boil. With three weeks of bandaging, it slowly healed. (Shakuntala, 50 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Besides these problems, women in Bunga and Daurn suffer from several gynaecological problems/conditions which are all probably indicative of a combination of other unknown obstetric problems caused by the generally unhygienic living conditions and infections.

Women suffer from multiple gynaecological problems that cause a great amount of weakness and discomfort. Vaginal discharge, chronic pelvic pain, long, painful or irregular menstruation and excessive menstrual bleeding are some of the more severe problems. Some women associate the general feverishness, fatigue, weakness and backache constantly felt by them to gynaecological symptoms.

Women suffer from white or yellow vaginal discharge (*dhat chinh*), reddish discharge (*pairwa*), burning and itching while urinating and itching in vagina (*sujak*) as the most commonly suffered problems. Viscid, white vaginal discharge (leucorrhoea) is described by women as a profuse, painful and chronic discharge that has plagued them for years.

*Since last six-seven years I have been suffering from excessive white discharge and excessive blood flow in each menstrual cycle. When the discharge is particularly profuse, I get severe pain in my abdomen and my back. White discharge started after my fifth daughter was born. After her birth for a long period I did not have menstruation. Instead I had white discharge. When I went to my native place I told my mother about it. She bought me medicines. It stopped for a few months. But it started again. I have also undertaken treatment at Duili. But it only gave my temporary relief. (Kavlo, 39 yrs, Auji- dom, Bunga)*

Majority of the middle aged and older women have experienced these problems at some stage. Most reported that the problems ceased on their own as they grew older. Women both young and old had tried seeking some treatment for white discharge. Most consider this as not being a serious illness, but rather a *choti bimari* (small ailment). Despite the discomfort that white discharge caused, women however, felt more troubled by other health problems.

*I have white discharge for last 4-5 years. But more than this I am troubled by my general poor condition of health which makes it difficult for me to fulfill my work and other responsibilities. (Savitri, 40 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi)*

They are almost regarded as common experience. Women believe that through these conditions related to childbirth "weakness creeps into the body" and it remains in their body forever (*kamzoori baith jati hai jeevan bhar ke liye*).

Uterine prolapse (*bacchedani bahar anan*) was a problem suffered by a few older women, though it has afflicted few relatively not so old women also. Heavy workloads along with several poorly spaced and uncared for pregnancies and lack of postnatal health care seem to have cumulatively contributed to the occurrence of this problem. It causes the greatest of discomfort and affects work and normal functioning.

*I did not get a healthy diet during pregnancy. Nor did I get anything especial to eat. Just after the delivery I had high fever for a week. My eyes were burning. I could feel that my whole stomach and pelvic region had become swollen and soft. It started to hurt in the pelvic region and the red discharge also became excessive. I felt very tired and drained out. But I did not call a doctor because I thought this is normal after delivery. It will cease after a few days. Yes I have a prolapsed uterus. If one has 7-8 children it will happen. Most of the older women have it. No we don't go to a doctor for it. When its not too bad, we just push it with our hand. When it comes out, it affects our movements. It's very uncomfortable in the beginning, but then one gets used to it. I feel pus has formed there. There is itching and burning and I feel it's wet all the time. But where can I go. (Kamla, 48 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi)*

Moreover lack of hygiene is evident in the way the women deal with their menstrual cycle. Water for washing themselves and the cloth menstrual pads that are used, is generally in short supply. After washing the pads are normally hung to dry in the cowshed, where they often collect flies. In some hamlets where forests have greatly depleted, it has become increasingly difficult for women to find private spaces for urinating. Women are thus compelled to exercise control for long stretches of time. This not only causes them extreme discomfort, but may also lead to urinary tract problems. These seem plausible from women's descriptions of some highly prevalent urinary symptoms such as pain during urination, burning etc.

As in pregnancy, there is a culturally prescribed period of rest and confinement. However even the eleven day period of postnatal pollution confinement is impossible to follow for the women. Although they strongly express the yearning for rest, they are compelled to step out of the delivery room for work. In situations where religious norms are widely broken, post partum work taboos are not practised at all. Where women could have traded off some rest in exchange for the ignoble polluted status that is cast upon them, they are expected instead to take charge of their onerous duties almost immediately upon delivery. At most, the fortunate few could snatch two-three days of rest.

However in the older days, women's confinement was relatively strictly observed. They came out only to relieve themselves. As Darshini recounted:

*The postnatal pollution period lasts for eleven days. The mother and child are considered polluting and to avoid pollution ("chhot") they are not allowed contact with other family members or outsiders. The "suili's" (parturient mother) "grahas" (stars) are weak and therefore there is a fear of "chhaul-chhraeta" i.e. attack from evil spirits. So she must confine herself in the delivery room for eleven days. She is forbidden to even step out of the room except to relieve herself. However three days after the delivery she can come out and bathe at the "gaddera" (spring). This is when the woman must wash her defiled clothes etc. as doing these jobs at home causes water pollution ("paani ki chhoot"). The child is brought out in the sun for the first time only on the fifth day. Ideally even the food has to be cooked and served to the suili by someone else. She is not allowed to cook for the family for eleven days though she may cook for herself after 3-4 days, if she is able to, or if there is no one to help her. On the eleventh day again the priest sprinkles "gaunth" (cows urine) and performs a purificatory ritual. By now she is half pure. The final purification ceremony called "paani pe lagna" is performed only after a period of forty days. After this ceremony she is regarded as completely recovered and is allowed free movement and normal living. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Such strict confinement is practically unfeasible today. Washing at the *gaddera* (the local stream) and cooking starts barely three days after delivery<sup>4</sup>. Fuel and fodder gathering and light agricultural tasks are resumed within five or six days. A week at the most is all the parturient mother gets before her daily grind resembles exactly that of the 'normal' women. This is considered sufficient time for her to recover and her body to be fit

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<sup>4</sup> The parturient woman is expected to wash her own soiled clothes at *gaddera* as no other woman of her husbands family will do it for her as the job is considered dirty and defiling.

enough for work. A little help from family and neighbours is usually forthcoming but only for the initial few days.

In some households it is not uncommon for husbands and in-laws to cook the meal (often only for themselves) during the pollution/prohibition period especially in the absence of other female members in the family. The postnatal woman feeds for herself and of course is loaded by the rest of the household work.

*My mother-in-law was living separately. And my husband was not here. In the morning after the delivery my neighbours gave me some water. I had small children in the house. So I cooked food for myself and also for them. The next day onwards I started doing every work. I even went and brought two pots of water. How could anyone help me everyday? I use to go to the stream and wait there with my "bantha" (pot) for someone to pour the water in it so that I could wash the clothes, take home drinking water for my children and cook for them. I did all the housework like bringing water, washing utensils and sweeping. I went to collect grass for the cows. I milked them. The next day I was in the fields weeding. After all I had to take care of my family. After 15-20 days I had started doing all other work as usual. (Gunti, 56 yrs, Rajput, Daur)*

*I did not have a mother-in-law. But my father-in-law used to stay with me. After the delivery, a kinswoman gave me some rice and water to cook my food. I made wet rice and had it. The next day I got up and went to the water to wash and carry water for the cattle. I did all the housework like cleaning utensils etc. Only I did not cook for my father-in-law. For five days he cooked his own food. After four days I went to do "mandai" (threshing) in the fields and beating and husking grain. After fifth day I started doing all routine housework like bringing water, cooking etc. for my father-in-law as well. (Golli, 62 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

*In the hills after delivery, we start work in two or three days. I cooked immediately after the delivery and I started doing routine work within 5-6 days after delivery. I did entire household, fieldwork and animal work. Mothers-in-law are there, but who receives any help from them! I did not get any rest at all. (Saraswati, 55 yrs, Lohar-dom, Birkatal)*

*My husband cooked his own food for eleven days. But I had to cook for my daughters and myself. My mother-in-law was not alive and there was no one else who could do my work. My husband said that he could not cook for the whole family (Kamla, 64 yrs, Brahmin, Birkatal)*

In addition to this confinement for a certain period of time, women have to follow certain food restrictions during delivery and postnatal periods. "Cold foods" are taboo and "hot food" are thought to provide the mother strength and combat the exhaustion. A "no-salt"

diet is recommended for forty days. Darshini provided the detailed diet chart before and after childbirth:

*A thick "khitchri" of urad dal, is fed to the woman during labour, so that the child may become slippery and may come out early and easily. Some give a glass of tea or hot milk with spoonful of pure ghee, or warm "dalia" (porridge) for a quick easy delivery. After the bath "suili" is given her first meal that is basically light and easily digestible. People give "khitchri" made of pulses and rice cooked together, or "halwa" made out of wheat flour and sugar or jaggery with lots of ghee or simply wet rice with sugar or jaggery. If a woman is unable to eat immediately, she is given a glass of hot milk or tea, with some ghee mixed in it to drink. Only hot water to drink is given. Cold water is strictly avoided till child is forty days old. But drinking too much water is not recommended as it causes "thand" (cold) in the "nas" (veins) and the infant will get loose motion. Food like cold rice and green vegetable are never given after a delivery. In fact she must eat preferably "halwa" for a few days after delivery. But usually the economically better off families alone can afford to give this rich food. Others can afford it at the most for one day and mostly follow it up with khitchri or wet rice later. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Even now social taboos continue to prevent a woman from eating certain "cold" food like green vegetable, cold rice, salt and cold water. However the inclusion of recommended special foods like ghee, milk, *khitcheri*, *halwa* in the lactating women's diet is minimal. Hardly anyone could get a good diet (*khora*k). As a matter of fact most women are unable to afford even a minimally good diet for more than two to three days:

*There was nothing to eat. At the time of delivery I was given wet rice mixed with sugar. I did not even have any special diet at that time. I would just eat whatever I got - mostly wet rice. Only the economically better off families alone can afford to give halwa and ghee. If there was half a kilo of ghee, the children would ask me to put it on their rotis and I would give it to the children (Jasla, 75 yrs, Auji-dom, Bunga)*

Today after delivery, women consume a few cups of sweetened tea and wet rice with some sugar mixed in it. After a week or so of eating semi-solid food, viz. usually *kitchri*, wet sweetened rice and rarely *halwa*, women returned to regular diet, viz. *rotis* with *dal* and a small portion of seasonal vegetable. The right quantities of nutritious health-giving food is a dream! Rather the oft-repeated statement "*taqat ka khana kahaan mila*" ("where did we get nutritious food") reflects the reality of food deprivation.

Following the pattern during pregnancy, factors like joint or nuclear family residence, patterns of co-operative labour within the conjugal family, availability of support from migrant husband, all determine women's postnatal experiences. Those belonging to nuclear and poorly off families' find it impossible to follow any confinement rule whatsoever. Especially if the fields are many and cattle herds are big and there is no money to hire labour, the parturient women have to take on the burden. In extended families, mothers-in-law refuse to be burdened by *buari's* work. The woman is subject to her mother-in-law's authority.

As during pregnancy, for a few women things have changed for the better during the postnatal stage. The cases of Sunita and Sudeshi (aged 23 and 30, Brahmin and Rajput respectively) for instance, illustrate the difference.

*Sunita and Sudeshi said that their mothers-in-law are/were extremely co-operative and kind. They did not allow them to do any work for eleven days. They were even provided hot water in the house itself for bath and washing their clothes. Hence they did not even have to walk to the "gaddera" and bathe in cold water. Slowly after three weeks they started doing "light" jobs like cooking and household chores. They got all the rest and care that any town woman would aspire for.*

Sudeshi (30 years) was one of the few who delivered in institutional set-up and was able to partake a nutritious diet after the delivery.

*During pregnancy I got all the necessary check-ups, injections etc. For my first delivery when pain just started my husband took me to G. T. Hospital, Rishikesh (Government Hospital). But since there were no good facilities in G.T.Hospital, my husband took me to a private hospital called Nirmal in Rishikesh. There I delivered through a small nick. All my other 2 deliveries were also performed in the hospital. I did not follow any diet restrictions - my mother-in-law did not ask me to follow any taboos - neither during pregnancy nor at and after childbirth. I used to regularly get whatever vegetables and fruits the lala's shop was selling. There was plenty of milk and ghee. For several days I had only eaten "halwa" cooked in ghee. I also had asked my husband to buy Horlicks for me from Rishikesh. Earlier villagers did not allow a newborn child to see the sun. But I took the child out in the sun as the doctor said that it helps the child to grow faster. I feel pregnancy and delivery can also be medical conditions, especially when some complications arise - and hence must be also shown to the doctor. I took full care of my baby and myself in postnatal period. The immunisation for the*



*children was complete. I also took tonic, vitamin pills and Horlicks prescribed by a private doctor in Rishikesh". (Sudeshi 30 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Today, younger women claim that they are more aware about the need for postnatal care and have started giving it more attention. However the statement is not fully substantiated by in-depth interviews done with women and by our observations. In these relatively remote villages where health care services are so inaccessible, the age old cultural practices are slow to go. Following two case studies powerfully depict this cumulative compounding situation for majority of the women even today. The first case is of a Dom woman and the second of a Brahmin woman.

*Savili, aged 35 years, belongs to a very poor household in Goddi. Her husband and elder son usually work as wage labourers – whenever work is available. They have only one nalli of land, which hardly suffices their family. Savili says that hardly any agricultural wage work is available, and most of the days they earn nothing. They go to the roadside teashop and ask for work. If work is available in nearby villages they go there too. "I got married at a very young age of 13. I gave birth to six children, but now only two are alive. I don't know what problems I have. That only the doctor can tell. But my children died in infancy. I was weak and there was never much to eat. What could my husband do. Poor man had little land, no money. Work was not easy to get. He tried to go to Rishikesh several times. But there too he hardly earned anything. Most of the time he was unemployed. So he use to return. I have lived my life in poverty with never enough to eat. Besides this, I have conceived so many times. There was no food and there was so much work to be done. Many children were born but many died. Birth and death left a scar on my mind and body. Naturally I became very weak. When we had hardly any money to buy food, where can we think of going to a doctor or taking any treatment? Now I am weak and frail. You said you are my age – who will believe that"! (Savili, 35 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi)*

*Vimla 37 years old, Brahmin from Bunga got married into a rich farming household at the age of 20. "I had no problems in the beginning. Some dowry in form of earrings, nose-ring, bed, bedding and "bantha parat" (utensils) was given and my parents had borne all the marriage expense". For 2-3 years Vimla could not conceive. She was sent home and there her natal family performed some "dosh puja", but to no avail. Two years later she had her first child who was born with many big boils on his head. He died in 3-4 days. The next child was a stillbirth. Vimla's in laws got very angry. "The behaviour of my conjugal family was not good any more. My in-laws started to fight with me. The work burden in my in-laws house was much more than my parent's house, but I used to do uncomplainingly. Earlier my in-laws family were happy with my work since I used to do all the work. Now occasionally my mother-in-law started to scold me even for my work. Conflicts between us due to my childbearing problems came to the*

*forefront. Now my natal family got very worried. They again did the "chal puja" as suggested by a reputed "bakki". They also performed "jhar phunk". They believed that because of some "dosh", both the children died and this was essential". On behest of her brother who was living in Rishikesh, Vimla was also taken there for treatment. One and a half year later, she delivered a healthy girl. Thereafter Vimla gave birth to two more sons. Vimla is bitter about her life. She worked hard in her in-laws house. But she was always treated as an outsider because she had difficulty with having children. She feels "neither my in-laws, nor my husband even paid attention to my health. They had no sympathy with my grief. After my deliveries they would expect me to return to my work as if nothing had happened". Vimla feels that "in any case women are weaker and men stronger because women give birth to children which weakens them. Moreover young children demands more attention, and we do all the work related to their upbringing. Hence we become weak. My health which was worsening because of heavy workload, got further ruined because of being pregnant so many times and the constant anxiety and tension with which I have spent my life." (Vimla, 37 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Hence we can conclude that though the diffusion of new ideas has begun, but it has been a very slow process. Rest and good quality diet are still very elusive entities for pregnant and parturient women even if they are aware of it. Most importantly, the desirability of whatever rest and food is made available to women revolves around fear of threats to foetal well being during pregnancy and safe delivery of the infant. Protecting the infant from physical illness and shielding "others" from birth pollution are the other dominant concerns behind certain taboos that bind women. The birthing woman seems to be of little consequence and therefore taking a pregnant, labouring or sick woman to a hospital becomes the last resort to be deferred or preferably avoided. Thus even today her status within the family and the underlying economic and social conditions mean that most women experience the most dangerous risks of pregnancy, delivery and post-partum period and often succumb to them.

**Chapter VIII**

**FURTHER EXPLORING HEALTH: WOMEN'S  
PHYSICAL ILL-BEING AND MENTAL STATE**

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Moving from women's reproductive health experiences, this chapter is concerned with looking at women's perceptions and experience of their general health condition including their mental and emotional state. Such a separation does not presuppose a compartmentalised approach to women's bodies nor to understanding their health. Rather, as mentioned in Chapter I, we advocate a holistic view of women's bodies, illnesses and health. The division is only for the convenience of analysis, a device for handling of complex and interlinked data. Our enquiry into women's health was directed at exploring the relationship between reproductive health and general physiological, emotional and mental well being in order to arrive at a holistic understanding of women's experiences of ill health and their health status.

Against the background of the connections between environment and economy, gender division of labour and reproductive health that we have explored, we now focus on women's physical and mental well being. The chapter investigates the experiences, definitions and explanations of women's physical states and illnesses and the pains and sufferings that derive from them and their ameliorative efforts. Though we did not begin with the objective of systematically enquiring into mental and emotional well-being, but through the course of our interactions and observations were unravelled women's mental stresses and states and how they affected them independently and in conjunction with physical ill being. Women laid bare the tremendous psychological burdens that they carried along with physical malaise burden.

Going by women's own descriptions we focus on the following questions: How do women describe their physical ailments/afflictions? What view do they have of their causes? Which signs and symptoms do they consider important or unimportant? Do they see the link between their productive and reproductive function and general health? The first part of the chapter addresses these questions. The second part examines women's attempts at accessing treatment, both "traditional" and "modern" and restoring their health. What beliefs and practices do they adopt for treatment and alleviation? What are the conditions that improve chances for better health and what jeopardise them? Are they even more under-treated than they are for reproductive 'problems' and dangers? What constitutes 'good health' for them? The chapter is based on qualitative material gathered

from our interviews. As in the last chapter we will attempt to look for variations between women in terms of age, migrant status, economic status and caste.

## WOMEN'S CONCEPTIONS OF ILLNESS AND HEALTH

Health and illness are conceptualised differently by different cultures. While we discuss women's conceptions of illness in this section, the concept of 'health' will be discussed later as it is intertwined with the experiences of life and death.

The previous chapter has made brief reference to the dichotomous classification of sources of misfortunes and illnesses into *dosh* (affliction) and *bimari* (illness). The supernatural world is manifested in *dosh* or affliction. These afflictions are frequently traced to spirit possession - ghosts (*bhut*) and deities (*devi aana*), evil eye (*nazar lagna*) and spells cast by magic or witchcraft (*toonatotka*). As a result illness, especially fever, diarrhoea, blood dysentery (*kaath*) or sudden deaths are attributed to supernatural forces such as ghost, evil spirit, evil eyes, etc. Children are supposed to be particularly at risk of being affected by the evil eye. When medicines are ineffective (*dawai nahi lagi, doctor ki dawai bekaar li*), it is again perceived to be the work of the evil.

The supernatural world of affliction is juxtaposed to the natural world of illness called *bimari*. The origins of *bimari* are traced to bodily disorders attributed to the humours. Discernible symptoms like stomachache, boils, pain, swelling, cough, fever are often attributed to external, natural forces like excess of heat and cold, air, strong emotions etc. In local articulation, the word *bimari* is used for describing illnesses like T.B (tuberculosis), malaria (*jadu bukhaar*) as well as fevers, loose motion etc. *Bimari* is further bifurcated into *bari bimari* and *choti bimari*. Women generally associate *bari bimari* (major illness) with serious conditions that takes longer to cure, is painful and affects output or work. *Choti bimari* as the name suggests, is illness that is less severe, can be cured easily and in short time and does not interfere with work.

Even though the etiological world of the villagers is broadly dichotomised at the level of the natural and supernatural, the villagers do not demarcate strictly between illness and other form of sufferings or miseries of life. Conventional ways of assessing states of

well-being include not only individual illness but also other non-bodily miseries that are cause for worry. Sufferings of the body are thus not clearly distinguished from those of the mind and there exists a conceptual overlap of body and mind. These conceptual perspectives in turn determine health behaviour.

Over time, with the advent of western medical services, the dominant traditional ways of making sense of illnesses gave way to new hybrid ideologies, knowledge, ideas, discourses and practices. A trend towards new (allopathic) treatment systems has set in but one is uncertain whether biomedicine is accepted as superior. There are some indications of changing beliefs. Most importantly indigenous forms of “germ” theory of bodily disorders have developed, which coexist with local theories of the ‘violation’ of body humours. In consonance with the multiple notions and beliefs about illness causation, a wide variety of healing systems/health practitioners have existed in the vicinity of Bunga and Daun. These specialists, both men and women, greatly differ in terms of their methods of treatment and explanatory models. They provide cures for different types of ailments. Thus treatment is seen as a matter for negotiation and for other authoritative pronouncements, either by traditional healers or today increasingly by the ‘wonders’ of modern medicine. At present what we observe is that there is a mixture of healing systems with a clear preference for biomedicine in some illnesses. However majority of women resort to the entire range of practitioners, depending on the nature and severity of the illness. We describe the current situation in the section on women’s access to healthcare.

## **ILLNESS AND ILL-BEING: WOMEN’S SELF-PERCEPTIONS AND ASSESSMENTS**

In our interviews with the women, women referred to number of mild and severe (“*choti*” and “*bari*”) and recurrent health problems that they suffered throughout their life span. Even though some of these ailments like chronic cough, cold, fevers and seasonal diarrhoea were common to women and men, women experienced longer and more severe occurrences. It indicates that women experienced a perpetual state / condition of ill-health. In this section we present the illnesses in order of the frequency of reporting by

the women. We present the data in terms of health problems as defined by and interpreted by the women themselves.

### **Body Pain: A Chronic Experience Of Hill Women**

Body pain is a predominant problem. Women overwhelmingly and emphatically attribute it to the enormous, laborious and hazardous work that they do. Women suffer from a host of pains – headache, backache, neck ache, pain in the hands and legs, stomachaches and joint pain. Chronic pains disable their functioning intermittently or at times so severely as to handicap them.

Multiple types of heavy and strenuous work, which we have amply described in the previous chapters, are the direct causes of pains such as back pain and other musculo-skeletal pains. Young girls from a very early age are compelled to adopt postures that are detrimental to bone integrity, such as carrying heavy loads. The different types of agricultural operations also require sitting, standing or stooping for long periods of time. Such tedious and time-consuming work is combined with nutritional deprivation that begins early in childhood and is aggravated by early marriage. The lack of food and rest as a *buari*, compounded by early and repeated pregnancies and years of lactation ensure that women are afflicted by chronic pain beginning early in life. The structural pattern of work, types of work and nutritional deprivation brought forth a profile of 'body pain' morbidity.

#### ***“Bai”: joint pain***

Chronic joint pain, locally called “*Bai*” was named as a predominant health problem of village women. “*Bai*” includes numerous symptoms and is associated in one way or another with particular kinds of work activity. Identified work-related patterns of symptomology-terms such as “*bai knee*”, “*bai elbow*”, “*bai-hand*” are often used to describe the effect of varying types of work upon muscles and joints. Explanations of these joint pains were mostly linked to “postures”, “lifting”, “carrying weights”, “bending” etc.

Women of all ages, starting as early as 30, suffered chronic joint pain. The lack of food and rest as a *buari*, compounded by early and repeated pregnancies and years of lactation ensure that women are afflicted by pain early in life. The most affected joints are of the knee, back, hips, shoulder, arms and wrists.

*Five years back I started having health problems. My joints got affected with 'bai' and my back started to hurt. Every morning I was stiff. I am now unable to do strenuous work. Luckily my daughters are now old enough to should my burden. But despite that some work is inevitable. I relate my ill health to my life full of backbreaking work; I feel that work for Garhwali women is inevitable (Pushpa, 38 yrs, Brahmin Bunga).*

Early and repeated pregnancies and several years of lactation are felt to further compound the situation. Conditions worsen with age, incapacitating many women above the age of forty.

*I am suffering from persistent joint pain called "bai" since last 10-12 years. At times my pain increases tremendously and then I go to Rishikesh to buy medicine. I have also taken treatment from the "vaid" and "bakki". I feel that "bai" is caused by the excessive work, poor diet that I have lived with. I have given birth to 15 children. Now my body is perhaps worn out. I have put on a lot of weight as well. The severe pain in the joints and body causes me a lot of discomfort. I am now not able to even do household work properly. Frequently my legs and hands get swollen up. Legs and hands also often become very weak – as if they have no strength. (Saraswati, 55 yrs, Lohar-dom, Birkatal)*

Another woman now in her forties suffering from multiple joint pains and stiffness, identified having to work long hours in the fields and forests as the main cause of her condition.

*I've worked in the fields and forest like this since I was 9 – 10 years old. My back, knee and elbow joints started to pain thirteen-fourteen years back. But for last three-four years, it has been getting worse. It is affecting my back, my leg - I've been walking up and down, bending and climbing, carrying head loads of firewood, fodder and other weights.... (Guddi, 39, Auji-dom, Bunga)*

In addition to detailed descriptions of causal relationship between *bai* and labour, many women sum up the cause of *bai* as 'wear and tear'. ("jor ghis jate hain; haddi ghis jati hai") The elaboration of the concept of 'wear and tear' often drew women into more detailed reflections of how their bodies had to be 'constrained' by their working lives.



*My health is failing because of the heavy workload. Now my joints, particularly upper and lower limbs pain a lot now. They are worn out- because of overuse I think. Our life and work in the hills causes our bones and joints to wear. With age it becomes worse. Look at me now. I find bringing water most troublesome. Weeding also aggravates my joint pain. While threshing and pounding the grains my hands become sore. (Kamla, 48 yrs, Gusai-Dom, Goddi)*

Women felt “worn-out” while trying to manage these obligatory pressures in the context of growing pain. Women who have no help with agricultural or domestic work and bear the entire burden are worse off. Krapu who lives alone with her much older husband complained:

*You have seen how far our water is. My knees are so badly affected by “bai” – I have severe pain and swellings. I find it difficult to go up and down the hill. I feel incapacitated in even carrying small quantities of water. Even though every day I carry only a small utensil filled with water, but still I feel I have too much work burden (Krapu, 69 yrs, Brahmin Bunga).*

Saraswati echoed most old women’s problems when she said

*Since I have “bai”, I have difficulty in doing work. It has affected my mobility. I just have to keep sitting while doing work. It takes so much longer to finish each task and that tires me out. But my bones just can’t take it anymore. (Saraswati, 55 yrs, Lohar-dom, Birkatal)*

### **“Kamardard”: backaches**

Backs are another great source of pain. Backache affects both young and old, though the pain differs in intensity. Older women complain of constant severe pain, while the younger women say that the pain increased with work.

*Kavlo, described her “bai”- back as having severe nagging pain in her back and feeling of being drained out. She also felt that there was swelling on her back. She could hardly stand up; her whole body shivered. (Kavlo 40 yrs, Auji-dom, Bunga)*

Bending at work – whether in the field or cutting grass – is perceived to harm the back.

