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HEALTH PERCEPTION AND HEALTH PRACTICES OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN A VILLAGE IN BALESHWAR, ORISSA: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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As a girl grows from a child into a woman she faces many hardships in life. And, many a researcher has dwelt on her difficult passage through these two stages, and quite justifiably. So, however, very often we forget that she grows from a child into an adolescent first, before becoming a full grown woman, and that even this stage is full of sufferings.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Women represent roughly half of the world's population and vast majority of them are engaged in work that contributes immensely to the life and wealth of nations. Yet, they are subjected to discrimination at work, in their homes and in every sphere of human activity. In no other area is the disparity between formal or proclaimed equality and the reality of discrimination is so great as it is, when it comes to women. The national conditions, policies and programmes are so structured as to relegate the women to the level of passive participants rather than active one in all activities. In subsistence economies, typical of developing countries, women perform the lion's share of work and in and around the home and in the field. Although they contribute more to the family income, their labour is viewed as unproductive. Gender bias in its various forms prevents millions of women from getting education, health care and due and rightful legal status for fuller actualization of their potential. Deep rooted societal and religious

tradition have further blocked their progress.¹

In India, during the Vedic period, women enjoyed equal status with that of their male counterparts. The concept of women was one in which the female aspect symbolised 'Shakti' or energy and women were considered worthy of being equal partners in religious rites and ceremonies; in the management of the home and even in affairs of society. She was not only given education; she could, if she wanted select her own mate and in domestic life she was an equal partner to the male. Marriage in Hinduism is a sacrament and the rites of 'Vivaha' or marriage are symbolic expressions of union on the two levels of equality and life long companionship. Man without woman was considered as an inadequate person.² The Vedic literature mentions many a woman's name who attained eminence as philosophers along with men. Visvavara, Ghosha, Lopamudra and Apala are few among them.

1 S.K. Verma, "Human Rights of women: The United Nations Approach," Human Rights year Book, ed; P.H. Parekh, International Institute of Human Rights Society (Regd.) New Delhi, 1993, pp.60-61.

2 P.H. Prabhu, Hindu Social Organization: A Study in Socio-Psychological and Ideological Foundations, Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1993, p.258.

Manu had a rather peculiar opinion about the nature of the women in general. He ascribes a lower status to women. The laws of Manu "stresses the need to control women because of the female character."³ The role of a woman as a faithful wife and devout mother, an obedient daughter and a punctual sister is often justified.

In the later Vedic period, women were given a lower status. Dowry system and child marriage were practised. Women lost their property. General bias in favour of man started slowly. Various superstitions and social values and norms contributed a lot towards the gender bias in favour of man. The women started living under the veil (purdah). The discrimination against women were so high that they were accorded a lowest position in the society. They faced untold misery and sufferings.

Social consciousness for liberation of women started with the Western English education. The socio-religious reform movements preached the gospel of extending more humane and just treatment to women. The British rulers tried to correct the gender-biased social evils by enacting various reform laws. The abolition of Sati(1829),

3 Jacobson D, Wadeleys, Women and Hindu Traditions: Women in India, South Asia Book, New Delhi, p.114.

legalisation of widow marriage (1856), banning of female infanticide (1870), permission for inter-community marriage under the Special Marriage Act (1872), raising of age of consent to 12 years (1891), legislations against child marriages (1929), Women's right to vote in Madras Province (1921), limited right to property etc. were some of the landmarks in this direction.

After independence, various social legislations were enacted to mitigate the inferior position of women. Constitution of India provided elaborate clauses for the emancipation of women and tried to focus on the need to bring about gender equality. Emphasis was laid on giving equal representation in all spheres of society. Plans and programmes were made with special emphasis for the improvement of the status of women.

But despite these legislations and social provisions even after fifty years of independence women continue to face a number of problems.

Declining Sex Ratio

The demographic features of consecutive Indian census shows that the sex ratio is tilted in favour of males. Apart from the adverse sex ratio it has also deteriorated over

decades.

The sex ratio of females for 1000 males in 1901 was 972, in 1931 it was 950, in 1951 it was 933, in 1981, 930, and in 1991 it is 927. A number studies have offered explanations for this declining trend. It is well known that the male foetus is biologically weaker than the female foetus.⁴ This biological disadvantage should reflect rise of higher male mortality rates. But in India this situation is true only for those who are less than one month old. Statistics indicate that while more males die at age one than females, by age 5 more females die than males. As Sunita Kishor observes, "Thus, the evidence on gender differences in mortality in India is unambiguous: female mortality exceeds male mortality during early childhood in large parts of India. Such excesses in female mortality are more likely to occur buy age 5 than they are in the first year of life".⁵

Several studies have explained this differential child mortality in terms of socio-cultural factors. Sociologists

4 Monica Das Gupta. et al (eds), "Women's Health in India: Risk and Vulnerability," Oxford University press, Bombay, 1995, p.5.

5 Sunita Kishor(1995), "Gender Differentials in Child Mortality: Review of the Evidence", in Monica Das Gupta, et al, op. cit. p.26.

suggest that the higher mortality of females in India may be attributed to the inferior status they are accorded from birth. That there is a preference for male children is well known and numerous studies in India have shown the strong preference which parents have for male children. Thus, preference is shown for the male child because they are regarded as permanent members of the family, it is through the male child that the lineage is traced. This attitude which shows a clear preference for the male child shapes the way in which girls are socialised, valued and how they are traced in terms of opportunities vis-a-vis boys. On the other hand a large majority of girl children feel unwanted, their stay at paternal home is limited and they grow up knowing that they are regarded as a liability where as the son is a valuable resource. Payment of heavy dowry at the time of her marriage adds to the above factors. And therefore, joy and celebration is marked the birth of a son and gloom occasioned by the birth of a daughter. The declining sex ratio is caused by female infanticide and foeticide. pre-natal sex determination by x-ray and amniocentesis help the pre-natal selective abortion of female foetus. According to media reports, in one year (1984), there were as many as 40,000 cases of female

foeticide in Bombay city alone.⁶ Female infanticide still continues; every year 300,000 more girls than boys die in infancy, many deaths being attributable to deliberate indifference and neglect because girls are considered a 'burden'. This differential attitude towards boys and girls gets reflected in various aspects of their life, viz, nutrition, education, treatment and so on.