*It started from a back injury through a fall from the tree. After recovering a bit I carried on doing my routine jobs. It was the bending which hurt the most...cutting grass, harvesting.... my back really took a lot of pressure with regard to doing physical work. (Radha, 46 yrs, Rajput, Dawn)*

Though both *bai* and backache are not considered a “threatening state”, they are experienced as nagging hurdles, which render difficult the performance of daily tasks and responsibilities. Pains aggravate during peak agricultural seasons, when women often work upto 18 hours. Women identified field labour of long duration, particularly during monsoon as “bad phases” when they suffered more pain. However at the centre of their explanatory framework were the constraints of their work:

*Farming itself is laborious. At present there is not much work. The workload of women increases five times during monsoon leaving them with body ache, joint pains and fatigue. At that time uninterrupted “gurai” (weeding) has to be done. Our hands ache and we feel very fatigued. But we have to continue the work – there is no way out. Yesterday I threshed and grounded flour in the “chakki” (stone mill). Today my hands are paining. But I still have to go and cut grass. What will my cow eat otherwise? Women have so much work – their joints get finished – we all end up with “bai” (Guddi, 32 yrs, Auji-dom, Bunga)*

Rains bring an exceptionally heavy and long workload of hoeing, weeding, planting etc. that causes physical exhaustion and stress. Women are in the field from sunrise and often until dark. Work is unavoidable and food is less during this season. It is also a season when women are more prone to infection and sickness. However illness and incapacitation have to be avoided at all costs. Women thus continue to work despite ‘unbearable’ pain, or even if they suffer from diarrhoea or skin diseases. Women reported pressures to “keep going” under extremely difficult circumstances.

*When we keep doing this hard labour throughout the years ... all the time, it's bound to have some effect. But work has to be done. If we will not do the work, who else will do it? (Sundari, 55 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Thus the women’s descriptions of the relationship between body and social context calls out a complex representation of the nature of their occupation, the specific bodily movements the jobs required of them, their relationship to their various tasks and the way in which all these things had an impact on how they felt. What comes out strongly is that they have little room for manoeuvre in the deployment of their bodies in relation to work. In addition to the detailed description of the relationship between the “pain-morbidity” and the context of labour, their accounts were combined with the experience of not being able to stop, of having to go beyond one’s limits. Women protested and complained

explicitly about the kinds of intolerable conditions of work in which they were obliged to operate. But under the existing life conditions they were constrained, as work for them never really stopped.

### **“Kamzori”: Weakness**

Weakness (*kamzori*) is the second most strongly felt and reported health problem. Women would ask for *takhat ki dawa* – medicine to give strength. Women felt continuous fatigue – as if they were just dragging their bodies to function.

*I feel tired and drained out. Sometimes I feel I will not be able to stand up. My knees become weak. My whole body shivers. I feel feverish and have a nagging headache. At times my head hurts as if it will burst. I never feel like getting up in the morning. I simply drag myself. I wish I could just rest. (Kavlo, 39 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga )*

They routinely spoke of “incessant weakness” or feeling drained out. Few women also experience blackouts and fainting.

*I have led a life of near starvation and deprivation and done a tremendous amount of work. Toady I am weak, and suffer from joint pains. I think I have no blood in my body. Just two weeks back when I went to cut grass for my cows, I fainted in the forest. Two women from the village had to carry me back. (Krapu, 69 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Fever and headache aggravated these feelings. Women also complain of severe headache when they have to work long hours in the hot sun. They often describe their total body state as having fever in the bones viz. “*haddi ka bukhar*”. According to them this does not get recorded in the thermometer.

*I am tired and drained out. I sometimes feel giddy. I get this fever – it is “haddi ka bukhar”. My body is cold, but I am very hot inside. I feel hot air coming out of my ears. When I get this fever, I just don’t feel like even getting up. (Kamla, 48 yrs, Rajput, Dauru)*

The combination of fever and nagging headache, and a “drained-out” feeling was linked with laborious tasks. In particular, weeding and harvesting the crops or long walks into the forest and carrying head loads of fodder and fuel wood were reported as cause of this condition.

Older women attribute this condition to the inadequate food that they received as daughters-in-law, despite shouldering the heaviest burden.

*I feel weak and drained out. It's all the result of overwork and forced starvation I faced as a young buari. I got married at the age of 14. My mother-in-law was very strict and hard-hearted woman. She would make me do all the work except milking the cows. She feared I might drink the milk in the cattleshed itself. I worked for 18 – 20 hours a day. She would not give me food to eat or allow me to rest or even change out of the wet clothes. My poor health is the result of this kind of life. Today women get rest. In our time where we got any rest? Fields were many, animals many more. I remember even to fill my stomach I had to steal food. I used to hide "pindalo" (yam) in the "pinda" (cattlefeed) when it was being put to cook. When "pinda" used to get cooked, the "pindalo" also got cooked. I would hide and eat it in the cattleshed when I went to give the feed to the cattle. (Shakuntala, 65 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Several closely spaced pregnancies and deliveries are also seen to create conditions of chronic weakness by the older women.

*My body has become so weak because I had so many children. There is nothing to eat. I also had to do all the work. I definitely felt weak after giving birth to 10-12 children. Here work is enormous, diet is not sufficient and rest is minimal. Men do less work hence they are healthy. Bearing children, having nothing to eat and working endlessly I have become weak and feel my body has dried up. There is no blood in my body now. (Jasla, 75 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

Women further associate their weakness with "khood ki kami" an outcome of frequent childbearing and poor diet. To me as a researcher, anaemia seemed evident in their pale face, eyes, nails and skin and they had very low haemoglobin levels.

Majority of women appear to be undernourished, thin and having less body fat. As the earlier chapter has shown, women experience scarcity of food and poor diet even during pregnancy and lactation. Bodily stress and breast-feeding usually worsens conditions of weakness. Poorer women in particular suffer from ill health and malnutrition than the men. Thin and frail Kamla's case described in the previous chapter tells the story of most poor women's nutritional state.

## The Accident Risk and Injuries

The close association between environment, work and gender is again brought out forcefully by reviewing cases of accidents in the village. Accidental hazards are high, resulting from working atop trees and walking with headloads over treacherous mountain terrain. Women frequently reported accidents while performing their work responsibilities. Mostly they alone are victims, since they traverse long distances and encounter risks while collecting fodder, firewood and water. Accidents that commonly occur are slips and falls from trees, rocks etc. or attacks by wild animals in the forest like bear or *baghs* (panther) etc. Women are also bitten by snakes while cutting grass.

Our household survey revealed twenty-four accident cases in the two villages. Of these twenty were females (see Appendix A8.1). Eight women fell from the tree while lopping wood, three fell off a cliff while collecting fodder, and another eight were bitten by snakes when cutting grass or weeding in the fields. One had died in a road accident

Many women's bodies are permanently scarred due to these accidents. The medical officer at the PHC, Yamkeshwar concurred that accidental injuries and deaths of children and men are fewer than those of women. Moreover since medical aid is not available immediately, the injury worsens and women may never completely recover. Susheela's case reveals the general picture

*“Around 10 years back I fell from a tree and seriously injured my back. I was admitted in Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi (where my husband lived) for four-five weeks. I was told that my back had got injured and I must not perform heavy work or carry loads. After staying in Delhi for 3-4 months, I returned to Bunga. All this while my kin in the village had supported my family. Now I had to return to fend for myself. Life in village did not permit me the luxury to heed to the doctor's advice. I resumed my daily chores- my back did not create trouble immediately. But after a month or so I started getting continuous pains. I went to Delhi again to a government dispensary and collected some medicine. But I did not get any relief. Later on insistence of my elder son, I also went to a private nursing home in Rishikesh. The doctor gave me injection for strength, few tablets and asked me to take rest and nourishing food”. Susheela returned to her village and inspite of being aware of the doctor's recommendation, she went back to performing strenuous agricultural, animal husbandry and domestic tasks. “What else to do. If I don't work my children and my animals will starve”. Pain in the*

*back and feeling weak are states that Susheela has learnt to live with. (Susheela, 42 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Poor dom women who suffer accidents and incapacitation may face serious problems of daily livelihood. Saraswati's accident put an end to the prospect of securing the daily *dadwar*.

*Eight months back I fell down while collecting some firewood, injuring my hip. I have not been able to resume my rounds with my husband who drums while I collect the "dadwar". With difficulty I manage to walk small distances. I am waiting for my death. I do not even look forward to my sons' visit "If they come what will they do? They will give us few rupees and then leave. That's all." (Saraswati-2, 75 yrs, Dom, Birkatal)*

Saraswati appears permanently disabled and handicapped as far as many of the female responsibilities are concerned. She is helpless and dependent on her husband and she feels miserable as he even fetches water! Saraswati manages to take care of domestic work within the home. She prays for death to relieve her of the pain and misery of such a life. Many such women are left at the mercy of their family or villagers for their basic requirements, causing not only physical but immense mental and emotional suffering.

### **Stomach Disorders And Related Illnesses**

Stomach disorders and infections appeared to be rampant among women. Complaints of stomach-aches, along with indigestion, loss of appetite and dizziness are frequent. These greatly affect their functioning and undoubtedly exacerbate their overall conditions of weakness and under-nourishment. "Inability to digest much food" or "not feeling hungry" (*khana hajam nahi hota* or *bhukh nahi lagti*) was a complaint commonly voiced by older women. Goli Devi often said

*I don't feel like eating. Even after eating a little I feel I have eaten too much. Food does not get digested properly. I have severe diarrhoea on most days. Earlier I used to eat a lot but now I can't eat. Because of not eating I feel this weakness has come. (Goli, 62 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

These symptoms may be associated with anaemic conditions, where due to a reduced oxidation of the body, there is a tendency to lose appetite. Or it could be a manifestation of long standing infections.

Many women like Kavlo have been experiencing symptoms of severe stomach pain. They describe it as “gola” or a ball in the stomach. Women believe lifting heavy weights causes this problem.

*Besides finishing my joints and back, lifting weights has caused me severe pain in my stomach. I feel as if there is a “gola’ in my stomach, which sometimes rises up my chest. When I eat something hot or when I climb a steep hill with a big load on my head, I get a burning sensation in my stomach and severe pain. I went to a knowledgeable woman in Goddi who gave me some “jaribooti” (herbs) to grind and drink in hot water. I have not still got relief. I intend to go to the doctor in Binak for medicines now. (Kavlo, 40yrs, Auji- dom, Bunga)*

This again may be another case of long standing ulcer or gastric infection. But since there is no diagnosis, we cannot medically define her illness.

Large numbers of village women routinely suffer from stomach pain, diarrhoea, dysentery and gastric problems. These infections possibly water-borne in nature are a reflection of environmental conditions. The village largely does not have a supply of piped drinking water and hence have to rely on untreated natural water sources for drinking purpose. Most women stated that seasonal diarrhoea and blood dysentery (*kaath*) aggravated in summer months when the regular water supply dried up. People then were forced to use stagnant water sources or a small creek where the water was even dirtier. Sanitary conditions aggravate the situation. In the villages latrines are almost non-existent. The widespread habit of defecating in the open is perhaps the main cause of these ailments. Villages are situated on ridges and hilltops, so the run-off during the rainy season serves as natural disposal for excreta. This pollutes the natural water sources in the valleys and creates environments of greater exposure to infections.

### **Eye Ailments, ‘Shawas Ki Bimari’ And Skin Infections**

Visual disturbances especially “weak eyes”, “ watering eyes ” and “pain in eyes” are conditions that aggravate for women over forty. Cooking exposes women to high levels of smoke as the ‘*chulha*’ does not have a chimney and hence smoke stays in the kitchen. The situation is worse in the monsoons when wet wood is used in these open ‘*chulhas*’. In the winter season, people sleep in rooms with burning logs. This is no less hazardous to health. Women have not even heard of smokeless ‘*chulhas*’. Indeed most find no

association between the smoke and their eyes problems. On the contrary almost all women feel that smoke serves a positive function of keeping termites, woodborers and other pest out of their kitchens! Doctors at the PHC have noted vitamin A deficiency.

Older women suffer from a condition commonly called *shawas ki bimari* (breathlessness). Several women report getting breathless while walking and this condition worsens when they have to walk long distances, carry weights or climb to greater heights.

*I suffer from "shawas" and "bai" both. My joints get swollen and cause a lot of pain and I feel breathless doing any work. Even if I walk a little I pant. I cannot even climb 100 metres. Now I get very breathless climbing to Mohanchatty. Breathlessness and "bai" together makes this trip unbearable. (Susheela, 60 yrs, Brahmin, Birkatal)*

Chronic illnesses like "shawas" are clearly a part of a complex chain of cause and effect connecting the women's bodies to their circumstances. These conditions may also be related to the fatigue and strain involved in carrying heavy loads in the mountainous terrain and cooking on 'chulhas' in closed poorly ventilated kitchens etc.

Another common complaint is of skin infection. Rashes, boils, ulcers and sores (*daad, khujli, phoora*) afflict most women. Paucity of water and absence of bathrooms preclude women's attention to personal hygiene. Women have to wait until late night to bathe in order to ensure privacy. Despite being relatively harmless, skin infections render women's life further uncomfortable and miserable.

Other than these there are persistent gynaecological problems that women have learnt to live with, which have already been discussed in the previous chapter.

The foregoing description thus shows how the experiences of illness are embedded in everyday life. These illnesses relate to various components of daily life, in terms of both their significance and consequences. Women's narratives have vividly revealed how the vicious circle of overwork – poor nutrition – ill health actually operates. Equally importantly is revealed how ill-health itself constitutes a debilitating condition of women's work.



## What Does Being Healthy Mean

Like illnesses, the women's conceptions of health too are borne out of traditional worldviews, diffusion of new knowledge and their experiences of illness and existing health services. Moreover women's culturally and socially determined roles, status and responsibilities in Garhwali society influence the way their health is conceptualised. "What does being healthy mean to you" yielded a range of responses.

- Being fit: "Can lift a lot of burden" "able to do all required work", "able to move freely", "does not get tired fast", "can do hard work".
- Not being ill: "does not fall sick", "is without diseases", "no disease can affect the body", "does not have any form of pain", "does not suffer from any big disease"
- Feeling well: "does not have worries" "have no tension", "does not have any anxiety".
- Looking well: "is fat", "has fat healthy body" "is fat and strong", "good strong body".
- Is not weak: "can do everything that a strong woman must do", "can fulfil womanly roles"
- Other: "one whose house is full", "one whose whole family is with him/her", "has a happy life with husband and children", "one who has no greed",

Though the absence of illness or disease was considered necessary to remain healthy, but the most predominant conceptions referred to the functional capacity of woman, and to a positive emotional and physical state (feeling and looking well). "A healthy woman is one who has no illness," emphasised the notion of an illness-free state. Given women's work context and the labour intensive agricultural economy, it is hardly surprising that dimensions of "work" and responsibility in particular capacities of fulfilling them entered women's definitions of health. "Being free of worry," reflected the importance of positive emotional and mental state. In addition, being healthy was viewed as a social obligation and those who could not live up this were viewed as failures. Illness is perceived as a

hurdle in fulfilling socio-cultural expectations. Prerequisites of good health were also related to wealth and good harmonious family relations.

Thus women's conception of health is linked to their day-to-day life and work. Since in this society women bear the primary responsibility and burden of agricultural, animal and domestic work, health is therefore mainly conceived in terms of their work responsibilities and is significantly influenced women's perception of their own health status. Poor health is experienced as a major problem and *bimari* troubled women primarily as a deterrent to work. Such a conception of health placed more emphasis on the utilitarian/ instrumental aspect of health i.e. the ability to perform necessary and required tasks rather than their emotional, social and physical well-being that was mentioned, but less frequently. Women expressed a genuine concern/ desire for good health and viewed it in the light of their constraints of daily life.

In conclusion we can say that women constantly related the specific features of their work circumstances and overall life to health, providing descriptions of the past and present as the contexts for making sense of their symptoms. What is striking is the strong perception of relationship between ailments and work, lack of rest/food and pressures of work. Women make references to the various losses as a result of life of hardship. Lack of proper and adequate food, lack of rest and subsequently slow loss of health following several poorly spaced pregnancies and long periods of lactation are well connected in women's accounts.

Almost all women of the two villages suffer from a combination of these health problems. While responses of chronic illnesses/ problems are most prevalent and uniformly distributed across most women, it is the older who suffer more acutely. In the context of the women's lives, we found that several of these chronic health problems set in early becoming extremely severe and debilitating as life progresses. However as our narratives have shown among the younger age group, women from economically poorer households, especially the Dom (like Jasla, Saraswati, Kamla, Guddi, Kavlo) suffer more frequently and acutely. The range of problems that they endure is also much wider and serious. The constant exertion and heavy work that they carry out, along with their poor

nutritional status has a deleterious effect making them more weak and prone to illness. No significant difference in health conditions of migrant and non-migrant women is visible as both are subject to economic hardship, work pressures and gender discrimination with only marginal variation. It is only among the better off migrant households that younger women claim to be better cared for and healthy.

## **WOMEN'S WORTH AND THEIR MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL STATES**

The multiple burdens of work, gender discrimination in food and care, economic deterioration and poor physical health has a tremendous toll on women's mental and emotional states. Living within large patriarchal joint family, the oldest women seem to have borne the brunt of these compounded effects. Women such as Krapu, Jasla, Saraswati and Susheela whose plight we have described in the chapters on work and reproductive health, also testify as stark examples of emotional trauma and mental oppression.

*In my younger days my life was very hard. Not only had I to bear up physical violence; I used to be emotionally traumatised. In my natal home I had a stepmother who ill-treated me. In my husband's home too I had a step-mother-in-law who was also very cruel and treated me badly. She would make me do all the work. Sometimes while working in the fields I would fall asleep in exhaustion. Then my father-in-law and mother-in-law would beat me. My husband too was very cruel. He was like a wild animal. He would beat me and ill-treat me. I was frightened of his sight. When they all beat me a lot I would run away to Magatha village (natal home). There my sister-in-laws use to beat me up. I use to return back to my husband's place. I would get up at four. I would work more than even machines can run, but I was treated worse than animals. If I slackened, I was beaten. Sometimes I was beaten for no reason. At times my whole body was black and blue – one could not even find a small patch of normal skin. I never slept before 12 o'clock; I never rested in the daytime. My back, legs and hands ached. I never ate a full stomach. No wonder I am in such a condition of health today. Even now sitting here I can feel all pain they have caused me. After my children grew up, violence ebbed, though it did not come to a complete halt. When we separated from our in-laws, my husband did not get his due share. Our land was taken away by in-laws. Life was difficult still. We use to sleep on the floor. Had only salt and roti to eat. My husband did not earn well and whatever he earned he spent on drinking. I had to raise 9 children. Such hardships, lack of food, several conceptions and so much tension must be the cause of my poor health today. Today by God's grace we have enough to eat but now I am unable to eat. I don't feel hungry. I find it difficult to digest food. (Susheela, 62 yrs, Brahmin, Birkatal)*

Children's deaths are the cause of permanent inconsolable emotional distress, which is suggestive of deep underlying depression and suffering in the form of 'nerves'. Deaths of young children have left deep emotional scars.

*I have a lot of palpitations. Whenever I feel very restless – I go out and sit near the entrance of the house. My heart starts to palpitate especially at night when every one is asleep, its dark and very quiet. My dead (murdered) son's memory disturbs me. Today he would have been 24 years old. (Susheela, 52 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Women's infertility continues to be another key source of mental agony and harassment. Young women are tormented today, as were the old ones in their younger days. Krapi, now aged 69, finds it difficult even today to come to terms with her emotional trauma and breaks down as she recalls the story of her ill treatment:

*I was not able to save my children after they were born. I don't know why my fate was such, but they would die. My first-born was a son who died in few hours of being born. The next was still born. When my third son died during birth, my mother in law got so angry with me that she said, "Let her die too". My heart was bleeding. But she did not see my pain. They abused me, beat me and sent me home. There we did "chal pooja" to calm the "dosh". After that I gave birth to two children – a boy and a girl. I still remember the pain and anxiety my in-laws caused me. I also still think of my dead children and my eyes become wet. Life was very hard. (Krapi, 69 years, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Lakshmi's narration reveals that the stigma attached to childlessness continues to be strong and evokes harsh behaviour on the part of the in-laws.

*I was married at age of 20. For 2-3 years I could not conceive. That became a point of conflict between my conjugal family and me. My mother in law stopped talking to me, but to other village women she would call me names. Even my husband got angry with me. I became very tense. They sent word to my father. Finally I was sent home and there my natal family performed some "dosh puja" but to no avail. Two years later I had my first child who was born with many big boils on his head. He died in 3-4 days. The next child was a stillbirth. My in-laws got very angry. This time I was even subtly denied food. Now my natal family was also worried. They again did "chal puja" as suggested by a reputed bakki. They also performed "jhar phunk". The Bakki told them that because of some "dosh", both the children died and this was essential. But on behest of my brother who was living in Rishikesh, I was also taken there for treatment. One and a half-year later, I delivered a healthy girl. Thereafter I gave birth to two more sons. Today I am bitter about my life. I worked hard in my in-laws house. Even though they also regarded me as a good worker, I was always treated as an outsider*

*because I had so much difficulty with having children. I feel neither my in-laws, nor my husband even paid attention to my health or tried to understand my tensions or sorrow. They had no sympathy with my grief. (Lakshmi, 37 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Women who are unable to conceive undergo a number of anxieties and fears. Apart from their own agony of remaining childless, they fear in-law harassment and some fear that their husbands might marry again. This is taken as a personal humiliation.

In the words of Maheshwari:

*I got married into a rich farming household at the age of 15, but for 8-9 years I could not conceive. My parents performed all kinds of dosh pujas, but to no avail. In the 9<sup>th</sup> year I gave birth to a girl child who died in infancy (4 months). She had high fever and loose motion and she died. My in-laws were very angry. When I could not conceive again for two years, they got their son married to another woman. I lived a miserable life with a "saut" (Maheshwari, 53 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Both miscarriages and deaths of infants caused untold suffering. Women struggle with their own sorrow. In-laws are no source of succour or support; rather the women are blamed for premature infant loss and may be ill-treated for this mistake.

*Out of the 13 children I gave birth to, five children died in infancy, of which four were sons. I was 14 years old when I had my first child. When I had my first child he died immediately. What happened and how it happened, about this my mother-in-law alone knows. At the age of 15, I became pregnant for the second time. He also died after delivery. At the age of 16, I became pregnant for the third time. He died after 5-6 months. After this at the age of 23 I had given birth to a girl and she also died when she was one month old because of cold. Then I had a son from my second husband who died in two three day's time. After birth he kept crying for 1-2 days and next day at 9 o'clock in the morning he passed away. Deaths caused me a lot of pain. It angered my conjugal family. Each time I was pregnant I was afraid. Each death was followed by more ill treatment. (Saraswati, 55 yrs, Lohar-Dom, Birkatal.)*

Physical abuse by in-laws has relatively reduced today, but there are still cases of wife abuse. Thirty-eight year old Pushpa's is a typical case. She is married to a migrant car mechanic who is an alcoholic and wife beater.

*After my marriage I was living with my husband in Faridabad where he was working in a garage. I delivered three of my children also there. At that time my husband was earning properly and I stayed with him there. Six months after my*

*third delivery, my husband said that he is going abroad to work and therefore he left the children and me in the village. But soon he returned to the village – not only he did not go abroad, he also lost his job in Faridabad. He turned into a drunkard, left the family and started living in Haridwar where he would on and off pick up a job at some garage. For more than ten years now I have been living with my 88-year-old father-in-law, somehow seeking out a living in the village. My husband comes once a month, usually very drunk. He fights and beats me up. Because of his beating I have been hurt many times. I have often bled profusely, sometimes from the nose, sometimes from the head. Many times I have severely hurt my back. When his drunkenness is over, he apologises to me. But what is its use. I fear his coming. Now I am married for almost twenty years. But I have spent most of my life in sadness and in pain. Five years back I started having “joint- bai” and my back started to hurt. But worst was when one day after chopping wood I had severe chest pain. I thought I would faint. After that many times I get this pain. I feel tense and my heart feels heavy. I started the rounds of doctors in Diuli and even few in Rishikesh. So far I have been to all doctors nearby and they have not been able to find out what my problem is. (Pushpa, 38 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Middle-aged group of women also gave vent to the mental stresses and strains inflicted by husbands and in-laws though the severity seems to have declined with early break-up of families and male migration. Their lives are also beset by several new worries and tensions. Shortage of food, children's especially boys education and economic future in a declining economy, domestic isolation and loneliness, sicknesses of children, over work caused by new agricultural tasks including the tiresome management of hired male field labour are problems that cause a lot of mental stress. Deaths of young children have left deep emotional scars.

The poorer and low caste women amongst them are plagued by family hunger, insecurity of wage labour and income and about feeding the children. The struggle is exhausting physically and emotionally. The experiences may instil in the women a sense of despair and desperation, which may even make them nostalgic about the older times when work at least carried a minimal compensation of a modicum of food security. Overall, the economic hardship, instability and insecurity of contemporary times are hardly conducive to mental peace.

As we saw in the earlier section women express their health problems in very general terms relating to pain (“*dukh-dard*”/ “*dukh-pira*”), discomfort (“*pareshani*”) to a convey

sense of physical ill-being that also encompasses their psychological/mental state and pain. Women stated that this combined suffering is reflected in symptoms of 'uneasiness', 'heart beating fast' and 'anxiety attacks' that they often face. Thus *dukkh-pira* may be seen as a cultural idiom, which reflects the relationship between women's material-social circumstances and their construction of health. Such articulation suggests that women perceive their illness as sometimes related to causes lying outside the purely physiological domain.

Women's narratives about their work and the new division of labour are full of the multiple and new kinds of stresses that they have to undergo. Physical strain, social stress, increased levels of responsibility, growing workload, pressures of time, lack of resources, violence, chronic poor health and dwindling capacities have a cumulative impact that is physically and mentally stultifying. They express incapacity and helplessness to change their situation. Statements such as "we are nobody", "nothing is in our hands", "there is no one to share our trouble", "we have to bear all responsibility alone", highlight the stress and strain felt in relation to difficult situation. They reflect perceptions of women's declining value in the society and 'unequal worth' in the family.

Women from migrant households may face an acute sense of 'being alone' and a 'sense of increased responsibility'. Equally however, there were wives who also perceived a sense of relief that they were free of wife abuse and control. Non-migrant household women face threat of both mental and a continuing physical violence. Violence, which involves severe 'battering', is not rampant, but neither is domestic violence uncommon. The situation has changed from collective violence of in laws to beating by the husband alone. While the immediately battered women's wounds may be only too visible, the long-term insidious effects of violence are manifested in women's expressions of 'anxiety', 'helplessness', 'unhappiness' and 'stress'.

In the context of change some women suffer complex psychological effects. For instance city-bred Shakuntala who wished hard to get out of the stranglehold of traditional rural life, in which she was caught, could never reconcile to her confinement. This has caused

her great mental and emotional distress, damaged her self-image besides ruining her physical health.