India is an agrarian society where social, religious and economic pressures on girls to marry at an early age remains very strong. In agrarian societies, the family is the basic economic unit and marriage and child bearing are economic necessities. In India an unmarried daughter past a certain age is considered an embracement and disgrace to the family as well as an economic burden. Most tragically, as she attains puberty, she becomes sexually vulnerable and requires protection. The burden has to be shifted as soon as possible and her marriage is considered a priority. Early child marriage lead to early pregnancies which, in turn, lead to a high rate of maternal mortality. It also, increases the risk of higher number of low birth weight babies, child deaths, disabled children, gynecological

6 S.C. Dubey, Indian Society, NBT, Indian, 1990,p.114.

problems and an increasing number of pregnancies to replace lost children. This perpetuates the cycle of misery, ignorance, poverty and prejudice from one generation to another, with an all too predictable consistency.

Education

Many young girls remain intellectually under developed as they are denied opportunities to attend schools. The gross enrollment ratio of girls at primary level is 44.5% and 22.3% at middle school level. This percentage for boys are 55.5% and 77.7% respectively. Most importantly, the school dropout rate is much high for girls than that of boys. And therefore, female literacy rate is very low in India. In 1901, it was 0.6% for females and 9.8% for males, in 1951, 7.9% for females and 25% for males, in 1971 18.7% for females and 39.5% for males in 1981 24.8% for females and 46.9% for males and in 1991, this percentage is 39.4% for females and 63.8% for males. In absolute terms, the number of illiterate females is increasing with time and at a faster rate than male illiterate rate.

The discrimination against the girl child which begins at birth gets echoed during different stages of her life through childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Girls are not

only discriminated in terms of access to opportunities compared to boys but also shoulder a lot of responsibilities at the household level. It has been demonstrated through some studies that girls work both at home by taking care of siblings, fetching fuel and water, cooking and in some cases even working in the fields. They are married at an early age. As many as 6.2% and 43.4% of girls aged 10-14 and 15-19 respectively are already married. In some northern states 20 to 40% girls are married by age 15.⁷ Very often girls just pass from child to adulthood and assume responsibilities of the household and their family.

Several Studies have shown that girls often are neglected in matters of feeding and health care and thus could be a reason for higher mortality among them. Gender plays an important role in the family for the determination of nutritional status. For girls, the dietary intake is less. As regards breast feeding, they get less milk, less frequently and for shorter period of time. On the other hand, preference is given to boys in feeding highly nutritious foods such as milk, eggs, butter or ghee or fruits and

7 Shireen J. Jejeebhoy and Saumya Rama Rao (1995), "Unsafe Motherhood : A Review of Reproductive Health" in Monica Das Gupta et al (eds), op.cit., p.133.

vegetables while they also continue to receive breast milk. This continues throughout her life leading to a higher rate of malnutrition. As revealed by the dietary consumption data of National Monitoring Bureau, girls in the age group of 13 to 15 years consume less than two-thirds of the recommended calories intake and because of this, they do not achieve their full height and weight potential.

The social values of Indian society prescribes the bread winners, generally the male members, to eat first. There is a linkage between status of women in connection with power relations of the sexes within the household and entitlement of food. And therefore, girls and women proportionately get less food than their male counter parts and thus subjected to undernourishment. Therefore, they are more susceptible to illness and receive less health care compared to men and male children. Women and girls are treated at the most critical stages. In a health survey conducted in Maharashtra, it was found that differential treatment was given to sick male and female children, in the sense that female children were given the traditional treatment or did not receive any treatment, while treatment from qualified doctors was sought for male children.

Child and early marriage is another factor that contributes towards the ill health and low life expectancy of women. The mean age at marriage of females has been 13.1 in 1901, 13.2 in 1911, 13.7 in 1921, 12.7 in 1931, 14.7 in 1941, 15.6 in 1951, 16.1 in 1961, 17.2 in 1971 and 17.6 in 1981. Against this, the mean age at marriage of males has been 20.0. in 1901, 20.7 in 1921, 19.9 in 1951, 21.4 in 1961, 22.2 in 1971 and 20.6 in 1981.⁸ Thus, the mean age for girls at marriage is such a low at which they are not ready for marriage either socially and emotionally, and physiologically and chronologically. This is significant, for infant mortality rate is directly related to the age of women at marriage.

At the societal level, women are controlled and dominated by men in various ways. The Indian social system, with a few exceptions is characterised by patriarchy. Patriarchy recognizes male dominance and female subordination. Even the male dominance is not seriously questioned by women. Women's sexuality is controlled much more strictly than men's. Preservation of their purity is behind the norm of getting females married before the on set

8 Ram Ahuja, Social Problems in India, Rawat Publications, New Delhi, 1992, pp.85-86.

of puberty. There are restrictions on women's movements and contacts. It is also believed that women's resources need regulation and control. Submission and subordination of women are further strengthened and maintained over time by socialisation process where hierarchic gender relations prevail and women have little and no independent social existence. "The manner in which these controls are exercised depend to a great extent on social structure, role allocation, value premises and the rigidity or flexibility of social control, the inter play of historical, economic, social and political forces contribute significantly to the shaping and reshaping of gender equations".⁹

The real burden begins when the girl become adolescent. Adolescence is a period when she is trained for the role she is expected to play in the future. And therefore, the phase of adolescence is a very important stage.

The modern systematic investigation of adolescence as a separate and distinct phase in human development really begins with the work of G.Stanly Hall, who published 2 volumes of work on adolescence in 1916. The word adolescence is derived from the Latin word "adolescence" which means `to

9 S.C.Dubey, op.cit.,p.108.

grow', 'to grow to maturity'. In other words, the child as a whole undergoes a complex series of changes in the various aspects of growth and development, namely, physical, mental, social, emotional, moral and vocational. After childhood he/she establishes new identifications. The period is also described as a second chance for mature development. Since it is a special time for the search and growth of a sense of identity, adolescence is a transition period and the status of adolescent is indeterminate. It gives in two overlapping life periods, namely childhood and adulthood. Sometimes the adolescents are more of a childhood and sometimes more of an adult. In reality, it is neither.

Adolescent period is the time of constant change of mind, body and social relationships. This formative period is totally neglected in the case of public programmes and even more remarkable, largely ignored within many socio-cultural systems.¹⁰ Adolescence is associated with rapid growth and development and increased demand for nutrients. But they don't get the required amount of nutrition.

10 P.M.Jude et al, "Status of Adolescent Girls in a Rural South Indian Population", Indian Journal of Child Health, 1991, pp.60-63.