*I had spent my childhood in Delhi and came to live in the village only after marriage. Despite pleading to my parents they married me into a Brahmin family living in a village. Being city bred, and educated (class 8 pass) I could never adjust to life in the village. Though my in-laws and my husband were very nice to me, their poverty disturbed me. I was also expected to work a lot – if I got tired and was unable to work everyone would taunt me. I did not conceive for many years after my wedding. I had two spontaneous abortions. My mother-in-law use to say “neither is she good at any work, nor does she have good fate”. But after many “dosh puja” that were performed in my natal village I conceived. I gave birth to six children. But I could never really adjust to working in the village. Even today I know most women mock at me. They tell my husband that why does he feed me as I do not do any work? It hurts me very much. No one sympathises with me or tries to understand my pain. As a child I was beautiful and healthy and never fell sick. Throughout my married life I did not keep good health. I did not have any serious health problem, but I was always unwell. I would have severe headache, felt weak, almost always had fever. I went to several doctors, took all kinds of medicine, even went to the Bakki and did “devi poojan”. But I could never really feel well and healthy. Since last few years I have chest pain and acidity. I have poor appetite and flatulence. Around eight months back I went to a Charity Hospital in Rishikesh and got admitted there for three days. Doctors could not diagnose my condition, so I returned after taking few “taaquat ke injections” and medicine. On some days I am very down – then I just lie huddled in my home throughout the day. I cannot even get up to have my food. (Shakuntala, 50 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

If certain women suffer as some do, the cumulative impact of several types of distresses is devastating. However it is important to state that the coping capacities of women are very high and that obvious psychiatric health problems were not evident. Yet the women reveal immense stress apparent from enormous demands for aspirins for headaches during the researcher’s stay. This high level of stress and anxiety often gets translated into bitterness, resentment, anger, sadness, depression and helplessness that found no space for expression in their social existence.

### **Local Perception Of Changing “Health Risks”, Illness And Dependency**

Significantly the concerns about the changing quality of environment, new health risks and shifting vulnerabilities in the village were central to the narratives provided by women. While women’s interpretations centred on individuals and families negotiating



for a way of life in an environment threatened by various factors, they also addressed larger concerns of health and social change. They drew connections between the various aspects of their rapidly changing reality and several causal factors. Women's understanding of health risks thus were broad, drawing from their own worries and struggles to sustain families in a tenuous environment and under shifting and changing conditions of production and control of and access to resources.

Local accounts of health trends are undergoing subtle redefinition as women draw comparisons between the past and present situation. All agreed that there is a higher standard of living, increased educational levels and easier access to market products, because of improved transportation networks. Even medical facilities are now more accessible and medicines can be purchased from local shops in Rishikesh. Yet, there is a strong expression of cynicism with regard to impacts of these larger changes on their long-term health and well-being. 85 years old Darshini commented:

*Roads are there. There are schools. We even have electricity and many new hospitals have opened up in Rishikesh. But then in the olden days there were not so many diseases. Those days were good. No doubt there was no "angrezi dawai" (allopathic medicines) or "doctors", but there weren't so many diseases. Now there are plenty of diseases, many very fatal – and there are plenty of drugs. Now I hear there is some nurse from the government hospital who goes door-to-door, weighing and examining babies! She also carries medicines for treatment and distributes them. It's strange but that with so many doctors, drugs and hospitals – we still have so many diseases spreading rapidly. (Darshini, 85 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Changes in local diet brought about by the encroachment of the market are looked upon as a causative factor of poor health. Today dalda and vegetable oil brought from the shop is used as substitute to "ghee" (clarified butter) and local mustard oil. Tea and biscuits are now commonly consumed and served. Older people regret not having enough mandua, jhangora and home-grown wheat and rice. Women have various opinions about changes in health and disease. Several women felt that locally grown food was healthy and full of strength ("taquatwar"). Contrasting with locally grown food, grains and spices purchased in the "bazaar" (market) are commonly perceived as inferior in strength and nutritional value. Imported wheat and flour, pulses, rice called "dukaan ka" (from the shop) were

deemed inferior. Shakhambari Devi spoke of these changes, which reflect attitudes about influence of rural dietary habits:

*In the past we ate everything that grew in our fields. We ate more of mandua than wheat flour, jhangora than rice. Our oil also came out of mustard from our fields. Many roots, leaves from the forest were a regular part of our diet. They possessed unique disease preventing qualities. We ate pure food. Today few women even buy powdered milk. Any case who can drink milk nowadays - most of us have black tea, and more and more tea only. (Shakhambari, 64 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Women also bemoaned greater consumption of and dependence upon market products because this compromised larger community values which discouraged buying and selling in the market. Thus tenuous circumstances and needs, which compelled bazaar purchase, were regrettably perceived as signifying the breakdown of traditional food security systems and associated with deteriorating household health.

While some regret the shortage of nutritious foods for household consumption, others look at local markets and easy access to food grains as a security available against seasonal scarcity which the many households earlier faced. The majority view however is expressed by Guddi:

*Before people lived off what they grew. They would store the grains for the following year. They would store all kinds of food grains and cereals. If say I did not have enough rice, but my neighbour did, then I would go to her house and trade some of my potatoes for her rice. These way things worked. No one went hungry. We all ate grains, vegetables, and pulses grown in our own village. But now we bring everything from the "dukaan" (shop). Then also there is shortage. What is strange is that this "bazaari" (from the market) food just sits in your stomach - you feel so heavy. And you may eat lots, but you will not have the strength that older people have. Look at Govardhani chachi - she must be above 80 years. But even today she can work longer, lift more weight than her young grand daughter-in-law. She has eaten good "khet ka khana" (from her own fields), while these young girls today just got dukaan ka. (Guddi, 32 yrs, Auji-Dom, Bunga)*

We observed that the outward and stated connections between deteriorating diets and food quality and poor health are indicators of deeper worries. Women are concerned and troubled by maintaining a certain quality of life and set of social and cultural values that their communities have lived by. Through these narratives women express their concern

about the nature of social and rural transformation and the fundamental changes it is bringing out in household status and standards of living.

## **DEALING WITH ILLNESS: WOMEN'S APPROACHES TO TREATMENT AND CARE**

In the context of their many sufferings and the availability and access to different types of treatment systems, we now examine how and when women define themselves as ill enough to seek treatment. Which symptoms do they perceive as demanding treatment? What kind of treatment do they opt for in what kinds of symptoms? What is their overall frame of reference while dealing with ill health? After a brief introduction to prevalent systems in their pure and hybrid forms, we move on to understanding women's contemporary conceptions and practices of treatment and care.

### **The Plurality Of Healers And Healing Systems In Present Times**

The first group of healers consisted of those who associated illnesses to the realm of supernatural - the *bakkis*, *jagris*, *tantrics*, *toonatotakas*, *jharphunck* and even *baman* (Brahmins) who performed "ritual actions". Next, there was a group of specialists who handled many diseases and everyday aches and pains. Their common explanation of causation grew from a humoral theory which symbolically connected "hot" and "cold" types of food and environmental exposures to subsequent illness. This included (i) specialist like *vaid*s who were generally exceptionally knowledgeable Brahmin and Rajput healers; (ii) *Dama* and *tala* healers (who used hot iron rod in a process which involved "firing by use of iron" in cases of strains, swelling and rheumatism); (iii) local herbalists and (iv) "*dai*" / "*byahs*" who intervened in abnormal cases of delivery particularly cases of displacement of the womb ("*pet dolna*") through skilful massaging. Moreover there were many older people in Bunga and Daurn especially the women, cutting across caste, who possessed an incredibly detailed practical knowledge of herbal remedies. This knowledge largely makes up the realm of domestic medicine.

In the early 1950s and 1960s, the Primary Health Centres (PHC), its dispensaries and sub-centres were the sole local sources of modern medicine. However this began to change with the state constructed motorable road links to Kotdwara and Rishikesh. This, along with the starting of bus services significantly increased the transportation access for

region. Private practitioners in Rishikesh, Kotdwara and other nearby towns could now be more easily accessed. These private service more than the government rural health care facilities provided direct biomedical treatment. Moreover the integration of these villages to cities has hastened the emergence of this new circuit of practitioners, through whom western medicine entered isolated villages such as Bunga and Daurn.

Further more in the decades of 1960s and 1970s a new group of practitioner popularly called “doctor” also made an entry into the existing plural medical system at the village level. These makeshift doctors (mostly untrained) have in the past several times rented room in village Magatha (*Pipal Dali*) and practised modern medicine for short durations. They were usually outsiders, with little known about their training, but they generally administrated allopathic drugs in treatment and made use of non-traditional means for treatment, more specifically of thermometer, stethoscope etc. in diagnosis. Their tablets (“*goli*”) and injections (“*sui*”) capsules, tonics etc. were popularly consumed medicines.

The villagers of Daurn and Bunga recalled having several such varieties of healers in their vicinity. Two *vaid*s lived in Bunga till three decades back. Nearby villages of Umrauli and Kheda Talla also had widely reputed (“*nami*”) *vaid*s. A villager from closeby Bijni village practised “*dama* and *tala*” treatment while an old Dom woman in Goddi was known to possess knowledge of local herbal remedies for several ailments. Villagers also recall a “*gaon ka doctor*” – a Bunga resident, who after working for several years in a Rishikesh clinic, returned to the village to practice. Till his death almost fifteen years ago, he reportedly practised a combination of allopathic and ayurveda. The doctor seems to have been very popular with villagers since he administered injections. But most popular today is a travelling doctor from Rishikesh.

*Dr. Rawat comes riding on his scooter to Bhirgukhal from Rishikesh on two fixed days. On the way he halts at the roadside bus stop of Binak and Pipal Dali. Patients or relatives who need to see him or buy medicine await him here on scheduled days. Seeing a crowd, the ‘doctor’ halts. He examines the patients and dispenses medicine. The medication is kept in a small vinyl suitcase. He also carries also has another bag full of bright yellow-red and red-black antibiotic pills. The pills are usually sold separately and at reasonable price though credits are also extended. On request, and after due negotiations of the fee, the doctor may oblige to trek to the village for a home visit. His charges are Rs. 150/- per*

*visit. Earlier posted at the Mohanchatty dispensary, the doctor is now on a transfer. He claims to have started this mode of operation in response to the felt need of the people and has practised his trade in this manner for the last three years. He is popular, despite being expensive and ill tempered and is well regarded for his experience and effective treatment. He has a guaranteed market in the region with almost every villager having sought his treatment, sometimes at any demanded price. Each trip along this route is estimated to fetch him two to three thousand rupees.*

Thus both doctors and villagers easily intermixed biomedicine with other types of healing and even today there exists a plurality of medical system in use and practice.

### **Treating Illness: Women's Conceptions And Approaches**

Women's contemporary approaches to dealing with their illness reflect the existent plurality of treatment systems. While there is no fixed pattern followed by women, certain specific healers are preferred for certain conditions. For instance, women believe that for ailments like stomachache, boils, pain, swellings, fevers, cough only and rituals like *jhaad phoonk*, *doodh phool ki pooja*, and can be used. While some problems are thought to be amenable to direct treatment either with herbs (*jaaribootis*) and dietary restrictions (*perhez*) or with incantation by minor specialist, a class of specialists called *jharnewala* (practitioner of *jharna*, stroking or brushing), gifted *pandits*, and healers with *tala* and *dama* skills. This last group of healers usually treats afflictions characterised by some external, visible symptom such as sores or swelling (e.g. boils, scabies). They also treat "gout", upper and lower limb pain, mumps, headache, stomachache, sore eyes, snakebites and spider bite. All these practices are aimed at restoring the balance between the humours, through which it is believed that the illness will be "cut off from its roots".

In cases of illnesses being equally attributed to germ and not merely body humours, allopathic medicine may be combined with above stated types of treatments too. In fact only snakebite is believed to be cured by "*jharnewalas*" alone.

There are several afflictions which are perceived by women as symptoms of "*dosh*"<sup>1</sup>. These include conditions like recurrent or prolonged fever accompanied by convulsions and blood dysentery ("*kaath*"), measles ("*khasara*"), leprosy ("*kushta rog*"). Apart from

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<sup>1</sup> Afflictions by conditions associated with ghosts, supernatural beings, sorcery or black magic.

these, women include in this category certain conditions, many of which appear to be of a psychomatic nature such as sudden starting ("*jhapeta*"), shaking or crying incessantly, trembling, stammering, inability to talk etc. (skin rashes and boils ("*khaur*"). Where "*dosh*" is implicated as the cause, prescriptions for cure normally involve a ritual or a set of rituals. These are in the form of "paying fine", "making vows", "tying charms" etc. aimed at appeasing the infuriated supernatural force and dispelling its effects. The "*Baman*" or pandit<sup>2</sup> and "*bakki*"<sup>3</sup> are basically "diagnosticians" and prescribe sacrifice, rituals, trying charms or amulets as therapeutic modes. Women strongly believe that there is no way of curing a person of "*dosh*" except through the performance of spells, prayers and offerings. They also believe that western medicine is ineffective in such cases. As a form of preventive measure against the "*dosh*", a black spot is usually marked with "*kajal*" (lamp black) on children's foreheads. Special and expensive food items, particularly fruits and sweets, which are rarely available in village households and hence may be a cause of envy are never kept in view of visitors.

Things seem to be changing however as a result of the growing influence of modern medical ideas. In an increasing number of actual illness or disease cases, it is observed that *dosh* and *bimari* are often lumped as possible causes. The emergent, widely held belief is to first calm *dosh* and then only attempt treatment of the *bimari*. The persistence of the old system is evident in the view that a *dosh* may aggravate *bimari* but never vice-versa. It is increasingly common to find women too resorting to both allopathic medicines as well as to the *bakkis* and other traditional healers. Though many secretly question whether all illnesses are caused or cured by supernatural or magic, they cling on to supernatural when seeking cure. In general, women also vouch in unison about the efficacy of these methods.

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<sup>2</sup>To cure a person of evil eye *pandit* who has special knowledge of mantra is called to rid the afflicted of the effect of this evil eye. The *pandit* usually performs a small *pooja* called the *dudh phool ke pooja* where he chants some mantra over some sugar, and gives it to the patient to eat. The *pandit* may even spell charms and blow on ash and give the same to the victim to keep (called *rakhauli*). Some *pandits* may do the same with mustard seed and hand it to the afflicted to wear round the neck. Or sometimes he may chant mantra and give a black thread to be tied round as an amulet

<sup>3</sup>*Bakki* is also primarily a diagnostician. Villagers go with a handful of rice, turmeric and Rs.1,25 as offering to the *bakki*. With his innate powers he is able to diagnose the persons suffering and prescribes a "ritual action" ranging from private ritual like "*jagar*" to bigger rituals involving sacrifice, "*mantras*" (spells) and possessions ("*dhami*")

The treatment is seen as a matter for negotiation and for authoritative pronouncements, either by traditional healers or today increasingly by the “wonders” of modern medicine. At present what we observe is that there is a mixture of healing systems with an emergent preference for biomedicine in some illnesses. But most women resort to the full range of practitioners, depending on the nature and severity of illness.

While explanations are grounded in a range of material and supernatural factors it is divine intervention, which is finally believed to determine the eventual outcome.

*We can only say that God has caused the disease. We know overwork, poor diet due to scarcity are the causes for women's illness. Unhappiness also causes diseases. But it is our fate. God makes us ill and He can only cure us. (Saraswati, 55 yrs, Lohar-Dom, Birkatal)*

People in general have grown to be dependent on allopathic medicines. However, local villagers have to go out of the village even for basic medicines and basic services such as blood and urine tests. The PHC at Yamkeshwar or the SAD at Diuli is not the preferred choices. The state assigned resident physician (ayurvedic or allopathic) is almost never present at the PHC or at the Ayurvedic Dispensary at Binak. Months pass between the departure of one and the arrival of the next. Moreover the perceived level of care offered by the public health facilities is lower than the private. Thus those who can afford the higher fees and transportation costs prefer to attend private clinics at Rishikesh. No villager would venture to do so unless they have at least Rs. 200 on him or her. People are aware that the more advanced the medical treatment, the more money required.

The RMP in Duili village is the other available option. The costs are comparatively lower at Rs. 20 per head for transportation. RMPs charge between Rs. 25 and Rs. 40 to the patient per visit for the medication and injections that they provide. Besides lack of money compels villagers to turn to the local *bakki* or *vaid*. This medication is also not cheap, but payment can be made in kind (usually a chicken and some liquor).

A serious illness requiring hospitalisation would be a major setback for a common family. Even a series of short illnesses in a family push men to migration in order to meet the need for cash. For instance Damu who sustained severe internal injuries after a bus accident and had to be hospitalised. His wife was forced to sell all the cattle and even a

piece of land, to pay for medical costs incurred. Damu recovered, but they still have debts. He left the village for Haridwar where he works as a roadside photographer. His wife is engaged in working on others fields for a small amount of grains!

The popularity of “Dr. Rawat” mentioned earlier is a clear indication of people’s need for medical care. Because of the inaccessibility of PHC and its state of affairs, the ‘doctor’ need only wait on the roadside for patients to arrive. This successful entrepreneurial initiative in a hitherto neglected region must be linked to people’s practical efforts to access modern medicine. The researcher herself was flooded by requests for medicine and was compelled to respond notwithstanding the limitations of her knowledge.

As mentioned by Susheela and observed by us, most households keep their own stock of medicines and are hesitant to share this with others. As Sudeshi explained:

*I will not give any medicine to any one. One can be jailed if someone died of his or her medicine. Even if you give good medicine, some women blame us for giving wrong medicine. I also will not take medicines from anyone. It could be expired or it may have it own side-effects (Sudeshi, 30 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal).*

An old villager of Bunga Sohanlal *dadaji*, disburses medicines and also gives injections. He is not educated, but his uncle was once the village doctor. Sohanlalji feels he has some knowledge of medicines because of this association. Most villagers doubt his knowledge, but resort to his treatment when desperate.

Rishikesh market to this day remains the nearest important source for proprietary drugs the antibiotics, injections, etc. sold at the chemist. Today, small shops in Duili, Binak and Magatha sell routine medication along with other general merchandise. The routine stock consists of a range of painkillers, paracetamols, antihistamines and antacids like Crocin, Baralgon, Brufen, Lomotil, Saridon, Digene, Disprin, Coldarin, Vicks etc. which people purchase for self-treatment. The shopkeepers rarely have greater knowledge than their customers about the medical effects of these products. The transaction takes place with the tacit understanding that the customer purchases at his / her own risk. Villagers seem to be familiar with these medicines and confident about their usage. They freely bought and consumed the medicines without fear.



The medical pluralism, which we observe, may be interpreted as multiplicity of choice being available to women confronting ill health. However, as we shall see, a true choice or option seldom exists.

### **Gender Difference And Discrimination In Health Belief And Practice**

A “rational” account of good health has always existed in the village health culture. Thus women perceive good health to be secured and maintained by proper diet, proper behaviour, along with factors such as having proper morals, avoidance of prohibited environments and regulations of passion. It is also believed that women should take care not to allow their body to become hot or cold, wet or dry or indulge in any acts that might cause their families or themselves to be visited by disease. Villagers believe that God uses affliction for multitude of purposes-and women may be a preferred medium as they are more vulnerable to evil spirits than men. In particular, unmarried women, new brides, pregnant and postnatal women are said to be highly susceptible to the attack of evil spirit.

Recognising the gendered dimension of health belief and practice, elderly village women recall that death was a familiar and expected outcome of illness especially for women and infants. It was natural to think of death for oneself and ones children. If the well-being of the family large was seen to be threatened by an affliction (*dosh*), the family head would consult a “big healer”. For women they relied on herbal remedies procured from some local *vaidya* or performance of a small ritual. Thus health interventions are gender discriminations hinged on the differential perception of women’s health needs as compared to men or male children.

The situation began to change, around the eighties, when women who accompanied their migrant husbands for short durations were able to access modern health care and realise its benefits. For example Susheela now 52, went to Kanpur in the 1980s, was able to get treated for “white discharge” at the private doctor. Such cases however remained few and far between. Treatment too was sporadically availed, linked to women's short stays with their husbands.

Basic cultural attitudes, which view women's illnesses as hurdles in fulfilling duties, are slow to change. The woman is by and large expected to bear the discomfort and carry on "normally". Women are themselves unlikely to access medical care and often do so only when the illness becomes serious. They may not get adequate medical attention because they have less access to cash, or because they do not readily admit to being ill. They have too much work, or at times they feel shy to admit an illness. Moreover, a woman who keeps admitting to illness is often portrayed as a malingerer and lazy.

*Women generally do not seek any medical help till condition deteriorates. This is because no facility which is easily accessible. Going far involves expenses and money in scarce. Hence only when condition worsens usually they have to be taken to doctor. Moreover in earlier time and even now women are always overburdened. They carry on working despite small health complaints. Only when a woman feels incapacitated, or her suffering is unbearable and visible, is she taken for treatment. Even when she is herself responsible she avoids as long as she can. Health care involves cost and time and both are scarce for her - or so she believes. Money can be put to so many other uses and hence even now even if she can, she generally avoids going to a doctor. (Susheela, 52 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Some women like Sundari feel that older times were better from the point of view of accessing treatment. Vaidis were more easily available.

*In earlier times vaidis used to visit the village-hence people could seek their help. Nowadays no doctor of any kind comes into the village hence it's often impossible to get any treatment closeby. It is most difficult for women. Men go to the bazaar and to the town and it is easy for them to accommodate a visit to the doctor or buy medicine for themselves. Women are dependent on others to find some healer. (Sundari, 70 yrs Rajput, Daurn)*

'Health care' practice of village households follows a typical pattern:

*Most families keep some medicines at home - like for fever, cold and cough - crocin, painjon, baralgan, disprin, anacin. For minor ailments people take medicines on their own. They borrow it from each other too. People hesitate to share medicine, but in emergency they relent. If after 2-3 days, there is no improvement they attempt to visit the doctor (RMP) at Duili. Some who have more energy to travel will go to the doctor at Mohanchatty. Sometimes if the patient is very unwell and cannot walk, the doctor from Mohanchatty is called to the village. He is an ayurved who works at the ayurvedic dispensary there but gives "angrezi dawa" (allopathic medicine). Only in emergency villagers go to Rishikesh, Dehradoon or Delhi. But only those villagers went to Delhi who have some family member or relative staying there. The decision to go is dependent on*

*cost and very few women go. Even sick women can go if some one is ready to take them. They have to be carried to the roadside and then taken on a bus to the city. Rarely do women in this condition get taken. (Susheela, 52 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

For smaller ailments, particularly if they haven't taken too severe a form, women go to the ayurvedic dispensary at Pokharkhal to collect free government supply of ayurvedic drugs. The frequency of visit to this dispensary depends on whether it is manned by the appointed doctor. If he is available, villagers definitely frequent it. There is always the probability of getting some allopathic medicine. The compounder too dispenses a few allopathic medicines, on payment. Occasionally a few women also go till Magatha village (Pipal Dali) to procure medicines from the travelling doctor - Dr. Rawat. However men always outnumbered the women in the crowd awaiting Dr. Rawat's arrival.

Women revealed that each family spends a sizeable portion of its income on health care, as sickness is widely prevalent. There is always a chronic shortage of the drugs at the government health centres and the treatment provided is of poor quality. Many women have never themselves visited a doctor; their sons or husbands may get medicines for them based on symptoms descriptions. Only a few younger, educated women routinely attend a doctor's clinic. Women in general however do not use the government facility – ayurvedic or allopathic is not the preferred choice.

*The doctor is rarely always there even in the dispensary at Mohanchatty. We go all the way and return without seeing him. Due to these delays our health deteriorates. Then we are forced to go to Rishikesh which is so far away and is costly. But I feel its better to go to Rishikesh. Despite being a government dispensary, we have to incur a lot of expenditure even at Mohanchatty. If one clinic is closed in Rishikesh, many will be open. Spending a little more can save life atleast. (Sudeshi, 30 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Sharp and systematic gender discrimination exists in the provision of modern medical treatment to women. As against the men who look after their own health needs, most women are simultaneously dependent on as well as neglected by their husbands. In-laws focus on the health of men and children of the family, while women's health gets nil or last priority. The following two cases reveal the cruel extents of physical suffering and medical neglect that even very sick women must bear.

*Neither my in-laws, nor my husband paid any attention to my health. Now I have nowhere to go. I keep so unwell. I can barely see with my eyes. The "bai" has affected my joints. I have problem walking. My husband does not bother about me. Nor does my son. Till our village doctor was alive, he use to give me medicines and injections whenever I fell ill. In 1999 first time I saw a hospital when I had fallen severely ill. I had high fever for two weeks. I was vomiting and shaking. When my husband refused to take me to the hospital, I went on my own to Rani Pokri (near Jolly Grant) to my sister's place. There I got my treatment done at Jolly Hospital. But even before treatment was over, my husband came and brought me back to the village. He himself has no money for my treatment and when my sister was taking care of me, he forcibly brought me back (Krapu, 69 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

*Since the last 17-18 years I have had problem of white discharge. I did not have the courage to tell my mother-in-law about the problem. My husband is not bothered. I do not have enough information to go to hospitals in Rishikesh. I am not confident of doing it alone. In the nearby dispensaries there are no lady doctors. Even in my young days I have never gone anywhere. That is why I do not know anything. Mohanchatty is far and the path is winding and steep. It takes 2 hours to climb up and 2 and 1/2 hours to come down. Usually a patient has to spend approximately Rs. 100/- for his treatment on medicines alone there. Even this I cannot afford. (Maheshwari, 53 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

While Maheshwari is seldom taken to the doctor her husband Govardhan visits the doctor every week for treatment of "shawas ki bimari". Even for simple problems like cold, cough and fever he prefers to visit the doctor. He either goes to the private doctor at Duili, or Mohanchatty or even as far as Rishikesh. He has got his urine, blood examination and chest X-rays done several times in Rishikesh. By his own admission, he has consumed medicines worth Rs. 3000-4000.

Despite greater availability of cash and greater family expenditure on health care, especially in migrant households, first of all their women do not get much attention, leave alone equal access. Access to cash incomes is indirect through reliance on male kin. Secondly, there are strong social pressures that deter them from paying attention to their illness. Only when ill health reaches a level where they are absolutely unable to work, is some action taken.

*In 1998-99 Sakuntala needed hospitalisation and underwent two operations (probably uterine ulcer as apparent from her description). She was ill for almost a year. As during that year the family were unable to cultivate at all, her husband migrated for work just to earn enough for buying food grains. They borrowed*

*money to pay the hospital charges and large debts are still outstanding. Despite her difficulties however, Shakuntala does not evoke much sympathy from other women in her neighbourhood. She is considered lazy and not a good homemaker because of her frequent complaints of illness. She is mocked for not putting in enough work on the fields and at home. (Shakuntala, 50 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Only in extreme illness is a woman worthy of attention. Even when their lives are in danger as was Sunanda's, it is not easy for women to claim treatment. Natal family members, parents or brothers may come to women's rescue. Such family support often proves crucial to women's health and their very life.

*As a young bride who suffered during a difficult pregnancy and delivered a dead child several hours later, Sunanda was lucky enough to convalesce at her natal home. For her second delivery her in-laws did not consider it necessary to take precaution by reducing her agricultural work. She was not taken to a doctor either when she felt unwell. She became seriously ill on a visit to her natal family. Prompt action by her family members saved her life. However her second child too did not survive. Her husband's family not only never offered to pay the medical expenses but also complained bitterly that Sunanda's parents had acted hastily and failed to consult them in the matter. They thus blamed the parents for the loss of the child. (Sunanda, 35 yrs, Rajput, Birkatal)*

Munni's story throws up the poignant contrast of the treatment received at natal and conjugal homes. Munni's brother escorted his sister to the doctor and also bore the medical expense.