The poor conditions of adolescent girls in India have been described by many scholars that they are neglected and continue to live without recognition, status, education, employment and social rights and opportunities and have no participation in decision making and self development. The concept of adolescent is still unknown to the rural people of India. Due to the denial of control over their own bodies they often become mere instruments of production. It is further said that restrictions are imposed on girls soon after puberty, whether social or ritual. The notion of purity and pollution is strictly introduced in connection with menstruation. She is caught in it by the burden of work, meeting her basic requirements and sometimes fails to and she is looked down upon as an unwelcome addition to the family. Social restrictions are placed on the girl who has attained puberty. A lot of dos and don'ts are imposed on her. Her sexuality is controlled. She is restricted in her behaviour and movements. The action of purity and pollution plays an important role in her social interactions. This in fact decreases her social interaction.

In this context, it is necessary to have a look on the existing literature on the status and health of women in general and girl child and adolescent girls in particular.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The general survey of the existing literatures suggest the following aspects of female and girls :

Over all Status of Women and Girls :- A large many studies suggest that women and girl child are subjected to various discriminations. Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj have mentioned the status of women in the pre-existing social structure and in the present day social structure.¹¹ According to them the growth of industrial capitalism is an opportunity for women to participate in various jobs. Even at this juncture, all classes of women are subjected to oppression although their forms vary. While the salaried educated women are not fully liberated and are subject to various control, the poor working women face discrimination and exploitation at work and male dominance at home. Even the work policies take women as workers and ignore their needs and rights as mothers. And the various governmental policies have not helped to eradicate the social maladies based on gender inequality. Similarly, P.Mary Jude et al in their study show that most of the adolescent girls are daily

11 Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj, "Women and Society in India ", Ajanta Publications, 1987.

wage labourers and they get less wage in comparison to boys for the same type of work.¹² None of the girls even had opportunity to take independent decision about themselves. They were being discriminated at school and home. Lack of sufficient food, lack of encouragement to study after puberty, early marriage, restrictions to participate in public programmes, sexual assault etc. are some of the basic problems faced by the adolescent girls in the study area. S.P.Punalekar mentions that inhuman and deliberate neglect of girl child is very common but varies according to social class and culture. The process of socialisation and upbringing of the girl child shapes her adolescence and the whole life. Preferential and discriminatory attitude in favour of male child helps a girl to do the household job or other inferior jobs while her male counterpart gets education and employment in superior position. Even the adolescent girls do not have a right to say in their marriage, employment, in the process of decision making, participation in political affairs etc.

12 P.Mary Jude et ,al, op.cit.

Predominance of discrimination against women since their birth has been focussed by M.K.Hassan.¹³ The women have been considered as weaker sex and treated accordingly. In spite of the various legal provisions, the upliftment of the status of women still remains a day dream. Women are accorded a low status and are subjected to various types of exploitation. Rekhadavi Raju in her study has found that girls are important than the boys both in case of tribals and non-tribals in rural Karnataka.¹⁴ The mothers are scared about the sex of the to be born children. The social stigma of the problem of heavy dowry is the factor behind this scare. Even differential treatment is found among Brahmin and non-Brahmin girls. Indira Kulshreshtra analyses the exploitation of girls starting from birth to motherhood and death.¹⁵ The girl child is the last to be thought of in matters of food, medical care, education and first to be considered for exploitation, discrimination, suppression and oppression or for performance of demeaning jobs. She is the

13 M.K.Hassan, 'Prejudice in Indian Youth: A Sociopsychological Study', New Delhi, 1981.

14 Rekhadevi Raju, "Status of Women", Dastane Ramachandra & Co. 830, Sadashiva Peth, Poona, 30, 1988.

15 Noopur Indira Kulashreshtra, "The war Against Gender Bias", Sterling Publications Pvt.Ltd., New Delhi, 1994.

victim of sexist bias. Her socialisation process is different from her male counterparts even within the same family. The discrimination is largely due to the subconscious of both men and women as well as the structure of society. Similarly, Meera Chatterjee describes how from birth till the age of 20 a woman is discriminated against.¹⁶ A girl child is unwanted and hence pre-natal abortion of female fetuses and female infanticide. On the other hand, a son is preferred for social and religious necessity. The girl is often neglected in getting health care, nutritional food, good cloth in comparison to boy in the same family. Monica Das Gupta and P.N. Mari Bhat, in their "The Intensified Gender Bias in India : A Consequence of Fertility Decline" examine the effect of decline of fertility on the manifestation of gender bias in India.¹⁷ They have studied the effects of reduction of higher parity births on the one hand, and intensification of parity specific gender bias on the other hand, to see their

16 Meera Chatterjee, "A Situation Analysis of Women from Birth to Twenty". women's Development Division, NIPCCD, New Delhi.1987.

17 Paper presented in International Conference on Gender Perspectives in Population, Health and Development in India, India International Centre, New Delhi, January 1996.

independent and combined effect on net excess female child loss. They conclude that there is an additional one million or more female children went 'missing' over and above those already reflected as missing in the census. The data suggests that this may be due to sex selective abortion or unreported infanticide.

Education :-

Education is another area where the girls are discriminated and hence the literacy level for girls are very low. The various studies show how girls education is limited by various hindrance. Snehalata Panda shows how the apathy towards education of girls is deep rooted in the societal values and norms¹⁸. Sometimes the parents in rural areas are reluctant to send their daughters to schools due to the prevalence of untouchability. Even the first short story 'Rebati' in Oriya literature by Fakirmohan Senapati depicts the superstition that girls education brings destruction. Rekhadevi Raju concludes that preferential treatment in the matters of education deprives girls of the right to education.

18 Snehalata Panda, "Women and Social Change in India" Ashish Publishing House, New Delhi, 1992.

Health and Nutrition :-

The discrimination of girl children in the society gets reflected in their state of health and nutrition. Neera Desai and Maithreyi Krishnaraj explain that health is not a neutral phenomena but deep rooted in the socio-economic values of the society. In a patriarchal structure, the importance is given to male child and the hierarchy of resources of the family limits women's access to health care. Even D.Banarjee in "Poverty and Health Culture" found that there was considerable awareness among the rural people regarding the health facilities. However, poverty, hunger, environmental conditions, sanitation, quality of drinking water, shelter, clothing etc. are the important problems for the rural people which cause ill health. P.Mary Jude et al, in their study found high prevalence of anaemia among adolescent girls due to nutrition deficiency. The minimum standard of height and weight required for safe pregnancy is lower among most of the girls. S.P.Punalekar concludes that gender bias very well results in lower health standards among girls, high mortality rate among women, lower sex ratio, high morbidity rate and nutritional deficiency. S.Bhatia describes how a complex of cultural practices and

social status differentials determine women's health in the Indian subcontinent.