*I married Roshanlal at the age of 15. It was a big extended family with large fields, many domestic animals. I arrived in the family and immediately got drawn in its endless work. For six years I did not conceive. I was sick. My back use to hurt severely. My in-laws use to curse and ill-treat me. On hearing about my plight, my brother called me to Kotdwara. There they did "devi poojan" and "dosh pooja" and my brother also got me treated for 3 months in the government hospital. But I still did not conceive on returning. Now my mother- in-law got very angry. I was sent back to Kotdwara. I had a small operation. Then my brother came to drop me back. Then after one year I had a son. After that I had 5 more children with a gap of two years between them. But after each delivery I felt very weak. I could not eat any food. Weakness crept in my body.*

*After 6 months of my third delivery I fell very sick. I could not make out whether it was day or night. My chest use to pain severely. When the pain came I became almost lifeless and I would fall anywhere writhing in pain. If I were in the field or forest, I would just fall there. My nephew visited me. Seeing my state he said, "You will die if you remain without treatment in the village." My father-in-law was a kind man. He had been trying to get me treated by local vaidis and also by*

*doing some "dosh pooja" but that was not helping. On behest of my nephew he took me to his daughter's place called Haripur. There it was diagnosed that I had severe jaundice. I was so weak that I could not even stand. I would just fall unconscious. On hearing about my bad condition my brother came to see me. He took me with him and got me treated from a Vaid in Dehradoon. I stayed there for a month till I felt better. My brother has really helped me. If it were not for him I would be dead long ago. (Munni, 48 yrs, Brahmin, Bunga)*

Phuphu is a woman who was divorced because of her ill health. Her husband's family refused to bear the costs of her treatment and also provide subsistence to a sick woman. Divorce was the punishment she received for falling sick and being incapable of work.

*Phuphu was compelled to leave her husband. He re-married on the excuse that she was always falling ill and was unable to work hard enough. She was sent back to her aging parents. Today Phuphu's son has grown up and has migrated to Delhi where he has set up an independent household. Since then Phuphu has gone twice to Delhi – once for a gall bladder operation and once for hysterectomy. Her fortunes have now changed. (Phuphu, 43 yrs, Brahmin Bunga)*

Women, who have sons in a city may have hopes of treatment, often the best possible under the circumstances. Sons take their mothers to private doctors or to the big hospitals, meet the cost of treatment, and house them till they recover.

Thus we find that while there is definite gender discrimination in access to health care, women are accessing both allopathic doctors and traditional healers. Also women's overall preference for modern medicine suggests an erosion of faith in the total effectiveness of traditional treatment. Gradually modern medical treatment has been incorporated into their lives and is often accessed along with indigenous healing methods.

To conclude, the negative association between women's lives, work and health is deeply embedded within the women's economic and cultural life in this region. Thus many of the physical, somatic and psychological disorders are a product of this association. Women's illness narratives brought out implicitly or explicitly the perceived links between work, environment, food and socio-economic locations and the sufferings of illnesses. The most significant causes perceived by women were environmental damage, under or malnutrition, quantum and conditions of their work, numerous pregnancies and deliveries and even the supernatural, which cut across major types of illnesses suffered.

Women's explanations of illnesses also reinforce the interplay of these factors which influenced health seeking in complex ways.

While there is undoubtedly perceptible gender discrimination in access to health care, women within the existing constraints attempt to avail both indigenous and modern cures. Hence while modern medical treatment has been included in the treatment seeking practice, it bears emphasis that biomedicine has not displaced or subverted the local healing system. It still has not replaced the work of religious healers, *bakkis*, *vaidis* etc. It has however, transformed local patterns of help-seeking and healing. Biomedicine is thus diffused across the plural healing system, but without subordinating traditional healing to its hegemonic control.

**Chapter IX**

**DYNAMICS OF GARHWALI WOMEN'S  
HEALTH: A DISCUSSION**

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We return now to the basic issues and questions raised at the outset of the study with a view to provide some answers to issues of women's status and work in a subsistence economy of a degraded ecosystem where male migration has in general provided only a semblance of economic compensation. We then consider their implications for women's health. The discussion is organised in five broad sections. The first highlights the character of the transformation in Garhwali subsistence economy under the impact of the macro forces of colonial and nationalist metropolist agendas of exploitation of land, people and forests. It shows how this destruction caused the expulsion of labour power to urban cheap labour markets and produced the phenomenon of migrant labour. The second recapitulates the key changes in the village economy. The third looks at the changing forms of work participation of women and of shifts in gender division of labour. It discusses their implications and meanings for women's changing position in Garhwali society and culture. The fourth gathers together the multiple insights into women's health situation drawing links between production and reproduction and their manifestation in problems of women's health. Finally, in conclusion, explaining women's work, health and overall position and status, we attempt to decipher the links between macro social transformation and micro-realities of women's lives.

### **Hill Economy: From Subsistence To Migration**

From a subsistence economy based on a close link between ecology and topography of the mountainous terrain on the one hand and peasant economy involving the activities of agricultural cultivation, animal husbandry and reproduction on the other, Garhwal was transformed to a state of economic decline. Our historical structuralist examination conducted in Chapters III and IV, revealed this broad pattern of change characterised by ecological destruction, depeasantisation and male out-migration.

Colonial imperialist exploitation in general but most menacingly the commercial exploitation of forests was responsible for the dramatic alteration of Garhwal society from mid 1911. Forests were central core of the hill economy, as sustainer of crop production, animals and preserver of people's basic needs of food, shelter and water. In the initial colonial phase, the clearing of land increased farming and forest use. It led to

heightened production and the generation of wealth despite the rise in population. However, the introduction of a dubious policy of scientific forestry and land settlements showed their impact by the early twentieth century. The destruction of natural forests and land ownership rights, had a disastrous effect on the regional ecology and on land, through its overexploitation for production and through soil degradation. In effect all this meant the gradual decimation of the carefully adapted ecology-economy link and the decline of food self-sufficiency which people had hitherto enjoyed. Poor, small and increasingly fragmented landholdings, failure of intensifying crop yields, economic pressures of taxation, shrinking pastures and in the final analysis the limits to land cultivation in the hill region, together made the economy feel the burdens of rising population. People who could earlier be accommodated within its fold were now superfluous. Thus state policies were conducive to the creation of population pressure which could no more be accommodated due to the accompanying ecological disaster. Job opportunities provided by the colonists came to respite of people beleaguered by the mounting problems of survival and livelihood.

Migration was initially adopted as a subsistence strategy by peasant households rendered increasingly unable to sustain themselves. The changing conditions, imposed by forces beyond people's control were primarily responsible for this as they hampered production and distribution of commodities and use value goods. Colonial need for labour in their urban administrative, military, infrastructural and domestic machinery came to the respite of households which were at a loss to achieve a balance between their needs and income and desperately needed palliation. Initially male outmigration took a temporary and seasonal form, which turned into longer duration moves of a more semi-permanent nature. Out-migration was from the outset a caste-linked phenomenon, with higher castes particularly the more educated Brahmins finding place in the higher rungs of British services and the Doms in the lowest.

Ironically, post-independence development policy exacerbated colonial effects. Misplaced emphasis on high value crops and horticulture, gross neglect of traditional subsistence agriculture, the continued commercial ravaging of forests, unchecked growth of tourism and urbanisation, eco-insensitive urban construction, and infrastructural

development, provided the impetus for a highly skewed, distorted and iniquitous pattern of growth which also caused further and irrevocable destruction of natural resources and biodiversity of the environment. A sharp decline in cultivation and agricultural production made the local economies completely unsustainable, declining their capacities for labour absorption. The net result has been an accentuated out-migration. Local villagers have felt real 'push' pressures even as they grew increasingly attracted to and 'pulled' by urban life. The culture of migration weaned away male youth from hard agricultural labour to seemingly softer options and pleasurable lives of towns and cities. At the same time, the growing need for cash not only for sustenance but for newer expanding needs like education, health, consumer products, payments to wage labour - in short a whole new range of consumption requirements - came to be regarded as a necessity.

Unification of push and pull factors is evident in the trends of consistent circular return and permanent migration. The study of eleven baseline villages confirmed the pattern of productivity decline-related migration in the Yamkeshwar block of the region. Besides it revealed that migration takes place across all caste groups and land holding categories. Migrants are generally educated till middle school and seem to find small / middle level jobs in the unorganised sectors of the urban economy. There has been a distinct change in the trend of migration from regional and near to far away destination such as South and Northeast of the country. Delhi and Mumbai are the favoured destinations. More than half of the migrants take their families with them. The span of migration of our sample of migrants - which ranged from six months to 53 years - reflects that it has been an ongoing phenomenon of a very long duration, in the block. Remittance amounts were more regularly sent by those who had not taken their families than those who had. Amounts sent varied widely, but it is clear that the region does merit description as money order economy a dual economy with remittances playing an important role. Subsistence agriculture however is still under practice. Agriculture remains important and the majority of the population left behind engages in it. This is so increasingly as a result of an absence of alternative and also due to the cultural values of peasantry.

## Changing Villages: Migration And New Structure Of Subsistence

Situated in Yamkeshwar block of Pauri Garhwal district of the lesser Himalayas, the two study villages, Bunga and Daurn, lie off the Rishikesh-Dogadda road, with relatively easier access to Rishikesh (in Tehri Garhwal), as compared to the block headquarters and semi-industrial town of Kotdwara at Yamkeshwar.

The villages stand at an elevation of 1300 to 2000 m along the degraded ridge of the Hiul river valley. The area represents the drier-agro-ecological zone with miniscule irrigated land, poor forests and sometimes almost sparsely covered slopes.

The villages are relatively close to each other and they together constitute the Bunga Gram Sabha. Both are multi-caste Hindu villages having Rajput, Brahmin and Dom households. However Bunga is predominantly Brahmin while Daurn is a predominantly Rajput village. Bunga and Daurn revealed themselves as microcosms of the larger region in terms of migration propensity, environmental and agricultural decline. Old villagers narratives revealed that through agriculture, livestock and petty commodity production, people produced and exchanged enough to sustain themselves. As elsewhere all this changed with the coming of the British. Declining agriculture, depletion of grazing, water and forest resources and market penetration marked the imbalance between production and consumption. Village peasant migration began with jobs in military, lower services, manual labour and petty business. Overall cultivation has perceptibly declined. Today it is evident in the vast stretches of *banjar* land on the village peripheries. Male outmigration has steadily aggravated this trend. Majority of cultivating households now claim lesser amounts of land and smaller plots are being cultivated. Both migrant and non-migrant households cultivate similar amounts of land, but larger proportions of non-migrants cultivate larger plots of five acres and above.

Male out-migration exists as a key strategy adopted by peasant households to cope with changing circumstances. It is today not merely a survival strategy but a viable and preferred occupational option of large numbers of households. Though migration is a preferred option, not all men are able to fruitfully migrate for the occupations, incomes and durations that they may desire. Migrant's remittances are unreliable and generally

unstable basis for meeting livelihood needs of households. Thus, the question of migrant incomes providing any investment for enhancing rural production does not arise for the large majority. Migration is perceived as essential but is actually an insecure and unstable option for most men except a privileged and lucky few.

One must take cognisance of the village economic and household differentiation that urban migration has caused. The remittance economy has brought relative prosperity to only a handful of households in the villages. Currently nine percent of the households receive remittances between Rs.5,000/- to Rs.10,000/- annually. The families of the better off current and return migrants have acquired modern comforts and facilities and have provided family members with access to cash and access to larger number of big animals which are used for income generation. By and large, these are Brahmins and Rajput households and only a minuscule number are Doms. As we have seen majority of the migrants earn wages which are not family wages, enabling only meagre amounts to be sent back to assist family subsistence. Thus the villages exhibit a pattern urban migration that provides supplementary cash.

The present reality of village economy is thus that of a combination of subsistence, remittance and wage work. Both labour migrancy and subsistence production are critical to the strategy of people's livelihood. In fact it is increasingly evident to the villagers that there is further need to diversify. Today's larger reality is that of inadequate incomes and productions which necessitate diversified livelihoods which combine farming with wage labour, exchange of services, producing commodities for sale and setting up petty businesses. The survival strategy of poor Doms combines marginal agriculture, caste-based wage labour and caste labour and most live under conditions of deeper deprivation.

This has been the micro-economic impact of the macro-economic processes that have affected this region. Furthermore this impact has led to the feminisation of peasant economy whereby women's role as unpaid workers has been expanded and intensified. Gender inequality is manifested in out-migration being an exclusively male and most definitely not a female option. Female migration occurs only in the capacity of a migrating wife. Women left behind in the villages are overwhelmingly restricted to and

located in the forest-based agriculture-animal husbandry economy. Though this production system was always women dominated, it is now moving towards even greater feminisation, since women are required to engage in subsistence. The specific and multi-faceted adverse impact of this feminisation process is dealt with in the following section.

### **Shifting Gender Divisions Of Labour And Women's Work**

Our integrated view of gender and the political economy of work highlights the fact that migration and ecological degradation have left an indelible impact on the nature, quantum and conditions of women's work patterns in both the spheres of production and reproduction. There have been marked redefinitions of gender roles and deleterious shifts in the gender division of labour.

Both migrant and non-migrant households, report agriculture as the main occupation indicating its enormous socio-cultural, if lesser economic, significance. Of course for non-migrant households, agriculture and animal husbandry are of considerable economic importance too. Rajputs households continue to maintain the traditional pattern of rural production and local sale and exchange of produce as the basis of livelihood. Dom non-migrant households sustain themselves on a combination of agriculture, wage labour and caste labour. Production of use values in agriculture, animal husbandry and domestic domain is in great demand as it is essential to all households.

Women in both migrant and non-migrant families continue to hold the major responsibility for the traditionally female activities. Our findings corroborate those of studies reviewed in Chapter I, which describe hill women's agricultural and animal husbandry tasks as very laborious and time consuming. We find furthermore that the multiple and different types of work and tasks that are assigned to women involve physical movements and positions which cause great physical strain and fatigue to women. The experiences are particularly harsh during the peak agricultural seasons, the rains and winters.

Most importantly it has come to light that the so-called typical male tasks were never performed exclusively by men. Women have always provided considerable, highly

laborious and heavy “assistance” to men as they ploughed, sowed, threshed and terraced. As men ploughed, women followed breaking mud clods, levelling and clearing the soil. In sowing, separation of saplings and transplanting are women’s tasks. Women prepare threshing floors and also carry heavy repairing material like boulders and stones for repairing *guls* and terraces. This labour has never been officially accounted or socially recognised though it adds quantitatively and qualitatively to women’s work burdens.

A marked difference exists in the gender division of labour between migrant and non-migrant households. In the non-migrant households, men continued to perform all traditional male tasks and women performed their tasks under male supervision. Thus in both kinds of households, patriarchal control over female labour persists. In migrant households, however, women’s labour is intensified. We encounter conspicuous shifts in the gender division of labour. The performance of all male tasks with the exception of ploughing has to be taken over by women. Terracing, irrigation, threshing, guarding of fields, repairing “*guls*” and tools are the new hard tasks that are added to women’s old laborious ones. Women have to do them alone or in a combination of help from hired, reciprocal or family labour.

Hired labour, for ploughing however, is not an unqualified blessing. It causes several negative repercussions for women and paradoxically even accentuates their work. Hence apart from expanding their labour inputs towards performing the various other tasks of men that they are allowed to perform, they have to further intensify their labour in exchange for male assistance for ploughing or pay substantial amounts to hired labour. Women’s labour expansion occurs through tasks such as finding and organising hired labour, cooking for the labour, arranging for fodder for their ploughing oxen. These are the additional tasks thrust upon women by the constraints of the peasant culture.

Moreover, the cultural principle of male domination operates to blur the distinction between the hired and the hirer. Hired men, whether of high or low caste, are difficult workers and harass women in several ways. Women are compelled into subservience because they are totally dependent on them. Moreover like they assist their own men, women have to assist the hired workers too. Since they are ultimately responsible for

household agricultural production on which their family survival at least partially depends, women have no option but to put up with male harassment.

Reciprocal labour arrangements in agriculture are repaid by women's labour in the event of inability to pay cash. Old, single, widowed women and poor migrant wives find themselves particularly under the strain of such compulsions.

Customary agricultural practices which were collective responsibilities of the males, have become individualised and women have to do the tasks. Systems such as "*vadu*" and "*goath*" related to guarding and manuring respectively have virtually disappeared. The group system of '*padiyal*' which was a method of women working in groups has also now broken down. The breakdown of the local *jajamani khalkiya-gusai* system and the breakdown of caste labour in general where Dom men served as ploughmen has also increased the labour of upper caste women.

As the discussion has made clear, women of migrant households are indeed central, but also highly overburdened and exploited actors in the agricultural production processes. Centrality and equality in work participation is a euphemism for the slavery of women, which they are powerless to resist.

Ecological degradation has historically had a severe impact on women's animal husbandry work. In our study villages, male migration has increased women's burden with respect to this domain also. Migrant households may invest some cash in purchasing animals for petty business including a number of livestock in migrant households. A most marked shift in gender division of labour has occurred in the task of grazing and a lesser shift in the task of small animal care. All other animal husbandry tasks whether in the migrant or non-migrant households are the exclusive domain of women.

Environmental degradation has made these tasks more laborious due to shortage of fodder. The decline of the *goath* system and increased requirement of stall-feeding has considerably added to workload. Collecting and carrying fodder for present and future use takes on an average three hours per day and the weight carried by women is 20 to 30 kilos on each trip. Stall-feeding requires the preparation of huge quantities of special



cattle feed for bullocks and buffaloes. This is another major impact of migration on women's workload. Larger cattle head owning families are migrant families. Since the big animals, especially buffaloes cannot be taken for grazing on steep slopes, their enormous food and water needs are met by women. Girls are assigned the cumbersome task of cleaning and smoking the cowshed and providing the bedding. Most significantly, only when it comes to the sale of cattle or milk and earning of cash, men take charge. Thus the unfair division of labour in animal husbandry also results in an unfair distribution of rewards. However, women at times meet cash requirements through the sale of small animals.

Reciprocal or whatever other form of labour re-organisation that is required for labour sharing in animal husbandry takes place among women themselves. Women in difficulties seek and find reciprocal labour only from other women. The male task of grazing or tending animals is taken up by younger or older women. Middle-aged women are already burdened with the direct responsibility of fulfilling all major household work and needs.

Market-related activities like selling and buying household items, grocery etc. have traditionally been men's task and in families where men or boys are present, they continue to do them. Women themselves look upon these tasks as "men's work" and find themselves uncomfortable in market places. However with education, growing awareness and increased spatial mobility, women in general and younger women in particular have begun to take on this responsibility too.

Along with gender, work organisation in the new evolving production and labour systems are being re-organised by age and hierarchical position within the households. Given the relatively large size but highly skewed sex composition of migrant households, girl children and older men along with women have to bear the brunt of the additional load. As compared to this, the primary worker in non-migrant households is generally a young or middle-aged adult, male and female.

In large migrant households, work gets distributed between women, with the heaviest burden falling on the youngest woman. In nuclear or smaller households, there are fewer

women and only women with young, unmarried daughters are in a position to share work. In fact a most significant finding is that in contrast to young girls, young boys are proving to be increasingly redundant for any subsistence task. The combined impact of male migration, schooling, and cash income has been such that the younger male generation of both migrant and non-migrant households is getting increasingly averse and apathetic to agricultural or animal work. This disinclination is reflected in the data on gender division of labour and increased dependence on outside male labour where it is essential. The younger male mindset is attracted to urban out-migration.

A comparative perspective across generations shows how quantum and the nature of women's work burden has drastically altered over generations. From old women's narratives, the sheer volume of agricultural, domestic and animal husbandry labour seems to have been enormous in their times. Comparing the situations of mothers-in-law and their daughters-in-law, the historical picture that emerges is that quantum of agricultural work in terms of agricultural operation and heavy domestic work (of grinding, pounding, churning, storing) have certainly reduced. The sheer quantum of older women's traditional work was large and they were carried out under oppressive conditions of surveillance, nutritional deprivation, lack of care and violence a situation which eased and changed only as they grew older. Today's women have comparatively lower burdens deriving out of smaller land cultivated size, and smaller families and an overall reduction in patriarchal pressures. However quantum do not tell the whole story. Women's work today has intensified because they have to undertake male work, multiple new activities and responsibilities and considerable mental burden of family survival, children's well-being and their future. They are left behind to independently maintain traditional food system but they also have a double dependency on men: for cash and other men for labour. Women's work has become so physically and mentally consuming that they have little time or energy to build on the freedom from direct patriarchal control and the woman has little more than informal power. Remittances have changed economic status of households, but given the small earnings of most migrants, with little direct benefit to most women. Rather women have got involved in status conflicts and conflicts over control of the paltry amounts sent. Moreover, despite their contributions, women's

economic value is low. For most women, the work-reward balance is thus inequitable and unjust.

Further, domestic tasks continue to be culturally allocated to women alone and involve multiple duties of nourishment, maintenance and caring of family members. Culturally men have refrained from carrying head loads of water, cleaning vessels, re-dunging the floors and childcare. They participate only minimally if required by circumstances. It is important to emphasise the great laboriousness of domestic work in the hills, particularly firewood and water collection tasks, which have become all the more exacting due to water shortage and deforestation. Cooking and feeding the family consists of several tasks of firewood collection, processing, pounding and grinding. However actual meals cooked are on the whole very simple in keeping with the conditions of scarcity.

Domestic labour is managed by all women of the household together – the older women being in-charge of cooking, sewing, childcare and the younger women of the heavy household tasks such as washing clothes, fetching water, washing utensils. Migrant and non-migrant households do not show any variation, but size of family does change quantum of work. But larger families also involve an intra-gender distribution of tasks. In the harvesting season, mothers-in-law may take over some tasks from daughters-in-law to release them for the agricultural labour in peak season.

Firewood collection is also mostly women's responsibility. Men may attend to this task, only in winter months, when wood requirements increase or when large quantities are required for repairing implements and the house. However the availability and use of LPG and kerosene have reduced this work for households who can afford their use. These are mostly migrant households and women have gained this concrete benefit. Use of torchwood has declined, reducing another strenuous and cumbersome women's task. Growing seasonal vegetables – an important task for household nutritional availability – is a task in which women expend more energies. Women though take the greater responsibility along with drying and storing vegetables for lean periods.

In sum, it is very clear that the household re-organisation of labour means a gendered re-organisation with an increased burden on adult women and girls.

Given the cultural glorification of women's work, the extra work generated by male absence is rarely considered to be putting an unfair or untenable burden on women. In a few households one daughter at least is kept out of school usually after completion of primary or junior high school to enable the mother to cope with work.

In Garhwali society, young girls thus are educated but are equally well socialised into the practice of hard work. In contrast, boys are increasingly set free from work and men tend to shirk their allotted tasks. Migrant men in particular, are privileged to exercise their options for leisure and impose their interests within the household.

Boys education is emphasised in emulation of male migrants for urban employment. If girls are encouraged for education as they are in contemporary Garhwali society, it is with the prime motive of finding migrant husbands so that they may escape the drudgery of village life. However, the general trend which is also substantiated by our data, is that most educated women whether married to migrants or not, are unable to make this escape.

Women are also subjected to newer forms of economic control by men. Old gender ideology continues to operate in the work domain and in the new and changing shapes gender relations within household relations of production. Both migrant husbands and non-migrant ones use the old ideology to confine women to use value production and the new ideology to redefine themselves as primary breadwinners and deny women material control.

Despite some weakening of patriarchal control and the penetration of education, cash and modern cultural influences generated by both communication systems and media, women have not been able to transcend the traditional gender division of labour. They continue to be restricted to the field of hard, manual labour. Thus one can concur with the conclusion of Leacock and Safa (1986) that modernisation is not a neutral process but one that obeys the dictates of capitalist accumulation, The system generates and intensifies inequality, uses gender hierarchies and places women in subordinate position at each level of interaction between caste, class and gender.

Under traditional systems, as shown in Chapter III, bride price prevailed due to the high economic value of women as workers. However women were valued as slaves and not as producers and hence even as workers their cultural value was low. In today's context the intense participation seems to be a function of a new gender division of labour based on a situation of agricultural food production and poverty.

As Sharma's study has shown (1978) more work devolves upon women but rewards are not commensurate. Land cash and other assets are all largely under male control. However for few migrant and nuclear families, women have gained limited measures of independence and control. But in this labour intensive economy, women have little time or energy to build upon their freedom, control and autonomy. They continue to partake in all tasks needed for household reproduction.

Yet they gain a limited measure of independence or freedom through their work. Even in their absence they remain subject to their husband's rules. They may have little time or energy to build upon their freedom from the direct control of their in-laws. Overall no section of women has benefited in an unqualified way. In any case detailing the changes that have taken place in the tasks women do and the social relationships within which they work should not obscure crucial continuities.

Women's work is portrayed by men as light and unimportant and women tend to be unwilling to reject this view publicly, despite its importance.

Women's labour is considered as family labour, it is unremunerated, underestimated, and undervalued labour, but is actually crucial for men's migration as it helps sustain their households at least partially.

In the final analysis, the larger process of capitalist transformation have taken advantage of, built upon and negatively changed the character of historically existing traditional gender division of labour. The above analysis of our data reveals that outside capitalism has built upon and reinforced sexual inequalities of traditional patriarchy. It helps us to argue that female labour in subsistence economy has undergone an expansion and intensification in order to provide cheap male wage labour. Women are now more

responsible for family survival. Since remittance is less, women have to intensify their work in subsistence agriculture to sustain their households and themselves.

### **The Production – Reproduction Link In Women’s Health**

Our enquiry into women’s health a complex of physical, reproductive and emotional and mental well being- through understanding of women's experiences of ill health revealed that the health and illness of women, both from migrant and non-migrant households is intermittently linked to their social and economic roles. Their health status is always secondary to their demands of work..

Throughout their life course, women are afflicted by a series of “*choti and badi bimari*”, however the cultural ideology of gender subordination sanctions their neglect. Moreover, the cultural construction of women’s bodies as always capable of executing hard labour does not see any need for special consideration or provisions to make them strong or fit enough to bear their multiple responsibilities.

Women’s descriptions of the relationship between body and social context brought out the complex interrelationship between the quantum and multiplicity of work activity and its incessant nature. Given the specificity of bodily movements in the jobs they have little room for manoeuvre in the deployment of their bodies in relation to work. Women’s narrations brought out the inextricable relationship between “pain-morbidity” and the context of hard labour, combining the experience of not being able to stop work and of having to stretch the body beyond its limits. Women protested and complained explicitly about the kinds of intolerable conditions of work in which they were obliged to operate. Most women experience the impact in terms of a severe bodily weakness and a continuing sense of fatigue. Work combines with nutritional deprivation to cause this state of ill-health. The syndrome begins early in childhood and is aggravated by early marriage.

Girls' socialisation into all types of work is also accompanied by socialisation into eating less than their brothers. Though no sharp gender discrimination was observed, boys tended to eat more times and more quantities of food and special foods. In the poorer and

in Dom households, there was generally less food for both girls and boys. Within each economic category however, there was gender discrimination in the quantity of food consumed. Clearly, the foundation of the work-nutrition imbalance is laid in childhood itself. Menstruation generally begins late for girls due to this imbalance.

As daughters-in-law a few year later, girls experience a much sharper gender discrimination in food intake in their conjugal homes. Patriarchal values create conditions that daughters-in-law may not be looked after in terms of food and care. Most older and middle-aged group women had experienced such discrimination and vouched that this was indeed the treatment they had received. Work was demanded but young 'buaris' were not entitled to required quantity of a basic necessity such as food. As women grew older, especially in better-off families, they had better control over food resources and were more likely to get a better diet. Low castes are generally poverty stricken despite reciprocal exchange. Their situation of low caste women contrasts sharply with upper caste women and it does not improve with ageing.

Women, who are currently part of smaller households, exercise some control over work as well as food. They have independent access to food grains and supplies. However it bears emphasis that women's gradual freedom from control by in-laws is taking place alongside the processes of economic decline. A manifestation of this has been declining food output and purchasing power which results in shortage of home-grown grain, animal product or market goods. The apparently newly acquired freedom from in-laws is more to compensate for the declining resources rather than to permit enhancement in consumption. Given the cultural practices of women eating last and left-overs, it is very evident that the food shortage affects women the most. Today the situation is that there is huge imbalance between food and work irrespective of caste and migrant status. As pointed out earlier, migration has provided a better deal to a few women only, in particular Brahmin and Rajput, and even fewer Dom women. They have some cash to purchase additional supplies.

Body pain including *bai* seemed to strike women from early ages. Each part of the body seems to be affected. Women clearly link it to reproductive and productive work – the

kind of squatting and bending positions they adopt in agriculture, the long and arduous ascending and descending treks, the lifting and carrying of weights and the cycle of pregnancies and deliveries marked by complication and distress. We identified work-related patterns of symptomology such as “*bai knee*”, “*bai elbow*”, “*bai-hand*” terms which are often used by women to describe the effect of varying types of work upon muscles and joints. Backs are also greatly afflicted by pain. Explanations of these pains were mostly linked to work related postures, lifting, carrying weights, bending etc. The causal relationship between *bai* and labour is summed up by women as ‘wear and tear’ (*jod ghis jate hain, haddi ghis jati hain*). The elaboration of the concept of ‘wear and tear’ often drew women into more detailed reflections of how their bodies were ‘constrained’ by their working lives. Women’s under-nutrition scarcely equips their bodies for the overwork and overexertion to which they are subjected.

Older women suffer from a condition commonly called *shawas ki bimari* (breathlessness). “*Shawas*” is clearly a part of the complex chain of cause and effect connecting the women's bodies to their circumstances. The conditions may be related to the fatigue and strain involved in load carrying in the vertical terrain or due to cooking on ‘*chulhas*’ in closed poorly ventilated kitchens etc.

Over and above their physical illnesses, women are exposed in the course of their daily work to environmental risks. They face very real risks and threat of bodily injury and even death. Accident hazards are high, when women work atop trees and walk with head loads over treacherous steep paths, or risk themselves to attacks by wild animals and snake bites. Environment-caused health hazards also exist in polluted water sources and unhygienic sanitary conditions as a result of which women routinely suffer from a whole range of infections and ailments, which are possibly water-borne in nature.

While responses of chronic illnesses/ problems are most prevalent and uniformly distributed across most women, it is the older who suffer more acutely. In the context of the women’s lives, we found that several of these chronic health problems set in early, becoming extremely severe and debilitating as life progresses. Younger women from economically poorer households, especially the Dom, suffer more frequently and acutely



than their upper caste counterparts. However, no significant difference in health conditions of migrant and non-migrant women is visible as both are subject to economic hardship, work pressures and gender discrimination with only marginal variation. It is only among the better off migrant households that younger women claim to be better cared for and healthy.

Women's experiences of illness are thus embedded in everyday life. Their illnesses derive out of the various components of their daily life, and also have consequences for their lives. Other than revealing how the vicious circle of overwork – poor nutrition – ill health actually operates, women's narratives also revealed how health itself constitutes a debilitating condition of women's work. Women's labouring bodies are sick bodies marked by a range of morbidities which are themselves derived out of productive and reproductive work. Women recognise this as a major problem but are unable to break out. Their strong identification with their work is reflected in the fact that *bimari* troubled them primarily as a “deterrent and obstacle” to work. For example chronic pain is not considered a “threatening state”, but is experienced as a nagging hurdle, which renders extremely difficult the performance of daily tasks and responsibilities. At the centre of women's explanatory framework were the constraints of their work. Yet doing work well is a key dimension of their definition of health, since work itself is integral to their identity.

The conceptual link between production – reproduction extends easily to reproductive ill-health of the women. Women are socially defined as producers, but in context of a patriarchal society, they are also crucially defined as reproducers. As old women's narratives have borne out, women were given no respite from work during their childbearing periods. Women experienced scarcity of food and poor diet even during pregnancy and lactation. Bodily stress and breast-feeding worsened their conditions of weakness.

Women's labouring bodies are bodies marked by ill health. The ill health derives out of both their productive and reproductive work. Women's experience of childbearing roles must thus be placed against the context of poor condition of their general physical health.

The cultural construction and experience of women's bodies as always capable of executing hard labour does not see any need for special consideration or provisions to make them strong or fit enough to bear other responsibilities.

Positive changes related to women's reproductive health are the rise in the age at marriage for women and decline in the number of conceptions. However, familial pressure to conceive early remains. The first medical treatment for women in their conjugal home continues to be sought for infertility. Reflecting perhaps the changing times or the impact of family planning programme or the discourse and influence of modernisation, an awareness about limiting families has reached the hill villages. There is a distinct trend towards later marriages as a result of changing values and growing levels of girl's education. What doesn't change is the still continuing pressure for early conception. Women continue to dread infertility; pujas continue to be held for the favour of early and male conceptions, and son preference is marked. Pregnancies and deliveries dominate the reproductive span, but gender pressures continue to play on women's mind till the required numbers of children of the desired, usually male sex are born. The use of family planning methods is very limited as reported by the women themselves. In general, gender ideology and control remain strong as far as reproduction is concerned.

Reproductive work even today does not give exemption from productive work. Patriarchal control over women's labour gains precedence over cultural prescriptions favouring work relaxation. As we have seen the huge quantum of work has been traditionally determined by levels of gender oppression and sizes of land and of families. Women are wholly dependent for a reduction in work on individual relationships of amicability with in-laws or the presence of grown-up daughters. Work as we have suggested is life cycle related but pregnancy rarely calls for lessening the burden of work unless there is an emergency or the woman is very sick. Though cultural norms around pregnancy to ensure rest and diet were talked about, the women denied any practices that brought relief. Patriarchal ideology controls the labour and its rewards of younger married women. Under these circumstances women face reproductive and general health problems throughout the childbearing process.

Pregnancy worsens the work-nutrition imbalance. Low cultural valuation of women as reproducers is evident. Women are starved of basic food nutrition, and generally underfed and undernourished. Various cultural pregnancy related food intake taboos, compound the situation of nutrition deficiency.

Pregnant women suffer multiple health problems which are perceived to arise from their twin condition of their overwork and mal-nourishment. Due to mild symptoms and the severe ones, women are afflicted by great physical discomfort. Anaemia, reproductive tract infections, gynaecological problems, night blindness and allergies seem to afflict them. Apart from these, general weakness, physical ill-health and body pains continue. Culturally, pregnancy related ailments are not looked upon as sickness but as “*thori thori pareshani*”. Thus medical attention is out of question.

Work continues till onset of labour and labour pains often begin in the fields. Women organise for their own delivery and continue to attend to household chores for as long as they can. Deliveries largely take place at home and are conducted by older experienced kinswomen who have experiential knowledge and techniques that are essential to assist labour and delivery. Women with many children even conduct their own deliveries in unhygienic conditions.

Dangers and risk associated with delivery have not disappeared despite the fact that majority of women pass through it safely. Most importantly, prolonged and obstructed labour continues to pose a threat to the lives of delivering women and infants. Incidents of maternal mortality are firmly etched in the collective memory and consciousness of the village women. The recurrent references made to them suggest that women are greatly affected by them at the subconscious level.

The tradition of *dai* has not existed in the villages, perhaps due to lack of support. Villagers mostly resort to “*dai*” during emergencies. PHC services however remain unavailed. They are inconveniently located and there is uncertainty about the treatment. The gravity of the situation is evident from the fact that none of the women have availed of any pregnancy related services at any rural health service.

Women's post partum experiences show that their difficulties and troubles not only continue but also intensify. Delivery does not signal the end of reproductive health problems. New ones surface such as uterine pain, bleeding etc and very discomforting symptoms like dizziness. Again very little is done about them. So thorough is women's internalisation of suffering, that they consider as 'normal' even the most unpleasant and severe problems like bleeding and excessive vaginal discharges. Such long durations of post partum bleeding must surely deplete women's energies and make them weak. However women get back to work immediately after delivery. Even women weak with blood loss cannot escape heavy laborious work. Women's later year reproductive health histories are strewn with gynaecological problems of various types and intensities – painful menstruation to uterine prolapse. Again though they produce pain and discomfort they are dismissed off as *choti bimari*. The deleterious link between health and work is thus reflected in a range of sufferings that have long term implications.

Overall the non-existence of antenatal and postnatal care aggravates women's health situation during pregnancy and childbearing. Women are controlled and valued for their childbearing capacity but their needs associated with that role are given little weight. Decisions about the seriousness of their own or their child's illness, about antenatal care, T.T. injections, strengthening food or rest are rarely made by the woman alone. Nor do her views carry most weight with those in her '*suras*' who might act on her behalf. Few direct changes have improved the conditions of childbearing, indeed most changes pertain only to reducing its frequency.

Home births continue to be the preferred cultural option. Money is an important constraining factor to hospital delivery. Women cannot be spared from agricultural work, hence hospital births are not generally encouraged. Further, there is no one to take charge of domestic responsibilities or look after children. Since women set out to work almost immediately upon delivery, it is in everyone's interest that they deliver at home. Thus most women undergo home deliveries even when their condition is serious and may result in maternal or infant death.

It appears that with later marriages the problem of prolonged labour has reduced. Besides the scale of ill health has gone down because of later and “better” marriages for some women. Again, the affluent migrant wives group stand as a small and privileged minority. They have greater autonomy to rest and seek medical attention.

Besides childbirth, the multiple burdens of peasant work, gender discrimination in food and care, economic deterioration and poor physical health have a cumulative effect to take a tremendous toll on women’s mental and emotional states. Women express their health problems in very general terms relating to pain (*dukh-dard / dukh pira*), discomfort (*pareshani*) to convey a sense of physical ill-being that also encompasses their psychological / mental state and pain. In the course of their narratives older and middle aged group of women particularly gave vent to the mental stresses and strains inflicted by husbands and in-laws. Though today the severity seems to have declined with early break-up of families and the mixed effects of male migration, women's mental states must be understood in linkage with their social and emotional life in the context of marriage. Furthermore, women’s lives are beset by several new worries and tensions. Numerous contemporary social effects in the form of shortage of food, children’s uncertain economic future in a declining economy disrupted social networks, multiple types and levels of responsibility, domestic isolation and loneliness, sicknesses of children are problems that cause great anxiety and mental stress. For many women deaths of young children have left deep emotional scars.

Women's narratives about their work and the new division of labour are full of the new kinds of stresses that they have to undergo. Overwork caused by new agricultural tasks including the tiresome management of hired male field labour, physical strains arising out of growing workloads, pressures of time and lack of resources etc. Moreover social pressures to conceive and bear male progeny, the stigma attached to infertility, wife abuse, domestic violence, chronic poor health and dwindling capacities have an impact that is mentally stultifying. The harassment of an infertile woman reveals yet another patriarchal character of Garhwal society. So severe is their ill-treatment that women’s natal families step in to perform the required religious rites for conception. Poorer and low caste women are further plagued by family hunger, insecurity of wage labour and

income and about feeding the children. The struggle is physically and emotionally exhausting.

Women's consciousness seems pervaded by incapacity and helplessness to change their situation. This is highlighted by statements such as "we are nobody", "nothing is in our hands", "there is no one to share our trouble", "we have to bear all responsibility alone". They reflect self-perceptions of women's low value in the society and 'unequal worth' in the family.

### **Patterns Of Health Care Services**

In consonance with the multiple notions and beliefs about illness causation, a wide variety of healing systems and health practitioners have existed in the vicinity of Bunga and Daurn. These specialists like the *bakkis*, *jagris*, *tantrics*, *toonatotakas*, *jharphunck*, *taal dama*, *vaidis*, *baman* greatly differed in terms of their methods of treatment and explanatory models have provided cures for different types of ailments. Furthermore in the decades of the sixties and the seventies, a new group of practitioner popularly called "doctor" also made an entry into the existing plural medical system at the village level. With the development of motorable road links, and the starting of bus services, private practitioners in Rishikesh, Kotdwara and other nearby towns could now be more easily accessed. The integration of these villages to cities hastened the emergence of this new circuit of practitioners, through whom western medicine entered isolated villages such as Bunga and Daurn. These generally untrained doctors have set up private practices medicine in nearby villages for short durations. The Primary Health Centres (PHC), its dispensaries and sub-centres were also set up by the government to provide access to "free" modern medicine. Thus over time a trend towards new (allopathic) treatment systems set in. This trend is also reflected in the way women defined health and illness. The distinction between *bimari* and *dosh* showed that even today some illnesses are still interpreted as caused by the supernatural. At the same time notion of cause as germ or environmental factors was also evident in cases where medical intervention was sought.

Today both government and private medical facilities are available to the people of Bunga and Daurn at the town centre of Rishikesh or further at Dehradun. However none

of these are within easy and regular access to the women. The closest is the government Satellite Allopathic Dispensary (SAD) at Duili but that too entails several hours of walk for women from both villages. Even the traditional access to midwives (“*dai*”) has been limited in this mountainous region. In fact private service more than the government rural health care facilities, provide direct biomedical treatment.

Under the circumstances, the majority of women are compelled to seek a combination of healing systems in dealing with their illness. What we observe is that women tend to mix healing systems with a clear preference for modern medicine. Majority of women resort to the entire range of practitioners, depending on the nature and severity of the illness. Treatment is seen as a matter for negotiation and for authoritative pronouncements, either by traditional healers or today increasingly by the ‘wonders’ of modern medicine.

In earlier days the indigenous healers treated all illnesses and ailments. In today’s time, older, middle aged and younger women all have a preference for allopathic medicine and they attempt to get themselves treated through this method. There is a tremendous rush for the travelling doctor who schedules his visits near the village bus stop. This is evidence enough of the tremendous demand for and popularity of modern medicine. Though the overall women’s experience is that allopathic medicine provides relief for common symptoms, women are not in a position to avail of modern treatment and medication on a regular basis.

The issue of accessing health care brings up sharp differences between migrant and non-migrant women. Women of migrant households have some recourse to healthcare at varying points in life. Particularly older women whose sons are established in towns and cities are cared for when ill. For wives of migrants the picture is not as favourable. They mostly do not receive such favourable response from husbands. Still they are better off than non-migrant wives in matters of medical treatment.

As traditional ideas and theories related to causation are still catered to or strongly held by some, both men and women regularly consult indigenous healers. Indeed for certain ailments such as stomachaches, swellings, boils and fevers, they feel that indigenous healing is superior and more beneficial. On the whole however, a wide gap remains

between availability and demand for effective healthcare. Thus the medical pluralism that still exists in the villages is partly because some people are not willing to change but primarily because of denial of access to an effective health care system which creates positive experiences and thus induces shifts in health seeking behaviour.

Whatever may be the desires and aspirations of women as far as their treatment is concerned there is a palpable gender discrimination in belief, practice and access. Though we were not able to probe into this aspect in much detail, the traditional belief system apparently devalues and rationalises women's afflictions. Older women recounted that they were socialised into believing that death is an inevitable outcome of illness for women and children. Today, the outside modernising ideational influences have made inroads through developmental interventions. Communications with the outside world, education, process of nuclearisation and increasing education level of women seem to have combined to bring about an awareness that health problems can and must be ameliorated. With migrant men responding to mothers and to a lesser extent to wives and daughters, women have become more aware and more wanting of medical attention. The compulsions of work and gender socialisation and absence of nearby health facilities however preclude the desired much needed and deserved care. Though a sizeable portion of income, especially of migrant households is spent on sicknesses it was very clear that it is largely spent on men. The well-off migrant wives are advantaged in this respect also.

Our research findings on women's health bear out many of the theoretical formulations made by the political economists of health some of whom are also feminists. It emerges as characteristic of capitalist economies that women are more affected by negative mechanisms. In the process of labour exploitation and appropriation of wealth, a host of processes enhance ill-health. These seem to have a gender bias against women as capitalism firmly retains patriarchal relations and transfers the burden of development to the poorest (especially of the backward regions) and to the weakest (working class women). Gender differences in morbidity seem pronounced despite the relatively higher sex ratio of the Garhwal region. Women report suffering of more ill health and availability of less healthcare than men. Doyal's contention that ill-health cannot be made



sense of, outside the mode of production seems applicable in this context (Doyal, 1978; 1995)

Structural obstacles to food production rather than denial of 'consumption needs' - ultimately underlie inability to provide adequate food and nutrition to women. Yet the differential intakes due to patriarchal structure of the families cannot be ignored. Production and purchasing power both are both undermined for most households and implication of this are greater for women due to scarcity and patriarchal gender values. Garhwal has become a subsistence economy that is unable to provide full subsistence and women bear the brunt of this under-development. Their invisible contribution to capitalist accumulation merits them no health care facilities and at the same time the conditions that cause ill health are obscured by the projection of an egalitarian hill culture where women work with men and have a higher educational levels. The Garhwal situation of destroyed economy and women's labour process clearly shows that causes of ill health are more closely related to socio-economic factors that are a result of the development process.

As we have emphasised at the outset, in hill society, irrespective of their castes, woman's patriarchal subordination did not exclude her from hard labour. The context is of long-term participation and overload and the significant shifts in gender division of labour and in the content and organisation of domestic labour. The period of a woman's life spent in pregnancy has been reduced, but work responsibilities have increased manifold. Gender ideology continues to emphasise reproduction and condemns infertility. Real health problems are not defined as such even by women and the society continues to expose them to high health risks and dangers and holds no responsibility for diagnosis or treatment.

We have seen that the health differentials are vitally linked to biological, social and economic production. Gender division of labour and the cultural sanction to it have had severe repercussions for women's health. Both economic factors and patriarchal ideology affect female morbidity and reproductive ill-health. Thus together the patriarchal control

of labour, sexuality and fertility adversely affect women's health. Thus women's power, value and status as tested out in the arena of health does not reveal a favourable picture.

Our data thus lends support to the critique that "causes of reproductive ill health lie outside the conventional medical boundaries and even when they severely affect reproductive health, they may not be amenable to cure through reproductive health strategies" (Qadeer, 1988).

It also reinforces the argument that the nature of development is not only responsible for ill health but for lack of services as well. A purely technocentric approach to health planning for women would only have a palliative effect as it does not touch the roots of the problem. In fact as revealed by this study, facilities of an effective modern medical system though desired and needed desperately by women are far from adequate even as a palliative measure. Thus even to provide the basic minimum the nature of development itself has to be tackled. The social sector needs to be strengthened and as the women of the region point out, planning work with dignity and comfort alone can lead to their well being.

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## **APPENDICES**

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**Table A 2.1: Total Number Of Households In Each Cluster/ Cell Of The Villages Classified As In Table 2.1**

	I (upto 10 km)		II (11-30 km)		III (31-50 km)		IV (above 50 km)		Total	Total	Total	%
	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L	H	L		
Small (upto 10 hh)	6	-	40	20	9	31	43	37	98	88	186	16
Medium (11-60 hh)	143	52	755	659	682	696	1023	864	2603	2271	4874	71
Large (above 60 hh)	812	-	925	452	184	197	596	175	2517	824	3341	13
Total	961	52	1720	1131	875	924	1662	1076			8401	100
Total H L	1013		2851		1799		2738		8401			
%	4		33		25		38		100			

Note:

1. Distance from the Rishikesh / Kotdwara town as mentioned in 1991 Census
2. Size of village according to number of households in 1991 Census
3. H=High population growth; L= Low population growth. This intercensal population has been calculated from 1991 and 1981 census.
4. [ ] Figures in parenthesis denote column percentages
5. ( ) Figures in parenthesis denote row percentages
6. Source : 1991 village Census of District Pauri Garhwal

**Table A2.2: Total Number Of Households To Be Surveyed In Each Strata / Cluster**

Village size/ distance	11 to 30 km (households)	31 to 50 km (households)	Above 50 km (households)	Total households
Medium size villages (11 to 60 HHS)	78	206	146	430
Large size village (above 60 HHS)	68	65	-	133
<b>Total households</b>	146	271	146	563

Note: Figures in the cell show the total number of households in each cluster.  
Source - 1991 Census (village level data of Pauri Garhwal District)

**Table A2.3: Distributional Profile Of Households Each Of The Four Villages**

Villages →	Ediya	Bunga	Ranchula	Kuthar	Daurn
<b>Land owned [in acres]</b>					
0	5 [16.7]	0	0	8 [12.7]	0
0.01-1.00	13 [43.3]	19 [31.1]	16 [40.0]	16 [25.4]	7 [17.1]
1.02-2.00	5 [16.7]	20 [32.8]	7 [17.5]	14 [22.2]	12 [29.3]
2.01-3.00	4 [13.3]	4 [6.6]	7 [17.5]	9 [14.3]	10 [24.4]
3.01-4.00	3 [10.0]	1 [1.6]	2 [5.0]	8 [12.7]	3 [7.3]
Above 4.00	0	17 [27.9]	8 [20.0]	8 [12.7]	9 [22.0]
Total	30	61	40	63	41
<b>Headship</b>					
Female Headed	18 [60.0]	27 [44.3]	17 [42.5]	19 [30.2]	19 [46.3]
Male Headed	12 [40.0]	34 [55.7]	23 [57.5]	44 [69.8]	22 [53.7]
Total	30	61	40	63	41
<b>Caste</b>					
Brahmin	23 [76.7]	28 [45.9]	8 [20]	12 [19]	5 [12.2]
Rajput	1 [3.3]	21 [34.4]	23 [57.5]	30 [47.6]	28 [68.3]
Dom [S.C]	6 [20]	12 [19.7]	9 [22.5]	21 [33.3]	8 [19.5]
Total	30	61	40	63	41
<b>Migration status</b>					
Migrant household	23 [76.7]	43 [70.5]	21 [52.5]	33 [52.4]	29 [70.7]
Non- migrant household	7 [23.3]	18 [29.5]	19 [47.5]	30 [47.6]	12 [29.3]
Total	30	61	40	63	41

Note: Figure in parenthesis shows column percentage  
Source: Analysed data of Baseline Survey

**Table A3.1: Details Of Famines, *Mahamaris* (Epidemics) And Other Natural Calamities Between 1815 - 1915 In Some Parts Of Garhwal And Kumaon Himalayas**

Earthquake and floods	1803
Mahamaris – plague	1823
Mahamaris - plague	1834 - 35
Mahamaris - plague	1846 - 47
Mahamaris - plague	1852
Mahamaris - cholera	1857
Mahamaris - cholera & failure of winter crops	1867
Mahamaris - plague and worst famine	1876 - 77
Mahamaris - cholera	1879 - 80
Mahamaris - cholera & Famine	1892
Famine	1896
Famine	1902
Famine	1908
Famine - failure of winter crops	1918

Note: The events and dates shown never mean that the whole of U.P. hills was found in the grips of these calamities. These occurred in several parts.

Source: Walton (1910) pp. 76-79; Atkinson (1886) pp. 531 - 533; Clay (1920) cited from Pokhriyal, ....., Himalayan Environment and Socio-Economic Development in the Himalayas. Delhi: B.R. Publishing.

**Table A4.1: Land Change Analysis Of Pauri Garhwal District From 1974 To 1994**

Changes In	Pauri Garhwal Five Year Averages				% Change	Uttaranchal <sup>▲</sup> Five Year Averages				% Change
	1974-79	1979-84	1984-89	1989-94	1974-94	1974-79	1979-84	1984-89	1989-94	1974-94
Forest Cover	470107	455528	453119	450393	-5.99	3403441	3439505	3432000	3430038	0.43
Area not available for cultivation <sup>⊗</sup>	31795	39089	45694	51697	72.31	350960	408225	423447	429593	29.12
Other uncultivated land excluding fallow land <sup>♣</sup>	82213	113319	129805	149149	100.17	691409	718419	794802	753340	10.80
Fallow land <sup>⊕</sup>	8817	10218	13103	17973	112.05	52872	53038	56465	71586	32.27
Net Sown Area	102914	101079	98511	89568	-14.44	695523	704072	683249	678997	-3.67

Note:

⊗ Includes area under non – agricultural use, barren and uncultivable land

♣ Includes permanent pastures and other grazing land, land under miscellaneous tree, crop and grows which is not included in net sown area and cultivable waste land

⊕ Includes current fallow and fallow land other than current fallow

▲ Uttaranchal excludes Haridwar

Source: Rao and Nandy (2002), Landuse Pattern and Population Pressures in Uttaranchal, p1-7 (Internet Article)

**Table A4.2: Population Growth For All India (1901 – 2001), Uttar Pradesh (1901 – 1991), Uttaranchal (2001) And Pauri Garhwal (1901 – 2001)**

Year	Population							
	India		Uttar Pradesh		Garhwal			
	Total (in crores)	% Increase/ Decrease	Total (in crores)	% Increase/ Decrease	Total	Males	Females	% Increase/ Decrease
1901	23.6	-	4.86	-	283760	139657	144103	-
1911	25.2	+ 5.75	4.81	- 0.9	316938	155650	161288	+ 11.7
1921	25.1	- 0.31	4.67	- 3.1	320602	153872	166730	+ 1.2
1931	27.9	+ 11	4.98	+ 6.6	352782	170473	182309	+ 10.0
1941	31.9	+ 14.22	5.65	+ 13.6	397867	191598	206269	+ 12.8
1951	36.1	+ 13.31	6.32	+ 11.8	422653	197784	224869	+ 6.2
1961	43.9	+ 21.64	7.37	+ 16.7	482327	222892	259435	+ 14.1
1971	54.8	+ 24.80	8.83	+ 19.8	553028	261054	291947	+ 14.6
1981	68.5	+ 24.66	11.08	+ 25.5	637877	305066	332711	+ 12.9
1991	84.4	+ 23.86	13.9	+ 25.5	682535	331371	351164	+ 7.0
2001	102.7	+ 21.3	8.4*	-	696851	331138	365713	+ 2.1

Note : 2001 data is not for State of Uttar Pradesh, but for newly formed Uttaranchal.

\* : Uttaranchal

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1981, 1991 and 2001

2. Figures for India and U.P. till 1981 cf Khanka (1988) Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment in a Backward Economy, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing, p.12-13



**Table A4.3: Change In Number, Net Sown Area, Average Size And Structure Of Land Holding In Pauri Garhwal**

A.

Period	Number of Holdings (% Change)	Net Sown Area (ha)	Average Size of Holding (ha)
1970 – 71 to 1980 – 81	- 12.63	29.00	0.90
1980 – 81 to 1985 – 86	- 3.80	- 5.11	1.33
1970 – 71 to 1985 – 86	- 15.95	22.41	1.31

B.