It has been shown by a number of studies that the gender is the most significant determinant of food availability and nutritional status. Chen et al (1981) analyse that girls receive less breast milk and other food than their male counterparts. The need for making boys stronger for physical work tempt the rural people to provide good food to their sons at the cost of their daughters.

Amartya Sen and Sunil Sengupta in their study on "Malnutrition of Rural Children and Sex Bias" found the high incidence of undernourishment among the children below 5 years in two rural villages. They have concluded that under nourishment is lower in case of boys than girls and in economically better area, lower than the poorer area. 'Women's Health in India : Risk and Vulnerability, ' (eds) Monica Das Gupta et al, is structured to take a holistic view of women's health from childhood to old age. By this process the most vulnerable points in the life-cycle of a woman can be identified, so also the sources of their vulnerability. The papers study sex differentials in infant and child mortality rates, and their relations to socio-cultural and economic factors. The resultant evidence



suggests that rather than economic development, it is cultural factors and the status of women that play a significant role in the reduction of female child mortality. Systematic documentation of the extent and nature of health risks during the reproductive years has also been done. This ranges from risks associated with pregnancy and child birth to sexually transmitted disease and AIDS. The study suggests that old age is least vulnerable in women's life.

The existing literature suggests that women and girl child suffer a lot due to various socio-economic and religious causes. However, none of the literature has made an indepth study on adolescent girls which is an important stage of a girl's life. Whether publicly recognised or not, the adolescent period seemingly has one outstanding peculiarity : it is a time when the individual is attaining physical maturity without necessarily attaining social maturity.

Daily food habits of rural girls along with total nutritional value in a particular cultural setting and economic background needs a deeper analysis. This has also to be analysed in the light of day to day work burden and exploited life of adolescent girls. It also requires an in depth study regarding the question of whether, women want

to change their status or not and whether this has any relationship with the class status. It also requires an in depth study as to how the conditions of adolescent girls affect them throughout their life when they would be mothers and housewives. Most importantly, the awareness of the girls can be known clearly with that of their male counterparts.

The present study, "Health Perception and Health Practices of Adolescent Girls in a Village in Balaswar, Orissa: A Sociological Analysis", tries to focus on the some of the above mentioned neglected issues by earlier literatures. The present work consists of 5 Chapters.

Chapter I is introductory one which generalises the over all status of women in general and girl child and adolescent girls in particular. Here special emphasis has been given towards health problems of the females. The survey of existing literature on this area is another feature of this Chapter.

Chapter II tries to specify the problems of the study in terms of methodology, objective of the study and other research problems.

Chapter III consists of a general over view of the study area. Here, geo-physical location, various facilities of the village, its population, pattern of settlement, socio-

religious aspects, etc. are described.

Chapter IV consists of 2 sections. Section-I consists of the general life style of the study group, i.e. Scheduled Caste population. Here their culture, economy, education, inter relationship among themselves and with other castes etc. are described. Section-II is the analysis part of the study where the data is systematically analysed to have a theoretical understanding of the problem and to reach at a viable conclusion.

Chapter V is the summary and discussion Chapter where the analysis of the collected data has been given a theoretical shape.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Adolescence is an important stage in the development of human being in many ways. It is the stage where rapid growth takes place both at mental and physical level. The impact from various environmental sources is more at this stage of human life where much of the things are learnt which shapes one's adulthood. Much of restrictions and do's and do nots are imposed by the family members and society at this stage.

Adolescence is influenced and shaped by different factors. The family tradition and social milieu are two most important factors which contribute to the shaping and reshaping of the life style of the adolescence. Different families have different traditions and ways of socialisation which contribute to the education of the adolescence and shape their life. The material and social conditions of the society affect the internal milieu of the families.

Role distribution and role performance is a gradual process at all levels in a society. The allocation of roles, status and power in all societies is based on the prevailing values for the two sexes. It is this social articulation of

sex roles that we call gender.

In a patrilineal society, authority is in the hands of male members.¹ One's patrilineal kinsman includes one's father's father and his siblings, (brothers and sisters), one's father and his siblings the children of one's father's brother, one's own brothers and sisters, and the children of one's brother. In such a society property and succession of titles are passed from father to son.

In India, the patrilineal society provides some guidelines to the social relationships in which a person is likely to be involved in the course of his life. It provides a way of transmitting status and property from one generation to the next. Therefore, such a society is male dominated, where women play a secondary role. In educated, urban middle classes, women have a role to play outside the family and this is also the case among peasants and agricultural labourers. Even in rural areas women participate in outside productive activities. Despite this, both in urban and rural areas men are perceived as bread earners and therefore, providers and protectors of the family while women are perceived as playing a nurturing and

1 Robin Fox, *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective*, Baltimore, Pelican, 1967.

supportive role. Patrilineal society exploits women's labor in the family in various ways. Here women are supposed to obey and sacrifice for the cause of the family. Whenever necessary in this case, family continues to be male centered and hence importance is given to males only. This kind of structure sets the pattern of living and socialisation in a family. These patterns and practices are propagated within and by the family. Childhood and adolescence thus is critical in setting social norms and traditions. Importance is given to adolescence and these girls are taught to accept this discrimination as natural and normal.

It is this phase of life which interests most as the foundations of an individual are laid here, and her health is also determined by the treatment that she gets and understanding that she develops regarding herself and her needs. To understand the sociological dimensions of the health of adolescents we chose to study a single social group in order to focus on the influence of economic and educational factors. We chose to study the Scheduled Castes of Badagan as it is well known that the unprivileged have little access to developmental programmes but they strive to educate their children. At the same time even within the socially backward caste economic differences do exist.

Given the time limit we chose to do a detailed study of 52 households out of 172 households. No random sample was chosen. However, we attempted to identify three economic categories amongst the 172 households and then selected clusters of 15, 17 and 20 households from higher, middle and lower classes respectively. The details of the economic classification are given later. Our study therefore, is purely qualitative. Before going into the details of the research design we give in the following pages our conceptualization of how perceptions and practices regarding health of adolescents are determined within a social milieu. We also describe the definitions used.

DEFINITION USED

Adolescence :-

It is the stage of human life which lies between childhood and adulthood. More appropriately, it is a transitional stage which lies between 10 and 18 years. Though short, nevertheless, it is a very significant social stage in human life as a growing child is in her most impressionable stage, therefore, the importance of its study. Given the fact that in rural India a child specially a girl is hardly seen as an adolescent and is pushed into

adulthood by early marriage. Here we define adolescence as the period which lies between 10 to 16.