Period	1970 – 71		1976 – 77	
	Number of Operational Holding (in percent)	Area (ha)	Number of Operational Holding (in percent)	Area (ha)
Marginal	36.14	11.08	65.52	49.68
Small	32.84	26.54	19.05	20.18
Semi-Medium	27.95	48.20	14.28	19.36
Other Holding	3.07	14.18	1.15	10.78

Note: The table is adapted from

- (i) Swaroop, 1993, Agricultural Economy of Himalayan Region, VOL 11: Garhwal, Nainital: Gyanodaya Prakashan, p.83; 97 – 99
- (ii) Government of UP Board of Revenue (105, 113); NSS (213, 214). Adapted from Pokhriyal, (1993) Agrarian Economy of the Central Himalaya, Indus Publisher New Delhi, p51 – 52

**Table A4.4: Productivity Of Important Crop (Kgs/Ha) In Pauri District And Garhwal Region\***

	Pauri Garhwal		Garhwal	
	Average for 1983 – 84	Average for 1990 – 91	Average for 1983 – 84	Average for 1990 – 91
Wheat	998	1033	1059	1185
Paddy	942	958	1109	1165
Maize	854	857	1309	1258
<i>Mandua</i>	899	949	974	1047
All cereals & millets	946	987	1059	1116
Pulses	499	465	489	517
Oilseeds	364	458	365	463
Potatoes	16,535	19,282	16,679	19,015

Source: Adapted from Swarup, 1993, Agricultural Economy of Himalayan Region, Vol. 11 Garhwal Nainital: Gyanodaya Prakashan, p 163

- Garhwal region includes district of Pauri, Tehri, Chamoli, Uttarkashi and Dehradun districts

**Table A4.5: Proportion Of Cultivators To Total Population And To The Total Work Force (Rural) In Garhwal District (In Percentage)**

Year	Population	Cultivators as a proportion to total population	Male Cultivators (%rural male workers)	Female Cultivators (%rural female workers)	Total Cultivators (%total rural workers-)	Percent Female Cultivators to Total Cultivators
1951	422653	-	87.4	98.6	-	54.0
1961	482327	-	74.4	98.1	86.3	65.0
1971	553028	195878(35.42)	58.4	97.3	77.9	63.1
1981	637877	165037(26.87)	56.0	97.3	76.7	61.5
1991	682535	135929(19.92)	42.2	94.0	68.2	57.4
2001	696851	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 1951; 1961; 1971; 1991.

Figures in parenthesis show percent cultivators; NA= not available

**Table 4.6: Literacy Rates By Sex In 1991 And 2001**

	1991			2001		
	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female
Uttaranchal	57.75	72.74	41.63	72.28	84.01	60.26
Pauri Garhwal	65.53	82.57	49.65	77.99	91.47	66.14

Source: Census of India, 2001

**Table 4.7: In-Migration, Out-Migration And Net Migration In Garhwal District In 1961 And 1981 (As Percentage To The Population)**

District	Year	Inter – District Migration		
		In-migration from other districts of U.P	Out-migration to various districts of U.P	Net Migration
Pauri Garhwal	1961	5.1	10.9	-5.8
	1981	5.8	10.6	-4.8
Garhwal Division	1961	7.4	6.2	+1.2
	1981	10.2	7.6	+2.6

Source: Government of India 1961 and Government of India 1981 (a), adapted from Bora (1996) Himalayan Migration. A Study of the Hill Region of Uttar Pradesh, Delhi: Sage p1

**Table 4.8: Population Growth Rate And Sex Ratio (Females Per Thousand Males) For Pauri Garhwal District (1901 – 2001)\***

Year	Garhwal Population			* total Population change per decade	% growth per decade male population	% growth per decade female population	Proportion of Females in Total Population	Sex Ratio	Change in Sex Ratio
	Total	Males	Females						
1901	283760	139657	144103	-	-	-	50.3	1032	- 4
1911	316938	155650	161288	+ 11.7	+ 11.5	+ 11.9	50.9	1036	+ 4
1921	320602	153872	166730	+ 1.2	- 1.1	+ 3.4	52.0	1083	+ 47
1931	352782	170473	182309	+ 10.0	+ 10.8	+ 9.3	51.7	1069	- 14
1941	397867	191598	206269	+ 12.8	+ 12.4	+ 13.1	51.9	1076	+ 7
1951	422653	197784	224869	+ 6.2	+ 3.2	+ 9.0	53.2	1123	+ 47
1961	482327	222892	259435	+ 14.1	+ 12.7	+ 15.4	53.8	1144	+ 21
1971	553028	261054	291947	+ 14.6	+ 17.1	+ 12.5	52.8	1118	- 26
1981	637877	305066	332711	+ 12.9	+ 12.1	+ 13.6	53.1	1091	- 27
1991	682535	331371	351164	+ 7.0			52.7	1058	- 33
2001*	696851	331138	365713	+ 2.1			52.5	1104	+ 46

Note: Garhwal district included the district of Chamoli till February 24, 1960, hence figures for Garhwal till 1961 are inclusive of Garhwal and Chamoli. Subsequently the data till 1991 is based on Garhwal territory as existing at 2001 Census.

- Sources: 1. Census of India 1981, 1991 and 2001.  
2. U.P. District Gazette: Garhwal, 1989.

**Table A4.9: Percentage Variation Of Population In Garhwal And Uttar Pradesh, 1901 – 1991**

Years	Garhwal			Uttar Pradesh		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
1901 – 1911	+ 11.7	+ 11.3	+ 33.9	- 0.9	+ 0.01	- 8.9
1911 – 1921	+ 1.2	+ 1.2	+ 0.5	- 3.1	- 3.5	+ 0.4
1921 – 1931	+ 10.0	+ 11.2	+ 1.5	+ 6.7	+ 5.9	+ 12.8
1931 – 1941	+ 12.8	+ 11.8	-161.2	+ 13.6	+ 11.9	+ 26.5
1941 – 1951	+ 6.2	+ 4.6	+ 63.2	+ 11.8	+ 10.3	+ 22.8
1951 – 1961	+ 14.1	+ 12.4	+ 53.3	+ 16.7	+ 17.7	+ 9.9
1961 – 1971	+ 14.7	+ 13.9	+ 26.7	+ 19.8	+ 18.2	+ 30.7
1971 – 1981	+ 15.3	+ 11.0	+ 79.8	+ 25.5	+ 19.8	+ 60.6
1981 – 1991	+ 4.2	+ 1.5	+ 29.8	+ 25.2	+ 19.8	+ 60.6
1901 – 1991	+ 134.3	+110.9	+ 1051.4	+ 183.7	+ 157.5	+ 414.2

Source : Pant B.R (1995) Glimpses of Central Himalaya, New Delhi: Radha, p.35

**Table A4.10: Density Of Population In Garhwal (1971 – 2001)**

Years	Garhwal				All India
	Rural	Urban	Total	% change Total	
1971	96	564	102	-	177
1981	107	911	117	14.7	216
1991	109	1182	124	6.0	267
2001			129	4.0	324

Source: Census 1981, 1991, 2001

**Table A4.11: Rural- Urban Distribution Of Population For Garhwal District From 1971 – 2001**

Year	Total	Rural	Urban
1971	553028	518181 (3.7)	34847 (6.30)
1981	637877	575208 (90.18)	62669 (9.82)
1991	682535	601353 (88.11)	91182 (11.89)
2001	696851	606629 (87.1)	90222 (12.9)

Note : Figures in parenthesis show percentage of total  
Source: Census of India, 1971, 1981, 1991, 2001

**Table A4.12: Sex Ratio (Female Per 1000 Males) For All India (1921 - 2001); Uttar Pradesh (1901 - 1990); Uttaranchal (1991 – 2001) And Pauri Garhwal (1901 - 2001)**

Year	Sex Ratio		
	All India	Uttar Pradesh	Pauri Garhwal
1901	972	937	1032
1911	964	915	1036
1921	955	909	1083
1931	950	904	1069
1941	945	907	1076
1951	946	910	1123
1961	941	909	1144
1971	930	879	1118
1981	934	885	1091
1991	927	936*	1058
2001	933	964*	1104

Note : 1991 and 2001 data is not for State of Uttar Pradesh, but for newly formed Uttaranchal.  
\* : Uttaranchal State

Sources : 1. Census of India, 1981, 1991 and 2001

2. Figures for India and U.P. till 1981 cf Khanka (1988) Labour Force, Employment and Unemployment in a Backward Economy, Bombay: Himalaya Publishing, p.12-13

**Table A4.13: Occupational Structure In Garhwal 1961 – 1991 (Percent Of Main Workers)**

	1961	1971	1981	1991
Cultivation	85.5	78.01	63.18	62.40
Agriculture labour	0.47	1.30	0.71	1.80
Mining, Livestock	3.23	1.65	1.56	2.48
Total Primary	89.55	80.96	65.45	66.68
Manufacture household	1.87	0.66	0.81	0.51
Manufacture other than hh	0.80	0.83	1.68	2.08
Construction	0.95	0.56	3.48	2.61
Total Secondary	3.62	2.05	5.97	5.20
Trade and Commerce	0.84	1.58	3.33	4.31
Transport, Storage etc.	0.75	0.76	1.53	1.90
Other services	5.24	14.65	23.72	21.91
Total Tertiary	6.83	16.99	28.58	28.12
Main workers (% of total population)	58.87	45.40	40.95	31.91

Source: Pant, B.R. (1995) Glimpses of Central Himalaya. New Delhi: Radha p. 51

**Table A4.14: Population Of Main, Marginal And Non Workers (In Percent) And The Distribution Of Main Workers (Rural) Into Various Economic Activities (In Percent) In Pauri Garhwal And Garhwal Region. (1991)**

WORKER TABLE 1991 Census	Pauri Garhwal		Garhwal Region	
	Male (Overall)	Female (Overall)	Male (Overall)	Female (Overall)
(A)				
Main Workers	38.74	25.48	44.66	31.36
Marginal Workers	1.57	14.62	1.36	9.96
Non – Workers	59.69	59.90	53.98	58.69
(B)				
Economic Activity (Rural)	Male (Rural)	Female (Rural)	Male (Rural)	Female (Rural)
I	52.4	95.9	53.3	94.1
II	2.5	13.6	5.9	2.0
III	2.9	0.1	3.1	0.3
IV	–	–	0.2	–
V a	0.8	0.2	0.9	0.5
V b	2.4	0.2	3.7	0.4
VI	2.8	–	4.1	0.1
VII	4.7	0.1	4.8	0.2
VIII	2.2	–	2.2	–
IX	29.3	2.1	21.8	2.2

**Key:** I : Cultivators; II : Agricultural Labourers; III: Livestock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation orchards and allied activities; IV: Mining and quarrying; Va: Manufacturing, processing, servicing repairs in household industry; Vb: same as Va but in other than household industries; VI: Construction; VII: Trade and Commerce; VIII: Transport, Storage and Communications; IX: Other services

Note: (A) Main, marginal and non – workers refer to overall workers  
(B) Refers to economic activity of rural workers only.

Source: Adapted from Swarup (1993), Agricultural Economy of Himalayan Region, Volume II Garhwal, Nainital: Gyanodaya Prakashan, p 34 and 37



**Table A4.15: Land Use Pattern In Pauri Garhwal District As Per 1996 – 97**

Item	Data (in hectare)
Total Area	753288
Forest	444901
Non Agricultural	34551
Barren Uncultivated	4470
With Permanent Pasture	43694
Misc. Tree Crops	62132
Fallow Land	18146
Net Sown	87416
Sown More Than Once	48412
Gross Cropped	135826
Net Irrigated Area	7502
Gross Irrigated Area	7990

Source: District Statistical Booklet 1998

**Table A4.16: Population Pressure On Land Resources In Pauri Garhwal 1990 – 91**

		Pauri Garhwal (in ha)	Garhwal Region (in ha)
1.	Land Per Capita		
	a) Total Geographical area	0.797	1.009
	b) Total Reporting area	1.111	1.103
	c) Forests	0.659	0.770
	d) Under non – agricultural uses	0.025	0.024
	e) Barren and uncultivable	0.050	0.079
	f) Other uncultivated land (excluding fallow)	0.217	0.121
	g) Fallow land	0.026	0.013
	h) Net sown area	0.134	0.097
	i) Gross cropped area	0.202	0.154
2.	Cultivated area per Bullock Pair in 1986 – 87	2.061	1.704
3.	Forest area per capita (ha)	0.658	0.770

Note: Landuse data refers to agricultural year 1990-91 and population figures are for 1991 Census

Source: Swaroop, 1993, Agricultural Economy of Himalayan Region Nainital: Gyanodaya Prakashan, p 81

**Table A4.17: Profile Of Yamkeshwar Block, Pauri Garhwal District**

Total area (in hectare)	36207
Forest	20629
Current Fallow	11
Cultivable waste	2502
Other fallow	1178
Non cultivable waste	1853
Landuse (other than agriculture)	804
Grazing/ Pasture Land	2145
Area under tree plantation	3987
Cultivated land (including irrigated land)	6129
Length of all roads (in Kms)	749
(a) National Highway	17
(b) State Highway	110
(c) Connecting Road (Sampark Marg)	45
(d) District (Headquarter)	56
Villages connected by road	47
Electrified village	118
Non-electrified villages	106

Sources: (1) Sankhiya Patrika, Garhwal, 1994 p35 – 36  
(2) Records of the Block Development Officer (BDO)

**Table A4.18: Population And Occupation In Yamkeshwar (1991)**

	<b>Yamkeshwar</b>	<b>Pauri Garhwal</b>
<b>Rural Population (1991)</b>		
Total	40533	601353
Male	19778	283753
Female	20755	317600
Growth rate (1981 – 91)	7.3	4.54
<b>Scheduled Caste (1991)</b>		
Total	4019	92261
Male	2024	45822
Female	1995	46439
<b>Scheduled tribes (1991)</b>		
Total	28	1502
Male	19	861
Female	9	641
<b>Economic activity (1991)</b>		
I Cultivators	7364	135929
II Agricultural labourers	120	3927
III Livestock, forestry etc.	152	5346
IV Mine and Quarrying	1	57
V Household Industry	158	1088
VI Other than household Industry	146	4533
VII Construction	382	5696
VIII Trade and Commerce	583	9380
IX Transport Storage etc.	202	4146
X Other services	2722	47729
Total Worker	11830	217831
Non Worker	4499	51374
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16329</b>	<b>269205</b>

Source: Sankhiya Patrika, Pauri Garhwal, 1994 p20 – 24

**Table A5.1: Population Distribution Of Study Villages Including And Excluding Migrants**

	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Total resident population excluding out-migrant and their dependants</b>		
Male	204	42.3
Female	278	57.7
Total	482	100
<b>Total resident population of household including out-migrant (excluding dependants)</b>		
Male	331	54.1
Female	281	45.9
Total	612	100
<b>Total resident population plus migrant population (including dependants)</b>		
Male	370	51.0
Female	355	49.0
Total	725	100.0
<b>Total migrant population excluding dependants</b>		
Male	127	97.7
Female	3	2.3
Total	130	100
<b>Total migrant population including dependants</b>		
Male	166	68.3
Female	77	31.7
Total	243	100

**Table A5.2: Percentage distribution of the main sources of incomes for the 102 households**

Primary source of cash income	Migrant	Non-Migrant	Total
Agricultural Income	41460 [5.4]	23200 [7.2]	64660 [5.9]
Livestock Income	66000 [8.5]	22700 [7.0]	88700 [8.1]
Wages	17200 [2.2]	62900 [19.5]	80100 [7.3]
<b>Hiring/Ploughing</b>	9350 [1.2]	6800 [2.1]	16150 [1.4]
Salary	-	45600 [14.2]	45600 [4.1]
Pension	151700 [19.6]	79100 [24.6]	230800 [21.1]
Land Rent	-	-	-
Building	-	-	-
Remittances	349000 [45.1]	-	349000 [31.9]
Interest	-	-	-
Customary/Traditional Job	52350 [6.7]	32900 [10.2]	85250 [7.8]
Others	85330 [11.0]	48000 [14.9]	133330 [12.1]
Total	772390	321200	1093590

Migrant n = 72 ; Non-migrant n = 30 ; Total n = 102  
 [ ] denotes column percentages

**Table A6.1: Sexual Division Of Labour By Migration Status And Land Cultivation (In Percentage)**

OVERALL FOR ALL SURVEY HOUSEHOLDS								GRAND TOTAL	
Agricultural Task		Low (.01-2 acres)	Total	Medium (2.01- 4 acres)	Total	High (>4.01 acres)	Total	Total (L + M + H)	Total
Activities		Low	Total	Medium	Total	High	Total	Total	Total
1. Land Terracing	M	51 (94.44)	54 (100)	24 (88.89)	27 (100)	14 (87.5)	16 (100)	89 (91.75)	97 (100)
	F	3 (5.56)		3 (11.11)		2 (12.5)		8 (8.25)	
2. Land Clearance	M	2 (3.70)	54 (100)	1 (3.70)	27 (100)	1 (6.25)	16 (100)	4 (4.12)	97 (100)
	F	52 (96.30)		26 (96.30)		15 (93.75)		93 (95.88)	
3. Manuring	M	–	54 (100)	–	27 (100)	–	16 (100)	–	97 (100)
	F	54 (100)		27 (100)		16 (100)		97 (100)	
4. Ploughing & Leveling	M	54 (100)	54 (100)	27 (100)	27 (100)	16 (100)	16 (100)	97 (100)	97 (100)
	F	–		–		–		–	
5. Sowing	M	53 (98.15)	54 (100)	26 (96.30)	27 (100)	16 (100)	16 (100)	95 (97.94)	97 (100)
	F	1 (1.85)		1 (3.70)		–		2 (2.06)	
6. Weeding	M	–	54 (100)	–	27 (100)	–	16 (100)	–	97 (100)
	F	54 (100)		27 (100)		16 (100)		97 (100)	
7. Irrigating	M	8 (66.67)	12 (100)	8 (66.67)	12 (100)	5 (62.5)	8 (100)	21 (65.63)	32 (100)
	F	4 (33.33)		4 (33.33)		3 (37.5)		11 (34.38)	
8. Guarding	M	28 (60.87)	46 (100)	15 (62.50)	24 (100)	11 (68.75)	16 (100)	54 (62.79)	86 (100)
	F	18 (39.13)		9 (37.50)		5 (31.25)		32 (37.21)	
9. Harvesting	M	–	54 (100)	–	27 (100)	1 (6.25)	16 (100)	1 (1.03)	97 (100)
	F	54 (100)		27 (100)		15 (93.75)		96 (98.97)	
10. Transporting	M	2 (3.70)	54 (100)	1 (3.70)	27 (100)	–	16 (100)	3 (3.09)	97 (100)
	F	52 (96.30)		26 (96.30)		16 (100)		94 (96.91)	
11. Threshing	M	13 (24.07)	54 (100)	11 (40.74)	27 (100)	5 (31.25)	16 (100)	29 (29.90)	97 (100)
	F	41 (75.93)		16 (59.26)		11 (68.75)		68 (70.10)	
12. Winnowing	M	–	54 (100)	–	27 (100)	–	16 (100)	–	97 (100)
	F	54 (100)		27 (100)		16 (100)		97 (100)	
13. Storing	M	–	54 (100)	–	27 (100)	–	16 (100)	–	97 (100)
	F	54 (100)		27 (100)		16 (100)		97 (100)	
14.Repairing “gul”	M	9 (75)	12 (100)	8 (66.7)	12 (100)	6 (75)	8 (100)	23 (71.9)	32 (100)
	F	3 (25)		4 (33.3)		2 (25)		9 (28.1)	
15.Repairing “tools”	M	36 (66.7)	54 (100)	14 (51.9)	27 (100)	12 (75)	16 (100)	62 (63.9)	97 (100)
	F	18 (33.3)		13 (48.1)		4 (25)		35 (36.1)	

(A) MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS								GRAND TOTAL	
Agricultural Task	Sex	Low (.01-2 acres)	Total	Medium (2.01- 4acres)	Total	High (>4.01acres)	Total	Total (L + M + H)	Total
1. Land Terracing	M	36 (92.31)	39 (100)	18 (85.71)	21 (100)	8 (88.89)	9 (100)	62 (89.86)	69 (100)
	F	3 (7.69)		3 (14.29)		1 (11.11)		7 (10.14)	
2. Land Clearance	M	1 (2.56)	39 (100)	—	21 (100)	1 (11.11)	9 (100)	2 (2.90)	69 (100)
	F	38 (97.44)		21 (100)		8 (88.89)		67 (97.10)	
3. Manuring	M	—	39 (100)	—	21 (100)	—	9 (100)	—	69 (100)
	F	39 (100)		21 (100)		9 (100)		69 (100)	
4. Ploughing & Leveling	M	39 (100)	39 (100)	21 (100)	21 (100)	9 (100)	9 (100)	69 (100)	69 (100)
	F	—		—		—		—	
5. Sowing	M	38 (97.44)	39 (100)	20 (95.24)	21 (100)	9 (100)	9 (100)	67 (97.10)	69 (100)
	F	1 (2.56)		1 (4.76)		—		2 (2.90)	
6. Weeding	M	—	39 (100)	—	21 (100)	—	9 (100)	—	69 (100)
	F	39 (100)		21 (100)		9 (100)		69 (100)	
7. Irrigating	M	4 (50)	8 (100)	6 (60)	10 (100)	2 (50)	4 (100)	12 (54.55)	22 (100)
	F	4 (50)		4 (40)		2 (50)		10 (45.45)	
8. Guarding	M	18 (56.25)	32 (100)	9 (50)	18 (100)	6 (66.67)	9 (100)	33 (55.93)	59 (100)
	F	14 (43.75)		9 (50)		3 (33.33)		26 (44.07)	
9. Harvesting	M	—	39 (100)	—	21 (100)	1 (11.11)	9 (100)	1 (1.45)	69 (100)
	F	39 (100)		21 (100)		8 (88.89)		68 (98.55)	
10. Transporting	M	—	39 (100)	1 (4.76)	21 (100)	—	9 (100)	1 (1.45)	69 (100)
	F	39 (100)		20 (95.24)		9 (100)		68 (98.55)	
11. Threshing	M	8 (20.51)	39 (100)	6 (28.57)	21 (100)	2 (22.22)	9 (100)	16 (23.19)	69 (100)
	F	31 (79.49)		15 (71.43)		7 (77.78)		53 (76.81)	
12. Winnowing	M	—	39 (100)	—	21 (100)	—	9 (100)	—	69 (100)
	F	39 (100)		21 (100)		9 (100)		69 (100)	
13. Storing	M	—	39 (100)	—	21 (100)	—	9 (100)	—	69 (100)
	F	39 (100)		21 (100)		9 (100)		69 (100)	
14. Repairing “gul”	M	5 (62.5)	8 (100)	6 (60.0)	10 (100)	3(75.0)	4 (100)	14 (63.6)	22 (100)
	F	3 (37.5)		4 (40.0)		1 (25.0)		8 (36.4)	
15. Repairing “tools”	M	23 (59.0)	39 (100)	8 (38.1)	21 (100)	6 (66.7)	9 (100)	37 (53.6)	69 (100)
	F	16 (41.0)		13 (61.9)		3 (33.3)		32 (46.4)	

(B) NON-MIGRANT								GRAND TOTAL	
Agricultural Task	Sex	Low (.01-2 acres)	Total	Medium (2.01- 4 acres)	Total	High (> 4.01 acres)	Total	Total (L + M + H)	Total
1. Land Terracing	M	15 (100)	15 (100)	6 (100)	6 (100)	6 (85.71)	7	27 (96.43)	28 (100)
	F	-		-		1 (14.29)		1 (3.57)	
2. Land Clearance	M	1 (6.67)	15 (100)	1 (16.67)	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	2 (7.14)	28 (100)
	F	14 (93.33)		5 (83.33)		7 (100)		26 (92.86)	
3. Manuring	M	-	15 (100)	-	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	-	28 (100)
	F	15 (100)		6 (100)		7 (100)		28 (100)	
4. Ploughing & Leveling	M	15 (100)	15 (100)	6 (100)	6 (100)	7 (100)	7 (100)	28 (100)	28 (100)
	F	-		-		-		-	
5. Sowing	M	15 (100)	15 (100)	6 (100)	6 (100)	7 (100)	7 (100)	28 (100)	28 (100)
	F	-		-		-		-	
6. Weeding	M	-	15 (100)	-	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	-	28 (100)
	F	15 (100)		6 (100)		7 (100)		28 (100)	
7. Irrigating	M	4 (100)	4 (100)	2 (100)	2 (100)	3 (75)	4 (100)	9 (90)	10 (100)
	F	-		-		1 (25)		1 (10)	
8. Guarding	M	10 (71.43)	14 (100)	6 (100)	6 (100)	5 (71.43)	7 (100)	21 (77.78)	27 (100)
	F	4 (28.57)		-		2 (28.57)		6 (22.22)	
9. Harvesting	M	-	15 (100)	-	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	-	28 (100)
	F	15 (100)		6 (100)		7 (100)		28 (100)	
10. Transporting	M	2 (13.33)	15 (100)	-	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	2 (7.14)	28 (100)
	F	13 (86.67)		6 (100)		7 (100)		26 (92.86)	
11. Threshing	M	5 (33.33)	15 (100)	5 (83.33)	6 (100)	3 (42.86)	7 (100)	13 (46.43)	28 (100)
	F	10 (66.67)		1 (16.67)		4 (57.14)		15 (53.57)	
12. Winnowing	M	-	15 (100)	-	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	-	28 (100)
	F	15 (100)		6 (100)		7 (100)		28 (100)	
13. Storing	M	-	15 (100)	-	6 (100)	-	7 (100)	-	28 (100)
	F	15 (100)		6 (100)		7 (100)		(100)	
14.Repairing "gul"	M	4 (100)	4 (100)	2 (100)	2 (100)	3(75.0)	4 (100)	9 (90)	10 (100)
	F	-		-		1 (25.0)		1 (10)	
15.Repairing "tools"	M	13 (86.7)	15 (100)	6 (100)	6 (100)	6 (85.7)	9 (100)	25 (89.3)	28 (100)
	F	2 (13.3)		-		1 (14.3)		3 (10.7)	

Note: Figures in parenthesis show row total percentage for each Low, medium, High and grand total

**Table A8.1: Cases Of Accidents In The Study Area**

<b>Reason for accident</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Total</b>
Fell from tree	8 [40]		8 [33.3]
Fell from cliff	3 [15]	1 [25]	4 [16.7]
Snake bite	8 [40]		8 [33.3]
Electric shock (grazing)		1 [25]	1 [4.2]
Road accident	1 [15]	1 [25]	2 [8.3]
Attacked by boar		1 [25]	1 [4.2]
Total	20	4	24

Source: Figures in parenthesis show column percentage.  
Survey of 102 households in Bunga and Daurn



## AS2.1: BASELINE SURVEY SCHEDULE

Schedule No. \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Village \_\_\_\_\_

1. Head of the household: \_\_\_\_\_
2. House Number: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Caste: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Brahmin \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Rajput \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Schedule Caste \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Any other \_\_\_\_\_
4. Main Source of income of the household: \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Main Source \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Secondary Source \_\_\_\_\_

5. Agricultural Land Details: \_\_\_\_\_ (in nalli 20 nalli = 1 acre)

S. No.		Irrigated	Non-irrigated	Total
1.	Owned			
2.	Leased in			
3.	Leased out			
4.	Cultivated land			
5.	Land under tree plantation			

6. Household members (detail of only those who are currently residing in the village)

Above 14 years		Below 14 years		Total
Male	Female	Male	Female	

7. Agricultural Produce in last 12 months

Sr. No.	Produce	Have surplus to sell	No surplus to sell, but sufficient for family consumption	Household sufficiency of produce		
				Less than 3 months	3 to 6 months	Above 6 months
1.	Rice					
2.	Wheat					
3.	Jhangora					
4.	Mandua					
5.	Pulses					
6.	Chulai					
7.	Soyabean					
8.	Potatoes					
9.	Onions					
10.	Fruits					
11.	Others					

8. Details of the house

1.	(i)	Kutchra (thatched/ tin roofing)	
	(ii)	Pucca (patal roofing)	
	(iii)	Cement	
2.	(i)	Owned	
	(ii)	Rented	
	(iii)	Any other	
3.		Number of rooms	
4.		Kitchen Y/N	

9. Livestock Asset

Sr. No.	Livestock	Numbers
1.	Oxen	
2.	Buffaloes	
3.	Cow	
4.	Goat	
5.	Sheep	
6.	Mule/horse	
7.	Any other	

10. Cattle shed

- a. No/ Yes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 b. Attached to homestead: \_\_\_\_\_  
 c. Far from homestead: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Details of the migrants who have migrated outside the village and reside outside the village.