Health:-

We conceptualise health in a broader notion and not as a restrictive biological entity. Hence, in this study instead of measuring health in terms of physical status, our focus is on conditions (economic and social) which are conducive and determinants of health such as availability of food, medical care, work load, rest and recreation and educational levels.

household :-

Household consists of a group of kins staying permanently under one roof and consuming food from the same hearth. In a loose sense, it has been synonymously used with family.

Illness:-

Any physical inability or hindrance to perform normal work persisting for 3 days and more is termed as illness. We have interviewed families to denote illness that occurred during last one year.

Development:-

It has used in it's narrower sense to denote the establishment of educational institutions, irrigation and

drinking water facilities, road and other communication system, including non-governmental inputs.

CONCEPTUALISATION

Any study on adolescence can be done basically at two levels. These are

- a) At the level of socio-economic status of families in the society and differential treatment, if any, within the existing socio-economic groups to the adolescent girls arising out of their conditions of work and social status.
- b) At the family level, to assess how socialisation, upbringing and parental influences and treatment of boys and girls generates gender differentials.

It is widely believed that differential treatment towards girls makes them more susceptible to morbidity and mortality, leaves them illiterate and place them in a more vulnerable position throughout their life. It is also believed that girls get less vaccinations, less education, less nutrition and even less time at their mother's breasts than their brothers. And therefore, when they grow up they are less healthy than their male counterparts and succumb more easily to sickness and disease.

At the larger level, in a stratified village population, the adolescence is influenced by availability of

resources and sustenance for a social group, overall understanding of its members about women and girls in each social group, children's participation in the economic activities, social norms set for socialisation and child rearing practices and beliefs.

At the family level the differences in the up bringing of boys and girls are reflected in their day to day life through food distribution and consumption, education and schooling, nature of household responsibility and out side work, chronic and major diseases and illness that they may suffer from, health care during illness, play time, emotional care and attention paid by the family members. These indices are to be studied in relation to their socio-economic background, role in total life processes of the family, relation to the parents, ways and explanations to cope up with any discriminatory behavior, perception about themselves and their families, the expectation of family members and parents from them and so on. Thus at the family level apart from changing family norms and practices individual perceptions of the adolescent will also be studied to ensure his/her reaction in case of discriminatory and preferential treatments.

VARIABLES

Thus health of adolescent girls can't be seen in isolation but in familial, socio-cultural and economic settings. The factors contributing towards the health of the adolescent girls constitutes the variables. In this study, the following variables have been taken into account:

- a) Economic
- b) Socio-cultural
- c) Education
- d) Food and nutrition

In this study, the emphasis has been given to analyse how the above variables affect to the health practices of the adolescent girls.

OBJECTIVES

The present study is to examine the perception of health and the health behavior of adolescent girls in a village in Baleshwar, Orissa. The main thrust of this study is to analyse the relationship of health and health practices with that of socio-economic factors. It attempts to analyse.

1. How health and health practices of rural adolescent girls are related to the economic conditions of the family?

2. Whether the health practices have any gender bias.
3. Whether development has broken the traditional barrier and helped the rural adolescent girls in attaining sound health.
4. Whether education has any role in changing family values regarding the adolescent girls.
5. The girls perception of their life and health.

DATA REQUIRED

A wide range of data is required to analyse the health perception and health behavior of the adolescent girls of rural area. These include:

- a) Data on the social and economic life of the study population.
- b) Demographic profiles.
- c) Food availability for adolescent girls and boys.
- d) Educational levels.
- e) The household and out side work responsibility of the adolescent girls and boys.
- f) The health and health practices with regard to adolescent girls and it's comparison with adolescent boys.
- g) The play of the girls in the three classes.
- h) Freedom of adolescent girls in relation to the other girls in the same community.
- i) Recreation of adolescent girls.
- j) Parents expectation from the girls and the boys.
- k) The women's preference for the sex of the child.

- l) A day in the life of girls and boys.
- m) The aim of the girls.
- n) Illness in last one year of the girls and boys.
- o) The girls' perception about any differential treatment for their younger brother and sisters by their parents.
- p) The adolescent girls' idea about the rural women who participate in village Panchayat etc.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design for the present study constitutes the following.

a) Selection of Study Population:-

While selecting the village, various aspects like accessibility of the study group, convenience for staying and collecting data, communication, language, the size of population were considered. Familiarity with the village for a long time and long term observation tempted me to select this village. These factors in addition to familiarity with the language made it simpler to obtain information. The selection of Scheduled Caste adolescent girls is a deliberate choice for the following reasons. While education, communication, modern occupation and all round development of the society has brought certain changes in the social realm, the intention in this case has been to see

whether this has brought any change to the traditional health behavior of the Scheduled Caste adolescent girls.

Village Badagan was thus selected and its Scheduled Caste population identified. Over time, 172 households were identified and with the help of key informants these were clustered into three broad economic categories on the basis of their type of houses and assests. Of these, a subset of 3 clusters was chosen and studied in detail.

b) Determination of Class:-

The data has been collected from 52 Scheduled Caste households having 71 adolescent girls. Purposive sampling has been adopted to collect data. The entire study population has been divided into three groups-higher class, middle class and lower class on the basis of economic criterion. At this level basically the standard of living of the households has been taken into account. Since in rural areas land holding and service contribute a lot towards good standard of living, these two factors have been taken into account. Accordingly, households possessing land holding of 10 acres or more are in the higher class category. Households possessing lands from 2 acres to 10 acres come under middle class category and households possessing less

than 2 acres of land come under lower class category. However, households who are in govt service, come under higher or middle class category depending on the nature of job.

The middle class can be again divided into the 'upper middle class' those who possess 6-10 acres of land and 'lower middle class' those possessing 2-6 acres of land. Similarly, the lower class is divided into 'poor class' who possess more than 1 acre and less than 2 acres and 'very poor', who possess less than one acre land.

Apart from the land holdings, the classification of the study group also takes into account the main and subsidiary occupations. In each class, the main plus subsidiary occupation of the people are taken into consideration. Land being the major criteria for class determination, occupies a key position in this study. In rural areas, agriculture is the main occupation of the maximum people and apart from the govt. service, petty business also contributes to some extent towards their earning. In lower class, since the people possess less than 2 acres of land, maximum of them are wage labourers in other agricultural field. (The classification of economic class of the study population would be in detail in the 4th Chapter, section-I)

c) Research Tools:-

For collecting data and cross checking it, the following research tools were used. Group discussion and individual interviews were undertaken from the key informants in order to extract a general profile of the village. The over all socio-economic data on the village is collected by this method.

For collection of household data, the main technique used was interview Schedules. In the study area where rural illiterate girls are the respondents, the interview was undertaken with the help of a schedule with open ended questions for most areas. Schedule consists of 36 questions both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The schedule consists of 3 sections for extracting a wide range of data and to cross check the data. Section-I is meant for head of the family and deals with the general data on family such as-family type, total members, occupation, education etc. Section-II is meant for the housewife of the household. It deals with her perception on the role and status of adolescent girls. The questions that come under this section include- nature of girls responsibility and starting age, work of boys, the number of time they eat, the acceptance of a girl child, their illness and treatment and so on.

Section-III deals with questions to adolescent girls regarding the state of her health, how she perceives her role and position in the family and includes questions like the nature of responsibility, the number of times she eats and sufficiency of food, recreation, education, freedom, her treatment in the family and her reaction towards this, health status, illness and its treatment and so on. The detailed schedule is attached in the Appendix-I.

Apart from the above methods, direct observation was made during the stay at the study area. The method of observation helped a lot to check the information provided by the subjects in the population and what actually exists.

Apart from these methods census data, official records on the village in the Grampanchayat and Block office helped a lot to collect the wide range of data required for the purpose of this study.

d) Time Schedule:-

One month before the major study, a pilot study was conducted to assess the general profile of the village including location, households, caste and class composition etc. The main study took 3 months from October to December. During this period, I stayed in the study area.

e) Analysis:-

Since only one caste group is taken into consideration, stratification of this group on economic basis as higher class, middle class and lower class is a basic necessity. This was done on the basis landholding in combination with occupations. It helps to locate different families in the social economic dynamics of the village and makes it possible to study adolescence in relation to this socio-economic status.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Depth and duration of the study are it's main limitations. As the first independent work and the occasional rains that disrupted the study in many ways, the time fell short. The study is limited for fewer case reports and a small study population. If it would have been more, it would have been better. The presence of other people including parents obstructed the revelation of same data by the adolescent girls.

Most importantly, if other caste categories would have been taken into consideration, comparison could have been done.

Inadequate and unsystematic official record keeping for the study village on adolescent girls and women both in Panchayat office and Block office is still another major problem of the present study which could not be overcome in the short period.

CHAPTER-III

THE GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE VILLAGE

Very often there is a complete dissociation between what is officially recognized and what really exists. Badagan is one good example of this dichotomy which I selected and visited for my research purposes.

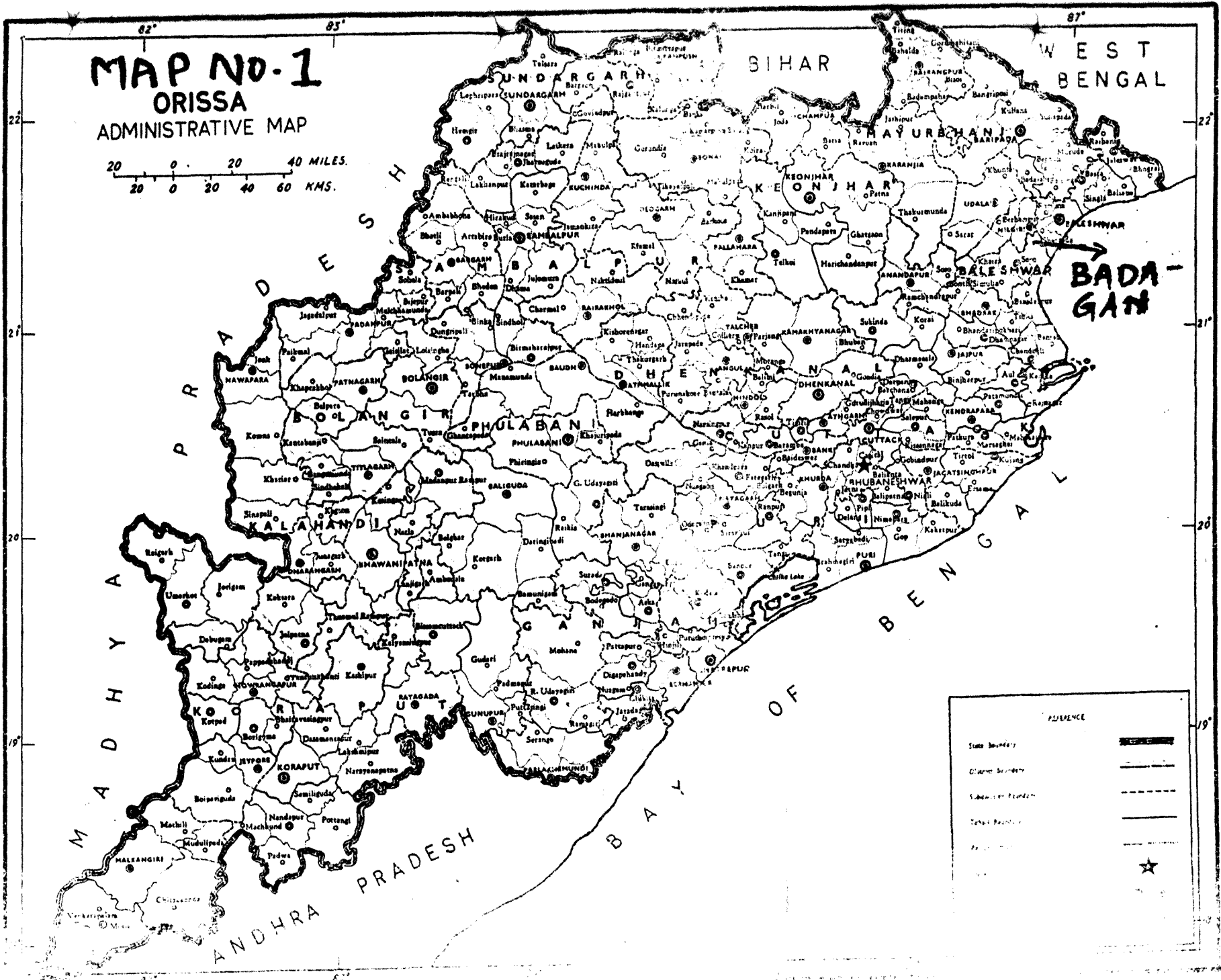
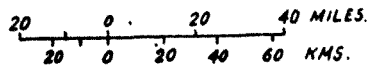
Badagan, as the name indicates, is a large village situated near National Highway No.5 and the South-Eastern Railway line that connects Calcutta on north-eastern side and Bhubaneswar on the southern side. Badagan comes under Bahanaga Block and Soro Police Station in the district of Baleshwar in the state of Orissa. It is situated on the coastal belt of Orissa.