S. No.	Name of Migrant	Sex	Education	Age	Year of Migration	Place of Migration	Main occupation	Marital status		Of Married		If family residing with migrant then details			Remittances		Frequency of visits		
								Married	Unmarried	Family residing with migrant	Family left behind in village	Wife	How many children		Regularity of remittance				
													Total	How many migrated within	Regular	Irregular		Send when asked	Amount remitted annually
1																			
2																			

12. Give detail of any "return migrant" in the household

S.No.	Name	Year of first migration	Year of last migration	Reasons for return
1.				
2.				

13. Any seasonal migrant in the family?

S.No.	Name	How many months in a year they reside outside	Year when first migrated for seasonal labour
1.			
2.			

Reasons for seasonal migration : \_\_\_\_\_

## AS2.2: VILLAGE SCHEDULE

Note: To be filled by informants, government officials/ sources in the village, block and observations.

### Identification

(a)	Village		(b)	Block	
(c)	Patwari Circle		(d)	Kanungo Circle	
(e)	District	_____	(f)	Total area (sq. Kms.)	_____
(g)	Total area under cultivation	_____	(h)	Total area under forest	_____
(i)	Height above sea level	_____	(j)	Total number of households	_____

### A.

#### Q.1. Population (from Census or any other government records)

Age Range	Males	Females	Total
0 - 9			
10 - 19			
20 - 29			
30 - 39			
40 - 49			
50 - 59			
60 - 69			
70 +			
All Ranges			

#### Q.2. Occupation (from any government source)

	Categories
(a)	<b>Primary Sector</b>
	(i) Cultivators
	(ii) Agricultural Labourer
	(iii) Mining, Forestry etc.
(b)	<b>Secondary Sector</b>
	(i) Household industry
	(ii) Manufacturing
	(iii) Construction
(c)	<b>Services Sector</b>
	(i) Trade & Commerce
	(ii) Transport, Storage, etc.
	(iii) Other services
	All Categories

#### Q.3. No. of Literates (from any government source)

	Literates	Male	Female	Total
(i)	Literates without educational level			
(ii)	Primary or Junior Basic level			
(iii)	High School/ Higher Secondary level			
(iv)	University Degree or Postgraduate level			
(v)	Technical and others			
	All Categories			

## AGRICULTURE

Q.4. What are the important crops grown in the village?

Q.5. Agriculture Calendar

S.No.	Crops	Time grown	Months when they occur		
			Sowing	Harvesting	Marketing
1.					
2.					

Q.6. Are irrigation facilities available?

		Yes/No			
(i)	If yes, mention the sources:	1.	Canals	2.	Guls
		3.	Fountain	4.	Tank
		5.	Others	6.	Reservoir
(ii)	If not, mention the reasons:	1.	Lack of water source.		
		2.	Government's neglect		
		3.	Lack of people's consciousness		
		4.	Others		

Q.7. What are the Agricultural Financial Institutions in the village?

- A. Money lenders
- B. Co-operative Society
- C. Both
- D. Any other (indigenous saving system)

Q.8. Are the following available in the village?

(i)	Seed Stores	Yes/No
(ii)	Co-operative Store	Yes/No
(iii)	Fertiliser Depot	Yes/No
If no, where (how far located)		

Q.9. Accessibility to services and amenities:

A. Administrative, Educational, Medical facilities etc.

Facilities	Within Village	Between 1-3 Km.	Between 3-5 Km.	Between 5-10 Km.	Above 10 Km.	How long does it take to get there	If outside village where
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	
<b>(1) Administrative</b>							
(i) District Headquarter							
(ii) Block Headquarter							
(iii) Tehsil Headquarter							
(iv) Kanungo Circle Headquarter							
(v) Patwari Circle Headquarter							
(vi) Police Station							
<b>(2) Educational</b>							
(i) Primary School							
(ii) Middle School							
(iii) High School/ Intermediate College							
(iv) College							

<b>(3) Medical</b>							
(i) Hospital							
(ii) Dispensary							
(iii) Maternity & Child Welfare Centre							
(iv) Primary Health Centre							
(v) Sub- Centre							
(vi) Family Planning Centre							
<b>(4) Postal</b>							
(i) Branch Post Office							
(ii) Sub-Post Office							
<b>(5) Bank</b>							
<b>(6) Livestock</b>							
(i) Veterinary Hospital							
(ii) Stockman Centre							
(iii) Artificial Insemination Centre							

**B. Shops**

	Name of the shop	No. of shops	If outside the village, its location in order of preference	
			1.	2.
(i)	Grocer/ General Merchant		1.	2.
(ii)	Tea shop		1.	2.
(iii)	Utensils & other household items		1.	2.
(iv)	Clothing		1.	2.
(v)	Tailoring		1.	2.
(vi)	Haircut		1.	2.
(vii)	Medicine		1.	2.
(viii)	Government Fair Price shop		1.	2.
(ix)	Weekly market		1.	2.
(x)	Others (specify)		1.	2.

**C. Small Industrial Establishments**

	Name of the Establishment	No. of Establishment	If outside the village, its location in order of preference	
			1.	2.
(i)	Flour Mills		1.	2.
(ii)	Oil Press		1.	2.
(iii)	Potteries		1.	2.
(iv)	Shoe making		1.	2.
(v)	Blacksmith		1.	2.
(vi)	Carpentry		1.	2.
(vii)	Cottage industry		1.	2.
(viii)	Others (specify)		1.	2.

**D. Officials**

	Residing in the village	Place of residence (outside village)	Frequency of visits
1. B.D.O			
2. Patwari			
3. Forest Officer			
4. Talati			
5. Police Patil			
6. Villager Chowkidar			

7. Water Tank Chowkidar			
8. Forest Chowkidar			
9. Gram Pradhan			
10. PHC doctor			
11. LHV			
12. Health assistant			
13. MPW			
14. ANM			
15. Dais (trained)			
16. Dais (untrained)			
17. Hakeem/ Vaid			
18. RMP			
19. Other Government Officials			

E. Electricity, Water, Transport

Electricity

- (i) Village electrified Yes/ No  
(ii) Year in which electrified \_\_\_\_\_  
(iii) Supply regular/ irregular \_\_\_\_\_  
(iv) Households with metered/ unmetered electricity \_\_\_\_\_

Drinking Water

- (i) Village has piped water supply Yes/ No  
(ii) Year in which piped water supplied \_\_\_\_\_  
(iii) If supply regular/ irregular \_\_\_\_\_  
(iv) Water points in villages number \_\_\_\_\_ location \_\_\_\_\_  
(v) How many households have piped water supply Yes/ No  
(vi) Proportion of households with piped (on tap) water now \_\_\_\_\_  
(vii) If no, what is the major source of drinking water  
Spring/ gul/ canal/ river/ stream  
(viii) How far is it from the village? \_\_\_\_\_  
(ix) Time taken to reach there \_\_\_\_\_  
(x) Is water available throughout the year?  
Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
(xi) If no, how long is water available? (no. of months) \_\_\_\_\_

F. Transport

- (i) Approach to the village pukha road/ kutchra road/ pathway  
(ii) Distance from pukha road \_\_\_\_\_  
(iii) Village has a bus stop Yes/ No  
(iv) Distance from bus stop \_\_\_\_\_ name of bus stop \_\_\_\_\_  
(v) Transport available public/ private/ both  
(vi) Frequency of public transport  
(vii) Places village is connected by public transport  
(viii) Are there times during the year, when the village is cut-off and public transport cannot reach the village \_\_\_\_\_

G. Is some land in this village collectively or communally owned

- (i) Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
(ii) Many areas/ nallies \_\_\_\_\_  
(iii) To what use has this land be put to \_\_\_\_\_

Q.10. Change in the village

- (i) Is there any change in social and cultural condition in the village community?  
(ii) Is there any change in consumption pattern in both agricultural inputs and items of personal consumption?  
(iii) Is there any change in cropping pattern, yields and agricultural practices?

- (iv) Is there any change in transportation and communication?
- (v) What are the developments in the villages? Since when they have taken place?
- (vi) What are the development problems of your village?
- (vii) In general, would you say people in this village are economically better off than they were about 10 years back, about the same or worse off?
  - Better off
  - At par
  - Worse off

**B. Agriculture - related**

1. What is usual payment or rental arrangement for tenant farmers or sharecroppers in the village?
  - (i) Pay a certain percentage of \_\_\_\_\_ what % \_\_\_\_\_ crop to the owner
  - (ii) Fixed money rent \_\_\_\_\_ Rent per month \_\_\_\_\_

2. For sharecroppers, does the owner provide seeds and other inputs?  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 What inputs? \_\_\_\_\_

3. How much are following types of agricultural workers paid in this community, whether in cash or in kind?

	Common specific type of work	Cash payment (per day, per week or by piece of work)	In kind payment (By operation or by piece of work)
Men			
Women			
Children under 15 yrs.			

4. Price at which crop was sold last year.

	Maximum Price	Minimum Price
Rice		
Jhangora		
Mandua		
Wheat		
Barley		
Mustard		
Tumeric		
Kauni		
Chillies		
Pulses		
Maize		
Others		

5. What is typical wage for non-agricultural wage labour here \_\_\_\_\_

6. Note the cost of the following in the local market in this village or in the nearest market for this village.

Rupees per unit of usage	
	Per
Rice	
Wheat	
Mandua	
Jhangora	
Pulses (a)	
(b)	

(c)	
Oil	
Kerosene	
Milk	
Meat	
Sugar	



**AS2.3: HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE - I**

Village Name \_\_\_\_\_

Schedule No

**I. RESPONDENT/HOUSEHOLD BASIC CHARACTERISTICS**

a. Age \_\_\_\_\_ b. Sex / \_\_\_\_\_

- 1. Respondent's Name : \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. Status of the Respondent in the Family and Household : \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. Name of the Head of the Household : \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. Household Identification Number, if any : \_\_\_\_\_

5. Migrant\* Household :  Non Migrant Household :

- 6. (i) Religion \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Hindu \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Muslim \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Christian \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) Buddhist \_\_\_\_\_
  - e) Any other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- (ii) Caste \_\_\_\_\_ Sub-Caste \_\_\_\_\_
  - a) Rajput \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) Brahmin \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) Dom \_\_\_\_\_
  - d) other, specify \_\_\_\_\_

**II. HOUSEHOLD-FAMILY STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION**

- 7.1 Total No. of Members in Household \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.2 No. of families (separate hearth groups) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.3 Head of Household (if any so recognised of overall households) \_\_\_\_\_
- 7.4 Description of Living Arrangements :

- a. No of Rooms and Distribution of Family Members into Rooms / Space available  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. No. of chulhas, whether separate kitchens, cooking arrangement, how chullahs organised / function  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. House is made of cement, pucca, kutcha, or patal ?
- d. Does this have a cowshed? If yes, where

---

\* Migrant household definition : a family from which atleast one usual member has left for atleast a period of 6 months to live outside the family. Migrants who have migrated with their complete family who keep no connection with the village/household and do not enjoy any fruit of land must not be considered for this study.

7.5 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION : Members Currently Residing In House hold (filled family/hearth-group wise with head at the start).

Sr.No	Name (in order of)	Relationship to Head of the Household (Overall head)	Sex (M/F)	Age (in completed years)	Marital Status M/UM/Divorced/Separated/	Education						
						Illiterate	Read & Write	Primary	Junior High School	High School	Intermediate	Graduate & Above
1												
2												

7.6 Occupation of All Adult Members Currently Residing in the Household (follow above order)

Sr. No	Name (in above order)	Main/Primary Occupation								Income per month (Total)	Secondary Occupation (Mention clearly)	Income per month
		Agriculture	Agricultural labourer	Non-Agricultural Manual	Animal Husbandary	Small Petty Shop	Government Service	Private service	Others (specify)			
1												
2												

7.7 School going children in the household :

Name	Sex	Class	Regular in school or not. Give Reasons

8.0 For Dom Community only.

8.1 Traditional caste occupation (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8.2 Do you/family members engage in this occupation and why

- Yes, regular basis
- Yes, in financial crisis
- Yes, on demand from villagers
- No, given up completely
- Any other response \_\_\_\_\_

8.3 Identification of Household members(s) engaged in this occupation (name, relationship to respondent)

- 
- 
- 

8.4 Remuneration received for caste occupation (Any traditional pattern of remuneration)

- In cash (specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- In kind (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

III HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

9. Land Ownership

9.1 Total land owned by this household : \_\_\_\_\_

92 Irrigated : \_\_\_\_\_

Unirrigated : \_\_\_\_\_

9.3 Collective Ownership \_\_\_\_\_ Individual ownership \_\_\_\_\_ Both \_\_\_\_\_ (tick only)

9.4 In whose name/names is the collective land ? \_\_\_\_\_

9.5 Who has the right to sell this land? \_\_\_\_\_

9.6 Has the household leased in or leased out some of the above land. For what purpose? Name the household to whom land has been leased in or out. Are you related to him. Specify. Is it a migrant household ?

	Irrigated	Unirrigated	Purpose		
			Rental	Share Cropping	Any other
Land Leased Out					
Land leased in					
Total					

Other details (Name, relation, whether migrant - to whom land is leased in or out )

---

9.7 How much of this land does this household cultivate? Who are the main family workers and do you hire? Has cultivated land increased, decreased over past year?

Net Area Cultivated		Total	Family Labour Fully/ mostly Name them Specify	Hired labour (specify no & period for hired labour) (season)	Land Under Cultivation*			
Irrigated	Unirrigated				Increased (by)	Reason	Decreased (by)	Reason

\* Details of the above items (if any) (separate sheet)

9.8 Write on the above issues in detail.

Does the family cultivate collectively? Do all the families pool in all the produce or does each individual owner / producer keep their individual produce ? Take down details separately of the quality of land which is leased in or leased out. Is it irrigated or non-irrigated ? How fertile is it ? What is the produce on it ? Did the household earlier take or give more land on lease ? What is the households experience on this issue ? On what sort of land and for which tasks does the household hire labour ? Give details. What is the nature and amount of this wage labour. Please specify.

---

### Assets

9.9 Does the house have? Yes/No. When did you get? Who bought?

	Assets	Yes/No	When bought? Who bought? How
1.	T.V.		
2.	Radio		
3.	Gas stove (LPG)		
4.	Kerosene cooking stove		
5.	Electricity connector		

6.	Solar Energy Connection		
7.	Cycle		
8.	Scooter/ Motorcycle		
9.	Steel cupboard		
10.	Wooden bed, chair, table, etc.		
11.	Fan		
12.	Mixer/ Iron		
13.	Water tank		
14.	Big wall clock		
15.	Any other		

9.9 (a) Give details of all other types of immovable/movable property/assets you hold and whether collectively/Undividually:

- i) Shop
- ii) Equipment (like flourmill, generator etc. specify) \_\_\_\_\_
- iii) Any other

9.10 Agricultural Produce (Use separate sheet for (i) Collective Household (ii) All individual owners)

a) What are all the crops and vegetables you cultivate? Give details of last one year.

Sr. No.	Name of crop/ Vegetable	Kharif Crop		Rabi Crop		Period for which sufficient for home consumption	Product has increased or decreased in last 10 years, Reasons
		Irrigated	Unirrigated	Irrigated	Unirrigated		
1	Rice						
2	Wheat						
3	Jhangora						
4	Mandua						
5	Barley / Jo						
6	Mustard						
7	Turmeric						
8	Onion						
9	Kauni						
10	Chillies						
11	Maize						
12	Tuhar						
13	Gahat						
14	Urad						
15	Bhatt						
16	Any other						

b. In winter, summer and monsoon season, are you able to grow some vegetables? How much? Give details? For how long are these vegetables sufficient?

9.11 Livestock (Use separate sheet for (i) collective household (ii) each individual owner)

a. Do you raise any livestock? Yes \_\_\_\_ No. \_\_\_\_

b. If yes, which of these livestock have you raised in last twelve months. Have you earned any income from these livestock?

S. No	Livestock	Current Number	Types of Use the Livestock is Put to			Earning in last Twelve month	Have the number of livestock you kept increased or decreased in last 10 years?	Reasons
			Home Use	Hiring Out	Selling			
1	Bull							
2	Cows							
3	Buffaloes							
4	Goat							
5	Sheep							
6	Ponies/ Mules							
7	Pig							
8	Chicken							
9	Others (specify)							

**SEPARATE SHEET FOR EACH HEARTH**

9.12.a. Total family or household income per month and/or annual and the various sources from which it comes. (Fill separate table for each hearth separately)

Sr. No.	Sources	Income	
		Per Month	Annually
1	Agricultural product sale		
2	Livestock		
3	Wages		
4	Salary		
5	Pension		
6	Rent of land		
7	Rent of building		
8	Remittances		
9	Interest on lending		
10	Customary/traditional jobs		
11	Others (specify)		

9.12. b. Are the income from various sources and various household members pooled? If yes, how is the monthly expenditure undertaken? Who has the control of the money and who decides expenditure?

9.12 b. If no, does each hearth group keep income separate? Fill separately for all hearths.  
Separate sheet for (i) collective HH (ii) each hearth

9.12.c. What are the various items on which you spend money monthly? Can you give an approximate amount spent on those items last month? For e.g. food items, fuel, electricity, personal goods like clothing footwear, medicine, education, conveyance, repayment of debts. What is the adequacy of income?

Sr. No.		Approx. Exp. (per month)	Approx. Exp. (per annum)	Adequacy of Income*
1	Food			
2	Fuel / Gas / Kerosene			
3	Electricity			
4	Clothing/footwear			



### 10.5 Current Migration Details

Sr.No	Name of Migrant	Relationship to the respondent	Education	Current age	Age at time of first Migration	Marital Status at time of migration	Is he one time migrant? First time movers	Is he repeat migrant? If repeat, Number of Times Multiple Movers	Details of Migration Cycle								Current period of Out-migration	Present occupation/Job (specify)	Income (per month)	Present place of Residence	Total duration of migration
									Ist Time				Last Time								
									Period of migation	Place	Job	Income	Reason for Return	Period of igration	Place	Job					
1																					
2																					

10.7 Currently Migrant, but are members of the household : Occupations when Not Migrant. When the migrant was residing in the village, what was his occupation and how much did he earn per month. For how long in the village did he work before migrating ?

Sr.No	Name	Primary Occupation						Income (per month)	Secondary Occupation	Income (per month)	Period of work (occupation) in the village
		Agriculture	Agricultural labourer	Non-Agricultural Manual Labor	Animal Husbandry	Small Petty Shop	Government Service (specify)				
1											
2											

10.8 What was the main reasons for their leaving their village. Give reasons for each migrant separately. Tick upto five reasons and then circle the two most important ones.

Sr. No.	Reason for Migration	Migrant 1	Migrant 2	Migrant 3	Migrant 4	Migrant 5
1	No land					
2	Shortage of land					
3	Bad quality of land to cultivate					
4	No work or employment					
5	Poverty, low income, debt burden					
6	Higher education, therefore inward job aspiration					
7	Non-availability of job according to qualification					
8	Aspiration for higher earning, better economic prospects, better employment opportunity					
9	Appointment of job					

10	Job transfer					
11	Dissatisfaction with earlier job, desirable for change					
12	For education					
13	Family tension					
14	Others (specify) i) ii) iii)					

#### IV. REMITTANCE: CURRENT MIGRANTS

##### 11. Frequency of Remittance (If different hearth groups, take from family / hearth concerned)

Sr. No	Name of the Migrant	Even sent money Y/N	To whom is money mainly sent	How long after leaving the village did he first sent money			How long since he last sent money			How much money he has sent in last 12 months	Frequency of Sending Money						
				Year	Month	Week	Year	Month	Week		Monthly	Quarterly	Half yearly	Annually	Irregularly	Mainly when asked	Others (specify)
1																	
2																	

##### 11.1 Receipt of Remittance

Sr. No.	Who usually receives this money	What is the usual mode of remittance			
		Money Order	Registered post	Through friends/ relation	Others (specify)
1					
2					

11.2.a. Apart from money has he sent/brought goods for the household and its member? If yes, what have been the main items received in past twelve month? (give for specific migrant)

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ (Sr. No. of Migrant \_\_\_\_\_)

b. Frequency of Migrants visits to the village. When did he last visit?

#### V. ANY OTHER INFORMATION



**AS2.4: HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE II  
(Women Respondent)**

**VI. AGRICULTURAL WORK DETAILS**

13. I would like you tell me the participation of all your household members in various **agricultural tasks**.

Agricultural tasks	Who in the household takes major responsibility? Give name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	Who in the household work sometimes on these activities. Give name and relationship to head of household Name Relationship	If someone else performs this activity other than family members, specify. For eg. Hired labour, reciprocal labour, any relative, others	How much time is spent on this activity in a day, number of days, weeks, months	N.A.
Land terracing	1 2	1 2			
Land clearance ( <i>dharan</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Ploughing	1 2	1 2			
Flattening land ( <i>jo</i> or <i>paata Lagan</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Sowing ( <i>Bowai</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Weeding ( <i>gorai</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Tying plants	1 2	1 2			
Guarding crops ( <i>jogai</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Fertiliser & pest control	1 2	1 2			
Irrigating fields	1 2	1 2			
Harvesting ( <i>Katai</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Transporting harvest for threshing ( <i>khaliyan le jana</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Threshing ( <i>mandai in khaliyan</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Winnowing or removing husk	1 2	1 2			
Storage ( <i>Bhandaran</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Irrigation Maintenance ( <i>gul</i> )	1 2	1 2			

14. I would like you tell me the participation of all your household members in various tasks related to livestock/ animal husbandry.

Livestock related tasks	Who in the household takes major responsibility? Give name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	Who in the household work sometimes on these activities. Give name and relationship to head of household Name Relationship	If someone else performs this activity other than family members, specify. For eg. Hired labour, reciprocal labour, any relative, others	How much time is spent on this activity in a day, number of days, weeks, months	N.A.
Grazing	1 2	1 2			
Preparing fodder ( <i>Pinda</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Stall feeding/ feeding fodder	1 2	1 2			
Cleaning cowshed ( <i>sanni</i> )	1 2	1 2			
Fetching water	1 2	1 2			
Fetching fodder & grass	1 2	1 2			
Milking	1 2	1 2			
Marketing milk & milk products	1 2	1 2			

## VIII. DOMESTIC TASK

15. I would like you tell me the participation of all your household members in various **domestic and other related tasks**.

Domestic tasks	Who in the household takes major responsibility? Give Name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	Who in the household work sometimes on these activities. Give name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	If someone else performs this activity other than family members, specify. For eg. Hired labour, reciprocal labour, any relative, others	How much time is spent on this activity in a day, number of days, weeks, months	N.A.
Preparing food	1 2	1 2			
Serving food	1 2	1 2			
Cleaning vessels	1 2	1 2			
Cleaning house & courtyard	1 2	1 2			
Washing clothes	1 2	1 2			
Mending clothes	1 2	1 2			
Marketing for household	1 2	1 2			
Caring for children	1 2	1 2			
Caring for old members	1 2	1 2			
Fetching water for house use	1 2	1 2			
Building & Repairing dwelling	1 2	1 2			

IX. OTHERS

16. I would like you tell me the participation of all your household members in other tasks mentioned below.

Other tasks	Who in the household takes major responsibility? Give Name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	Who in the household work sometimes on these activities. Give name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	How much time is spent on this activity in a day, number of days, weeks, months	What remuneration does the family member receive : cash & kind.	N.A.
Repair and make tools	1 2	1 2			
Petty trade. Specify (i) flour mill (ii) shop	1 2	1 2			
Any form of wage labour (i) construction (ii) road work (iii) ploughing	1 2	1 2			
Any form of caste labour (i)	1 2	1 2			

17. I would like you tell me the participation of all your household members in various tasks mentioned below. (subsistence tasks)

Subsistence tasks	Who in the household takes major responsibility? Give Name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	Who in the household work sometimes on these activities. Give name and relationship to head of household. Name Relationship	Is this activity performed daily, weekly, monthly or annually. Also specify how much time is spent on this activity in a day, number of days, weeks, months	If someone else performs this activity other than family members, specify. For eg. Hired labour, reciprocal labour, any relative, others	N.A.
Collecting fuelwood	1 2	1 2			
Collecting water	1 2	1 2			
Collecting fodder / grass	1 2	1 2			
Gathering wild foods	1 2	1 2			
Tending to chicken	1 2	1 2			
Tending to goat / sheep	1 2	1 2			
Home garden	1 2	1 2			
Any other	1 2	1 2			

**AS2.5: HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE III  
(Women Respondent)**

**X. HEALTH PROFILE**

18. Are there any household members who are currently suffering from any major illness like T.B., leprosy, heart diseases, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, and gynaecological problem. Write down each person's name who is currently suffering from the illness.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)
	Name of family member	Type of illness	Duration	1 <sup>st</sup> source of treatment	Reasons for choosing	Nature of treatment provided	If referred place of referral	Reason for referral	You took or not; reasons for not	Any other treatment sought	Reasons for seeking other treatment	Result of treatment Satisfaction from it	Total cost in illness
1													
2													

19. Are there any household members who had suffered from any major illness like T.B., leprosy, heart diseases, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, gynaecological problem in the past. Write down each persons name and the history of the illness.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)
	Name of family member	Type of illness	Duration	1 <sup>st</sup> source of treatment	Reasons for choosing	Nature of treatment provided	If referred place of referral	Reason for referral	You took or not; reasons for not	Any other treatment sought	Reasons for seeking other treatment	What was the result of treatment	Total cost in illness
1													
2													

20. Did any household member suffer from minor illness like fever, cough, cold, diarrhoea, eye, ear, tooth problem etc. during the last two weeks. Write down each person's name who fell sick in the last two weeks only.

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)	(k)	(l)	(m)
	Name of family member	Type of illness	Duration	1 <sup>st</sup> source of treatment	Reasons for choosing	Nature of treatment provided	Problems if any	If referred place of referral	Reason for referral	Any other treatment sought	Reasons for seeking other treatment	Results of the treatment	Total cost in illness
1													
2													

21. Has any household member suffered from any major accident for which medical aid was needed or which made the person bedridden for a few days.

	Name	Type of accident	Cause of the accident	Treatment sought	Cost	How long person was incapacitated	Has it led to some disability
1							
2							

22. Hospitalisation:

Was any of your household members ever hospitalised (except for child delivery)

Yes.....

No.....

If yes, please give the following details

	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)
	Name of family member	Duration of hospitalisation	Place of hospitalisation	Reason for going	Problems faced if any	Total cost
1						
2						
3						

23. What are the main health problems in your village? You can give upto 5. Please rank them from 1-5 according to the most important or major problems (1) to less important (5)

	Health problems in the village	Who suffers from them usually; children, male or female	What type of treatment is sought and where
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

24. Are any of these problems of increasing prevalence in the village?

Yes.....

No.....

Which ones and why?

.....