Badagan is not the official name of the area. The Census hand book shows that the village known as Badagan by the local people actually comprises of three census villages known as Patharpent, Taharpur and Patna. The record for official purposes is maintained separately for three villages. But the people of the whole area identify themselves as Badaganites. For the purpose of our study, therefore, we have taken Badagan as one single unit.

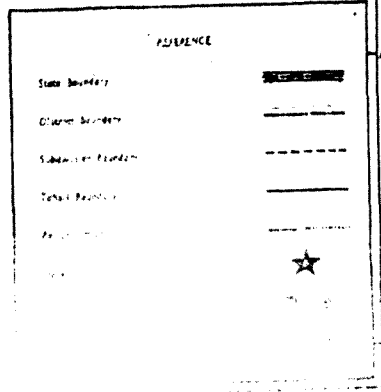
MAP NO. 1

ORISSA

ADMINISTRATIVE MAP



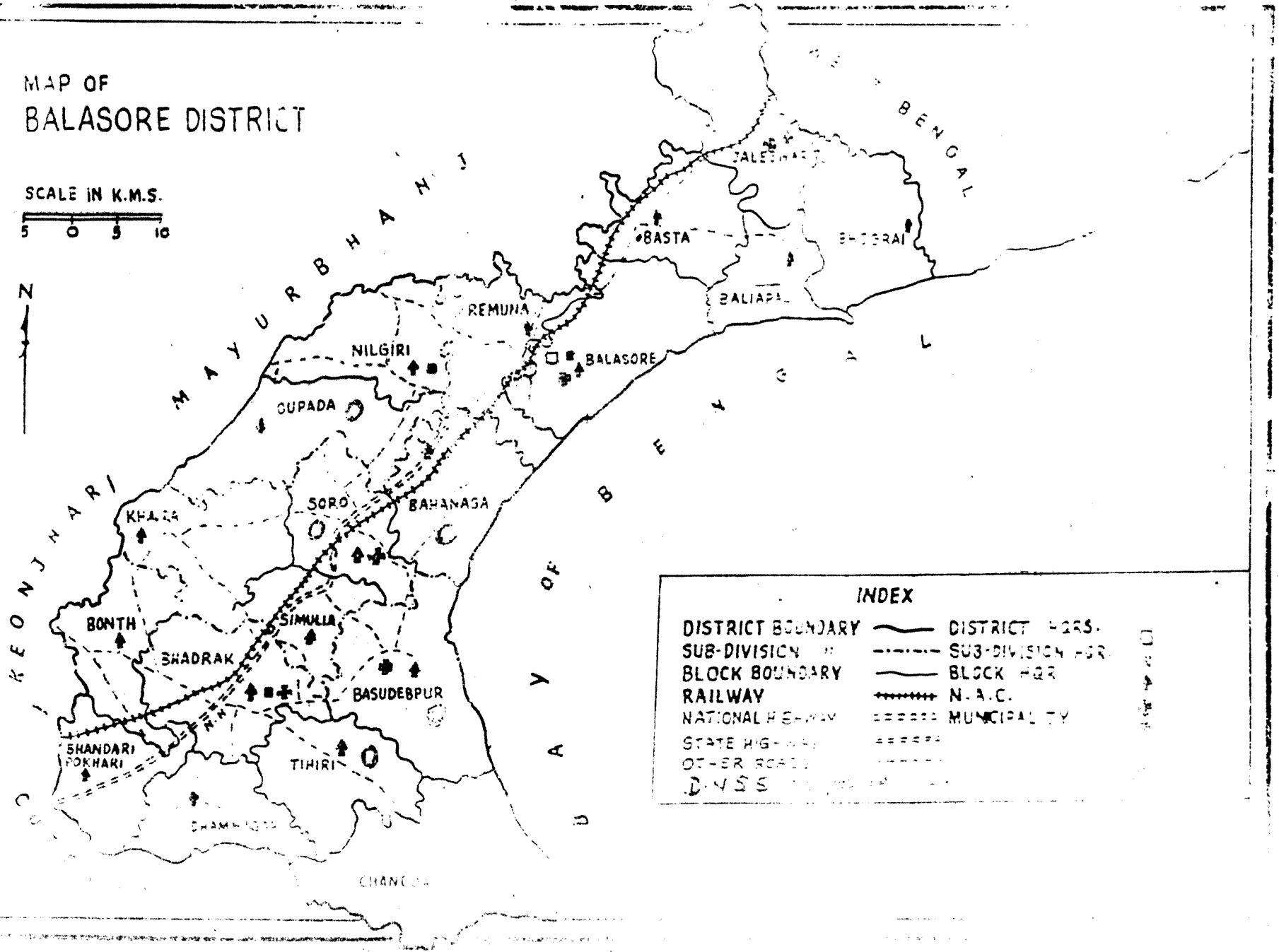
BADAGAN



MAP NO. 2.

MAP OF BALASORE DISTRICT

SCALE IN K.M.S.