25. Please indicate your number of surviving children by sex, age

	Name of children	Sex
1		
2		

26. Have you ever had a stillbirth?

Yes .....

No .....

If yes, how many: .....

27. Have you ever had an abortion?

Yes ..... No .....

If yes, how many: .....

28. Do any health worker/ family planning worker visit your house?

(i) Yes ..... No. ....

If yes :

(i) How frequently .....

(ii) When did the worker last visit .....

(iii) For what purpose .....

29. In last five years have any women in this family become pregnant? What was the consequence of pregnancy?

	Name of woman who becomes pregnant	Year of pregnancy	Consequences			Place of delivery	Who conducted delivery
			Abortion	Stillbirth	Delivery		
1							
2							
3							
4							

30. Are you pregnant now?

Yes ..... No .....

If yes, how many months pregnant are you? .....

**AS2.6: HOUSEHOLD SCHEDULE IV**

**To be filled in households having children less than 5 years**

**Maternal and Child Health**

- Households having children less than 5 years of age
- Questions are directed to experiences related to the last born child amongst, children less than 5 years of age.

**31. Last Birth (of last born child)**

1. Name ..... , Date of last born child: .....  
Alive ....., Dead .....

2. If dead

When did the child die ..... Age of death .....

Reasons for death .....

.....  
Rest of the question pertain to last pregnant, irrespective of the consequence of pregnancy

**A) PRENATAL CARE**

3. When you were pregnant with (name), did any health worker visit you at home for check-up

Yes ..... No .....

4. If yes, how many months pregnant were you when the health worker first visited you.

Months .....

5. How many times did she visit you

No. of visits .....

6. When you were pregnant with (name), did you go for a check-up

Yes ..... No .....

7. Whom did you see? Tell me all the persons you had seen

**Health Professional**

- (i) Doctor (PHC)
- (ii) Doctor (Private)
- (iii) RMP
- (iv) Vaid
- (v) Nurse / midwife
- (vi) Other health professional (specify)

**Other Persons**

- (i) Dais (trained)
- (ii) Dai (Traditional)
- (iii) Hakim
- (iv) Others (specify)



8. In which month did you go for check-up
- (i) Before 4 months
  - (ii) 4-6 months
  - (iii) 7-9 months
9. How many times did you go for check-up .....
10. During the check-up what kind of services did you receive
- (i) Clinical examination
  - (ii) Urine/blood test
  - (iii) Medicines/tonic
  - (iv) TT injection (injection in the arm)
  - (v) Advice
  - (vi) Any other (specify)
11. What was the reason for choosing the health facility ?
- Near by .....
  - Timing Convenient .....
  - Free/nominal charge .....
  - Personalised treatment .....
  - Credibility .....
  - Better Quality Services .....
  - Good follow up .....
  - Any other (specify) .....
12. If the mother did not go for check-up. What is the main reason you did not go for check-up.  
Record all reasons.
- (i) Lack of knowledge of services
  - (ii) Nor necessary
  - (iii) Not customary
  - (iv) Financial cost (No money to go)
  - (v) Inconvenient (facility/doctor far away)
  - (vi) Poor quality services
  - (vii) Husband not available to take her
  - (viii) No other family member available to accompany her
  - (ix) Not permitted to go
  - (x) No time to go
  - (xi) Health staff visit it home
  - (xii) Others (specify)
13. Did you face any problem during your pregnancy?
14. Did you take some extra care of yourself during pregnancy.
- (i) food related
  - (ii) work related
  - (iii) health related

**B) CHILD BIRTH**

15. Where did the delivery take place
- In this village .....
  - In your natal village ..... (name it)
16. Where did you give birth
- (i) Home
  - (ii) In the field

- (iii) PHC
- (iv) Sub-centre
- (v) Government Hospital (name)
- (vi) Private Hospital
- (vii) Private clinic / maternity home
- (viii) Any other (specify)

17. If at home, who conducted the delivery

- (i) Doctor
- (ii) Vaid
- (iii) Nurse / midwife
- (iv) ANM / LHV
- (v) Dai (TBA trained)
- (vi) Dai (traditional)
- (vii) Relation / neighbour / friend
- (viii) Any other(specify)

18. Why did you deliver at home ? Why you did not go to PHC for delivery?

- (i) Lack of knowledge about medical services
- (ii) Not necessary
- (iii) Customary to deliver at home
- (iv) Financial cost (no money to go)
- (v) Inconvenient (facility / doctor far away)
- (vi) Poor quality services
- (vii) Husband or member available to take her
- (viii) Not permitted to go
- (ix) No time to go
- (x) No transport available
- (xi) Others (specify)

19. Was it a normal delivery

Yes ..... No .....

20. If no, what was the problem

- Premature Birth
- Low birth weight
- Forceps
- Caesarean
- Still birth
- Any other (specify)

.....

**C) POST-NATAL CARE**

21. After childbirth, did you ever visit the subcentre / PHC of any other health facility

Yes ..... No .....

22. If yes, where did you go?

- (i) Doctor (PHC)
- (ii) Doctor (Private)
- (iii) RMP
- (iv) Vaid
- (v) Nurse / midwife
- (vi) Dai (trained)
- (vii) Dai (traditional)

- (viii) Hakim
- (ix) Sub-centre / PHC
- (x) Other (specify)

23. How many times did you visit and what was the purpose of each visit

		Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	Visit 4	Visit 5	Visit 6
(i)	Check up mother						
(ii)	Check up child						
(iii)	Immunisation Child						
(iv)	Post delivery complication (mother)						
(v)	Illness of child						
(vi)	Family Planning						
(vii)	Any other (specify)						

**D) IMMUNIZATION**

24. Do you have a card where child's vaccinations are written down?

Yes ..... No .....

If no, have immunised / vaccinated your child Yes ..... No .....

(Write details of immunisation)

25. Status of vaccination

	YES	NO	Any comment
BCG			
Polio (OPV)			
Triple (DDT)			
Measles			
Booster I			

26. Where was you child immunised

- (i) By health worker at home/a camp in the village
- (ii) By health worker at sub-centre/PHC
- (iii) Any other public facility (specify)
- (iv) RMP
- (v) Doctor (PHC)
- (vi) Doctor (Private)

27. If the child has not been immunised, what is the reason for not immunising your child?

- (i) No knowledge about vaccination
- (ii) No need for it
- (iii) No health work visited or camp held
- (iv) No knowledge about where to go for vaccination
- (v) Husband not there to take the child
- (vi) Other family members not available to take the child
- (vii) Sub-centre /PHC/facility very far away
- (viii) Vaccines at facility not available
- (ix) On day of vaccination camp, child was ill
- (x) Any other (specify)

## **AS2.7: INTERVIEW GUIDE I**

### **I : CHILDHOOD**

- Where were you born? How many brothers and sisters? Did you grow up in the same village?
- Parent's occupation, education, caste and creed
- Who were you closest to in the family? Why? Which other people? Memories of mother, her work
- Memories of girlhood – did you go to school? Till what class did you study? Why didn't you study further? If didn't go, why not? Did you feel like going? Did you have friends? Did they study more than you?
- What work did you do as a child – at home, outside?
- What were other things you did? What did you enjoy doing most?
- Did you fall sick often as a child? What sickness / treatment? Were you ever taken to hospital?

### **II : GIRLHOOD, MENSTRUATION**

#### 1. Words used for menstruation

#### 2. First menstrual experience

- Menstruation Menarche - which age? What trouble / discomfort / pain
- Taboos that had to be practised – kitchen, cooking, pujas
- Hygiene
- Knowledge – from whom – what
- Whom did you first tell when you first got your periods, what

#### 3. Menstrual cycle

- regularity, duration
- frequency (length of cycle)
- problems – remedies used
- changes in menstrual cycle – reasons
- what all does she do during those days
- avoidance of any activity / chore
- are there any contraception induced changes (today)

#### 4. During menstruation

- What is used (cloth, pad etc)
- What is done to used ones, where washed, where dried

#### 5. How does one keep track of the menstrual cycle?

- Taboos
- Segregation practices
- Sex during menstruation

#### 6. Attitudes

- Is this segregation necessary, why?
- What changes do the women aspire for in customs
- Telling their daughters about menstruation, what they tell.

### **III : MARRIAGE - Early Married life**

- At what age did you get married? How did the marriage get fixed? Were you happy / keen on getting married? Were you happy with this match? Were you pressured in any way? Dowry / Bride price? What were your initial experiences, difficulties, problems when you entered this house? (not to be asked very sharply)

Who helped you in adjusting?

- What were the initial work you had to do? Was everyone happy with you, your behaviour, the way you did work? Did you have quarrels, conflicts? Were you tense about anything?
- Did you find greater load of work than your parent's home? Did you find it difficult to complete the work, not meet expectations? What work was given initially?
- Did you fall sick at any time in the initial years of marriage? What illness? What was done about it? Who did you talk to? What was the response of your husband? Did you recover fully?
- Husband-wife relationship? Emotional – sexual - problems

#### **IV : PREGNANCY**

1. Words used for a pregnant woman

2. Having children – Social aspects

- How many children do you have? What are the age differences?
- Boys? Girls?
- Did you want a boy very much? Your in-laws?
- Why? How did they express it?

3. Knowledge of being pregnant

- At what age (first pregnancy)
- How long after marriage
- How did she know
- Whom did she tell first / later on
- Planned / unplanned / wanted / not wanted
- When had other children / .....
- Feelings - first and later pregnancies
- Shyness, happiness, anxiety

4. Problems

- Problems faced (in first trimester/second/third)
- Anaemia, nausea, constipation, diarrhoea, bleeding, frequent urination)
- How long did it last ? Who did you talk to about it ?
- How did it affect you
- Anything done to decrease it
- Any illnesses (jaundice, measles)
- When in pregnancy did the illness occur; any treatment for illness (home remedy, allopathy etc.)
- When, how etc

5. Daily routine

- After detection daily routine of pregnancy
- Any change from earlier routine (daily chores, visiting)
- Daily work, - any reduction in workload (esp. agricultural/animal related work, domestic work)
- Sex during pregnancy
- Subsequent pregnancies
- Visiting
- Food during pregnancy - Any change in diet/quality – quantity; Food items avoided

6. Cultural Aspects

- Ceremonies performed - when, where, how, why
- Any taboos, anything she avoided (death, eclipse etc)

8. Contact with medical care

- routine check up, T.T., iron tablets, treatment for illness

- jaundice, measles, vomiting, fits etc.
- registration in any hospital / maternity home

## **V : CHILD BIRTH**

1. Labour
  - a. Words used
  - b. Where had the first childbirth – mothers' / in-laws' place?
  - c. Experience of first labour
    - when did it start after conception
    - how did she know
    - from whom, what
    - who did she first tell when labour started
    - what was done immediately
    - Duration of labour
    - What was done to increase or decrease it
  - d. Experience of subsequent labour
    - Was it different from the first
    - In what way
2. Delivery
  - a. Experience of first delivery
    - (i) Preparation done for delivery
      - When did it start, what was done
      - Where did the delivery take place (exact location; why?)
    - Cost, who pays
    - Position of delivery (lying down, sitting)
    - Who conducted delivery (mother-in-law, dai, any other relative, doctor, nurses)
    - Who cuts the umbilical cord, how with what
    - Was there any method adopted to control the bleeding immediately after the placenta fall? What do they do with the placenta ? Bath for mother & baby?
    - Complications during delivery - what was done
    - Subsequent deliveries - was there a difference
3. After Delivery
  - a. Special practices
    - Breastfeeding the baby – how long, problems
    - Segregation practices - at home and hospital - how many days, why; what is done (bathing, participation in religious and community activities, lifting heavy things, clothing)
    - Food practices
    - Mobility
    - Special care for new mother
    - physical relations, when was it resumed
    - contraception
  - b. Health problems after delivery  
(enlarged breasts, fever, excessive bleeding, any other discharge)
    - How long it lasted, what was done
    - How was bleeding managed

## VI : CONTRACEPTION

- a. Knowledge and use of contraceptives
  - Did you know anything about contraceptives prior to marriage? When did you first hear about which method?
  - When first used and why?
  - Consulted family or who else, also husband
  - How decided which one to use – whose help / guidance in use
  - Are you using any method right now? Which other methods used in the past
  - Problems in contraceptive use
- b. Sterilisation
  - (i) Was it performed - on whom and why
  - Their experience
    - (ii) How was the decision made, why
      - who was involved in deciding
      - where did they have it done
      - why did they choose it
      - did they know exactly what would happen
      - what exactly was the experience - feelings
      - how long were they in hospital
      - who looked after home at that time
      - what kind of sterilisation - laproscopic / surgical
      - were they fully / partially unconscious / discomfort due to procedure
      - How much rest ; when did they start daily routine; any precautions taken, eg. Lifting
      - Any physical problems experienced, any pain, discomfort

## VII : ABORTION

1. Experience of Abortion: Narrate incident, no. of abortions, what happened in each case, at what stage, whether induced / spontaneous
  - If induced why, who advised, what was done, at what cost, where
  - If spontaneous - why did it happen, problems after abortion, reaction of family members
2. Use of Health Care Facility:
  - Where is abortion normally done (availability / accessibility, how many / how far away)
  - Who is approached, cost, formalities (consent)
  - Care given during and after,
  - Availability of sex determination tests (s.d.t.), extent of use of s.d.t., cost, was s.d.t. done before inducing abortion
3. Amniocentesis (sex determination tests)

## VIII : MOTHERHOOD

1. How important was it to you to have children ? Do you pamper your children a lot (observe also) What aspirations you have for them ? What do you feel ?
2. As a mother do you worry a lot about your children ? Why ? Over what issues ? (Girl / boy difference note) Which children and why ?
3. Do any of your children suffer from any illnesses ? Which ? What treatment have they been given ? Who ? What do you do when they fall sick ?

4. As a mother what are the various things you do for your children ? What work ?
5. Are you close to your children ? Sons, daughters ? Do you have any favourite child – why ?
6. Infertility
  - What happens when a woman cannot bear children (behaviour and attitude of family / community towards her - respect / avoidance ; participation in household and community occasions / functions / ceremonies)
  - Efforts done to have a child (treatment, prayers - which deity, fasts)
  - Is it normal for a married woman not to have children
  - Why is a woman unable to bear children inspite of wanting to - options available

#### **IX : SEXUAL DIVISION OF LABOUR / WOMEN'S WORK : CULTURAL EVALUATION**

1. Why are some tasks done by women and some by men ? What would you think if your husband did the jobs you do ? Why are these rules not broken /
2. Do you feel that your workload has increased because of the decline in the quality of land? For past how many years have you felt this most severely?
3. Has there been an increase in any type of work. Have you taken on additional work? Since when and why?
4. What other work activities have you participated in? Wage labour, petty trade? (Details) Why and what work done, for how long, what income? (What experiences – probe?)
5. Which is the busiest time of the year for you? How many hours do you work at the time?
6. Which of the work that you do you find most burdensome? Difficult? Strenuous? Which work would you like to give it up? Have you always found it so? If not, why do you think it is more difficult now? Do you find your capacity to do certain work is decreasing – why?
7. Is there any work you like? If given a choice, what kind of work would you like, what new work you would like to do?
8. Do you feel family members appreciate the work you do or do not? How, why do you feel so?
9. How much do you rest in the day? Do you feel that the total rest time (sleep at night and rest in the day) is adequate? What time do you get up in the morning? Do you find it difficult (especially in the winters)
10. Are there any quarrels over work done? Usually between whom?
11. Have you had any accident / injury at any time? When? (Take details of all incidents – case – events – treatment – cure) Any lasting debilitating impact?

#### **X : WORK : MIGRANT WIVES' : WORK, ECONOMIC STATUS / CONTROL, DECISION-MAKING**

##### **Part I : Household Economy, Impact of remittance**

1. When, where and why did your husband migrate?
2. What costs were borne by the family to help him migrate?
  - amount of money spent
  - sources from which money was raised



- loans incurred
  - mortgage or solid land, jewellery
  - other hardships the family faced
3. Does the family today find it worthwhile to have spent money and face hardships to help him migrate? Has the economic situation improved? If yes, how; if no, why not ?
  4. How much does your husband earn?
  5. How much does he send home and how frequently does he send it? Is this the primary income of the household? Or do you have other sources of household income?
  6. Were early remittances small? Did you face economic problem in the early years?
  7. In what form does he usually send remittances? Cash through someone coming to the village, money order, cheque / bank draft, remittances in kind etc.
  8. In whose name are these remittances usually sent? What powers of control over them accrue to the recipient?
    - Male acting head of joint family (e.g. Father, brother, uncle)
    - Responsible female head (e.g. Mother-in-law)
  9. Do you receive any remittances in your name?
  10. Has there been any improvement in the house since your husband started sending remittances?
    - new construction
    - installation of electricity
    - others ....
  11. Who controls the spending and investments? Who takes decisions related to management of this remitted amount? On what is this amount spent? Are you satisfied with this arrangement?
  12. What kind of consumer durables were purchased? How did they affect your domestic workload? In what way are you able to influence purchases?
  13. Are remittances earmarked by your husband for farming and consumption purposes?
  14. Do you enjoy considerable freedom on use or spending of the remitted amount (if she receives it) Do you take advice from anyone on matters related to handling of money?
  15. On what items do you spend this amount?
    - Agriculture and related activities
    - Child rearing
    - Food and ration procurement
    - Health
    - Education of children
    - Paying back loans
    - Any other head
  16. How great a capital expenditure can you make without consulting your husband?
  17. Who has control over money raised from other sources such as sale of agricultural produce, chicken, goat etc?

18. How is your independent action or initiative related to financial transactions perceived by the community / family?
19. Do you manage to do any saving? What are your preferred ways of saving? Have you invested your saving in anything?
20. Have the remittances increased, decreased or remained stagnant over time?

## **II : Impact of Agricultural Activity / Work**

1. What impact has male migration had on farming?
  - Tilling land, land left fallow
  - Decline in produce
  - Problems related to ploughing, preparation of terraces
  - Sharecropping
  - Wage labour
2. Is ploughing taken less frequently and on less land?
3. What major work adjustments did you and your family have to make as a consequence of this migration?
4. What are the additional responsibilities related to agriculture you have to undertake in absence of your husband?
5. What problems do you face generally and specifically in mobilising, hiring and supervising labour? Do you receive assistance from relatives or community?
6. Do you take independent decisions related to agriculture and are you encouraged?
  - Decision to give a piece of land on sharecropping
  - Decision to employ wage labour
  - What to sow, purchase of seeds and fertilisers
7. Who oversees the payment in cash or kind for agriculture related work?
8. Do you often go to the market town (Dogadda, Kotdwara) to the seed and fertiliser depots for agriculture related work?
9. What kind of collaboration in production or investment decisions passes between you and your husband? Is this collaboration direct, or is it mediated and censored by a resident male? For what decisions do you still continue to depend on your husband?
10. Have you visited institutions like:
  - Post office
  - Bank
  - Market town
  - Seed and fertiliser depot
  - Children's school
  - PHC
  - Other institutions ....
11. When did you visit and with whom?
12. Do you have a bank account in your name? Do you operate it on your own?

4 (b) SPECIFIC ILLNESS OR DISEASES (AT VARIOUS POINTS) (most troublesome, bedridden, hospitalised etc.)

	Name Of The Illness	Describe	When Occurred & Duration	How Handled (Actions)	In Handling Your Attitude/ Family Attitude/ Reasons	Perception Of Causes	Expenditure
(i)							
(ii)							
(iii)							
(iv)							
(v)							

**XI : HEALTH**

1. Do you generally feel healthy / unhealthy? Do you feel your health has been deteriorating? Why?
2. With whom do you talk about your health problem?
3. Do you suffer from any specific disease / illnesses. Which have you been most troubled by / worst illness
4. (a) What have you done about your illnesses? Treatment. (Probe: whether tendency to attend to them / neglect / causes of neglect – for which problems they try out home remedies / go to the doctor)
5. At what level of severity of the health problem do they go the doctor? Who do they go to and why? For which health problems do they only stick to home remedies? Which health problem / severity for which they feel the need to take rest / permitted to rest?
6. What do you believe are the causes of these diseases (probe for types suffered)
7. Have you ever been bed-ridden for a long time? How has the family responded to this?
8. Have you suffered from any mishaps / injury? When and how?
9. In general are women's illnesses taken lightly by male family members. Why?
10. Were you happy with the treatment you received from your family during your pregnancies and post childbirth? Do you feel they have suffered any long-term impact of multiple pregnancies? Has it weakened you? (Use as probes only)
11. Who takes decisions about when to seek healthcare services and how much to be spent on it?
12. Do you have enough money to attend to health of children, family members and your own health?
13. Has remittances meant improved monetary conditions – what consequences does this have for their family and their own health?
14. Do they face any problems related to seeking health care because of the absence of their husbands?
15. What new services / improvement in existing services or what kind of health services / facilities would you like in your village?
16. Any specific problems like absence of children; inability to give birth to sons etc.

## **XII : CONTROL OVER RESOURCES AND FAMILY CONFLICT**

1. Do you have money in your hands for household spending every month? From what source? What freedom to spend? What freedom to buy things? Have women always had such freedom?
2. Do you have any separate money for yourself? Do you earn it or is it gifted? By whom? Are you free to spend / save as you like? Do you have any savings of your own?
3. Have you sold / pawned any of household / personal belongings at time of financial distress? What things? When?
4. Do you have enough money for every need? What do you have to cut down on / forgo because of inadequate finances. Are you (constantly) worried about financial problems? Probe whether women's needs are sacrificed.
5. Does health of household members suffer for lack of money? Specifically women's health?
6. Are there any family quarrels over money? What are the quarrels mainly due to in your family? Between husband / wife, parents / children?

## **AS2.8: INTERVIEW GUIDE II**

### **INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY RESOURCE PERSON**

#### **KEY RESOURCE PERSONS**

- Village leader
- Old woman

#### **I. Village, Region Ecological Degradation, Developmental, Activities:**

1. History of what has been happening and how it has affected them.
2. Climatic change, land quality change, forest depletion, quality of soil
3. Agricultural cultivation, traditional system that has been destroyed, agricultural production, fuel fodder, water difficulties of subsistence, animal rearing.

#### **CHANGES – PROBLEMS ENHANCEMENT OF DIFFICULTIES NATURE AND INTENSITY**

4. Was this responsible for male out-migration?
5. Pauperisation of households, wage labour, wages, expenditure
6. Entry of other occupation, government schemes, employment
7. When did the chain of migration begin?
8. Who were the first to migrate?
9. How? What jobs?
10. Was it linked to ecological degradation, low productivity
11. Push
12. Increase in migration. Why?
13. New generation, interest in agriculture, urban attractions.

#### **II. Women's Work and Status**

1. History of gender role complementarily
2. Women's song, work related, home related
3. Gender ideology as revealed through song, ritual, custom, rights, obligations, treatment
4. Male attitudes – are attitudes changing?
5. Is female dependency increasing / decreasing.

#### **III. Caste system of the village**

1. Endogamy

2. Commonality
3. Caste occupations, untouchability

**IV. Village Markets**

1. Women's participation in markets

**V. Alcoholism**

**VI. Female Headed Household**

**VII. Health**

1. Services / Facilities
2. Perceptions / Changes in attitudes / Health beliefs
3. Traditional / Local village health practice & belief
4. Metaphysical belief on health
5. Health improvement as a result of change and development.
6. Young female death / women's death / illness / men's death
7. Attitudes to death, mortality, illness, daily functioning. View on life, death, health
8. Why do both traditional and modern system coexist

**VIII. Nature of economic, cultural, social changes in the region.**

## AS2.9: OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

### A. HOME / HOUSE

1. What is cooked? Typical meal.  
Class - Caste Differentiation
2. Intra household food distribution
3. Eating habits / Nutrition
4. Attitudes to food  
Beliefs, amount of food, types of food, energy
5. Family Relations / Power relations
  - Male attitudes
  - Behaviour to women
  - Incidence of wife abuse. Over what? why ?
  - Value of women's labour
6. House
  - Conditions of houses
  - Conditions of low caste women's houses
  - Physical, material conditions of low caste women's houses
  - How much dependence on subsistence, food gathering activity
  - Levels of poverty
7. Work

#### Sites: Observe

- Men-women's hours of work & leisure
- Women's postures
- What all do they, women and men actually as transgressions
- Caste labour (observe)  
Type, conditions, remuneration's
- Time management of work
- Subsistence work – how much is needed in migrant and non-migrants households.

### B. IN THE VILLAGE

1. Space in the village where women can socialise, congregate.
2. Is there restricted radius of their movement.
3. Is there restriction on women's interaction with outsiders/ other family members.
4. Higher caste families – do they take pride in the fact that their women do not work in the field?
5. Daily chores – any changes
6. Daily meals – method of preparations, utensils used – any change. Staple Diet – what is it.
7. Grocery stores – what do they store – bread, biscuits?

8. Kerosene stove, smokeless chulha – technology which can improve working condition for women – why is it not available?
9. Shortage of food – who is prioritised or discriminated.
10. Do women neglect minor ailments, do not attend to their Health problems – until they become serious – is it true.
11. Education of women – women’s own view about their education – do they view it as a route to financial & personal independence or more concerned about “widening one’s horizon”, “increasing ones social work”.
12. What changes do women identify which they think have eased their daily chores (e.g. piped water supply, flour mill)
13. Are technologies like smokeless chulha, kerosene stove etc. which improve working condition for women valued by men.
14. Despite impetus for change, has village society successfully maintained the traditional roles and position of both men and women?
15. What are the women’s aspirations? Is the cultural ambience of the village supportive of women’s aspiration?
16. Opinion about women working of males / of females.

**C. Observe and find out through informal discussion and conversation with various people.**

- (ii) Anything visually unusual about this village community in its age – sex – caste composition.
- (iii) Primarily agricultural or is there any significant non-agricultural enterprise.
- (iv) Social stratification of village
- (v) Condition of roads, pathways inside the village
- (vi) Extent of ease of access to other villages/ towns via road etc, and whether it is possible all year round
- (vii) Physical appearance of the village – damage, refuse, cleanliness, distance of the place of abulation etc.
- (viii) Feelings of the villagers about local political leaders, Uttarakhand movement, etc.
- (ix) Perceptions about whether people feel that things are getting economically better
- (x) Whether people seem generally happy in the village or would they leave if they could.
- (xi) Feelings about security, crime, other problems – their perceptions about problems in the village.

**D. Find out in each village**

- (i) Settlement pattern
- (ii) Changes in methods of agricultural production.
- (iii) Population changes in the area
- (iv) Land legislation history
- (v) Information on school system

**E. Women’s participation**

- (i) Gram Panchayat
- (ii) Social & political affairs of the village
- (iii) Village level institutions
- (iv) Voting.



## **F. Health care and Medical services**

1. Private practitioner available – their qualification & background
2. Why they prefer to visit private practitioner and not government health care services.
3. Why they do not use PHC & subcentre. Is it because of
  - location
  - long waiting time
  - staff not available especially doctors
  - medicines not available
  - prescribed medicines, difficult to procure from town
  - medicines of available, prescribed and given for few days only, villagers unable to fetch them at such frequency.
4. Why is private doctor more preferred
5. Besides private allopathic doctor, who are the other practitioners available in the village.
6. What is the general health seeking behaviour/ pattern of people? Minor ailments, are they ignored? Resort to home – remedies. Last resort, when condition persists is doctor?
7. In health seeking/ utilisation of health care, any particularly group most affected – e.g. women; women of child bearing age, female child etc.