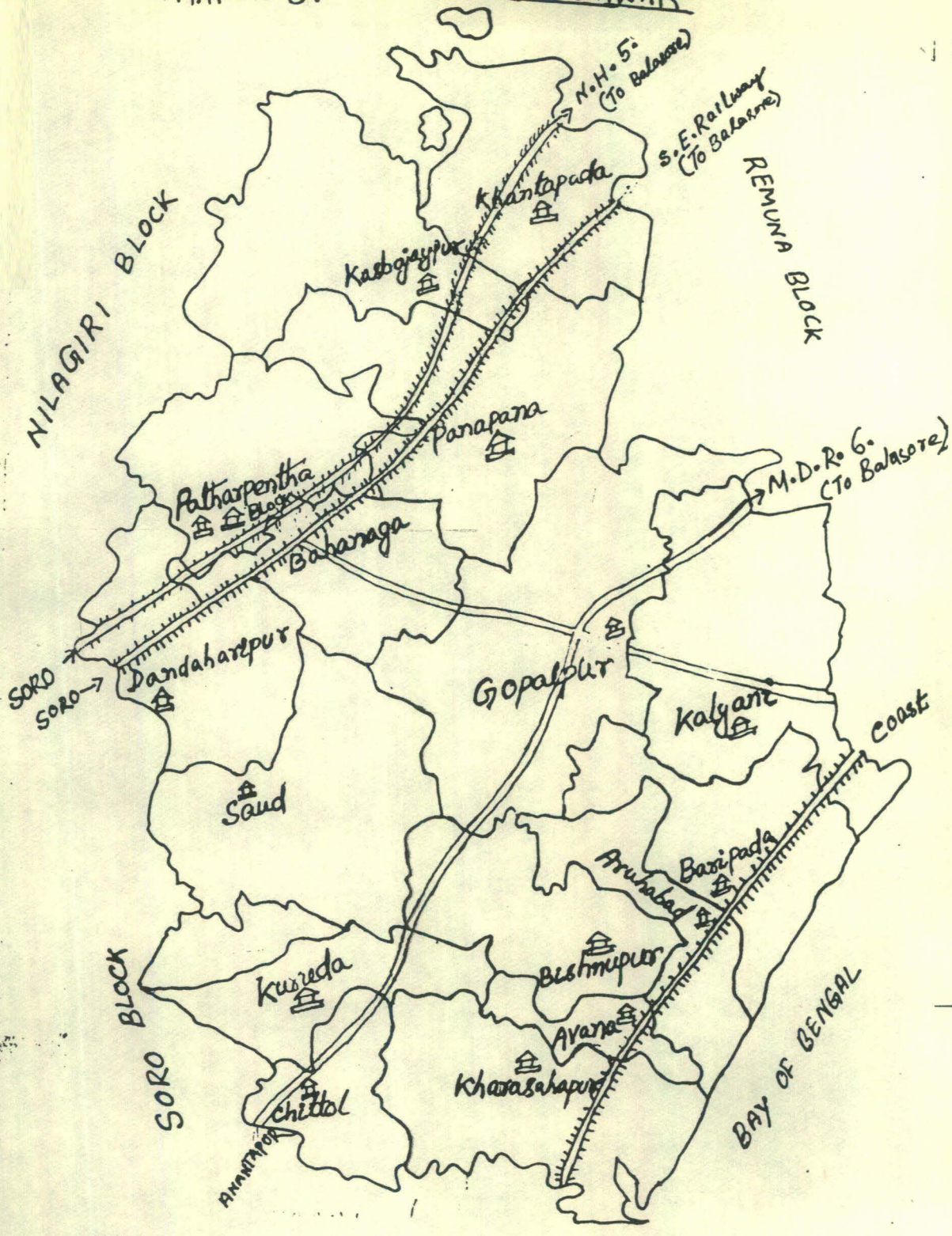
INDEX

DISTRICT BOUNDARY	—————	DISTRICT HQRS.	■
SUB-DIVISION	- - - - -	SUB-DIVISION HQRS.	□
BLOCK BOUNDARY	—————	BLOCK HQRS.	▲
RAILWAY	+++++	N.A.C.	+
NATIONAL HIGHWAY	=====	MUNICIPALITY	○
STATE HIGHWAY	=====		
OTHER ROADS		
D.S.S.		

1944

MUZMULI MAP OF BAHANAGA BLOCK

MAP No. 3.



GEOGRAPHY

Badagan comes under the coastal plains of Orissa, 15 Kilometers to the west of Bay of Bengal. The coastal area of Orissa is divided into three heads according to the fertility of the soil. This village is located in the most fertile part. It consists of alluvial soil and hence is well cultivated, rice being the major crop. Therefore, rice is the staple food of the people of this area. Other edible products, jute and cash crops are also produced here.

There are two hills, Nilgiri and Panchalingeshwar situated approximately 25 Kilometers north of the village. This hill area is marked by many small jungles on which some people depend for their livelihood. The people collect mahua¹, tamarind, cashew nut, honey and other forest products.

The three main rivers that flow in Baleshwar-Budhabalang, Subarnarekha and Baitarani are not far from Badagan. This affects the soil and climate of the village.

Since the area is situated in the coastal part of Orissa, the climate is neither too cold nor too hot,

1 Mahua is one kind of citrus fruit found in the jungle out of which the people make wine. They also make a special kind of cake mixing it with rice etc.

therefore, it is good for habitation. As the village is situated on the east coast of India, rainfall occurs both by the South-West monsoon and retreat monsoon. The average rainfall in this area is 180 centimeter. Generally rainfall occurs from mid-June to mid-September and December to March. However, heaviest rainfall occurs in the months of July and August. Sometimes the Oceanic cyclone affects the village.

Table No. 3.1

SOME FEATURES OF THE VILLAGE & ITS DIVISIONS

	Total Area (in acres)	Common land	Area not available for	Temples agriculture
Patharpenth	280.04	8.09	19.43	3
Taharpur	223.39	18.21	12.83	0
Patana	107.65	4.45	11.12	1
Total	611.08	20.75	32.38	4

Table No.3.1 shows the total area of the village in hectares. Out of the total amount of 611.08 hectares, 20.75 hectares is meant for common land. Common land means the land used by all the villagers for any purpose including

Table No. - 3.2

THE BASIC FACILITIES OF THE VILLAGE

	Education	Health	Drinking Water	Post/Telegram	Nearest Hat	Nearest town
Pathar-penth	Village High School & Bahanaga School	MCW NGO Doctor	Tank, Tubewel	Bahanaga	Barickpur (Friday)	Soro
Patana	Primary School & Bahanaga School	PHC, Bahanaga	Well, Tank, Tubewel	Bahanaga	Barickpur (Friday)	Soro
Taharpur	Bahanaga School	PHC, Bahanaga	Well, Tank, Tubewel	Bahanaga	Barickpur (Friday)	Soro

MCW - Maternal Child Welfare

PHC - Primary Health Centre

grazing and cultural activities. It also houses village clubs and drama halls. The area not meant for agriculture includes rocky lands, ponds, jungles, drains, schools etc. The total amount of this land is 32.38 hectares and the other part is meant for temples.

Some of the basic facilities of the village are shown in table no.3.2. The table shows that the over all position of the village is good. The village provides good educational facilities, health facilities, postal facility and marketing facilities. The village is only at a distance of 11 Kilometers from the town. It is not far from the district town of Baleshwar. The village is well connected with roads. The local NGO, Daridra Narayan Seva Santha (DNSS) has contributed a lot towards the development of the village. However, despite various facilities and efforts the literacy level and development of the village is not much satisfactory.

HOUSEHOLDS

Bahanaga Block has 165 villages and consists of 88726 households. As Badagan is the largest village in the Block, the number of households in this village is much more than

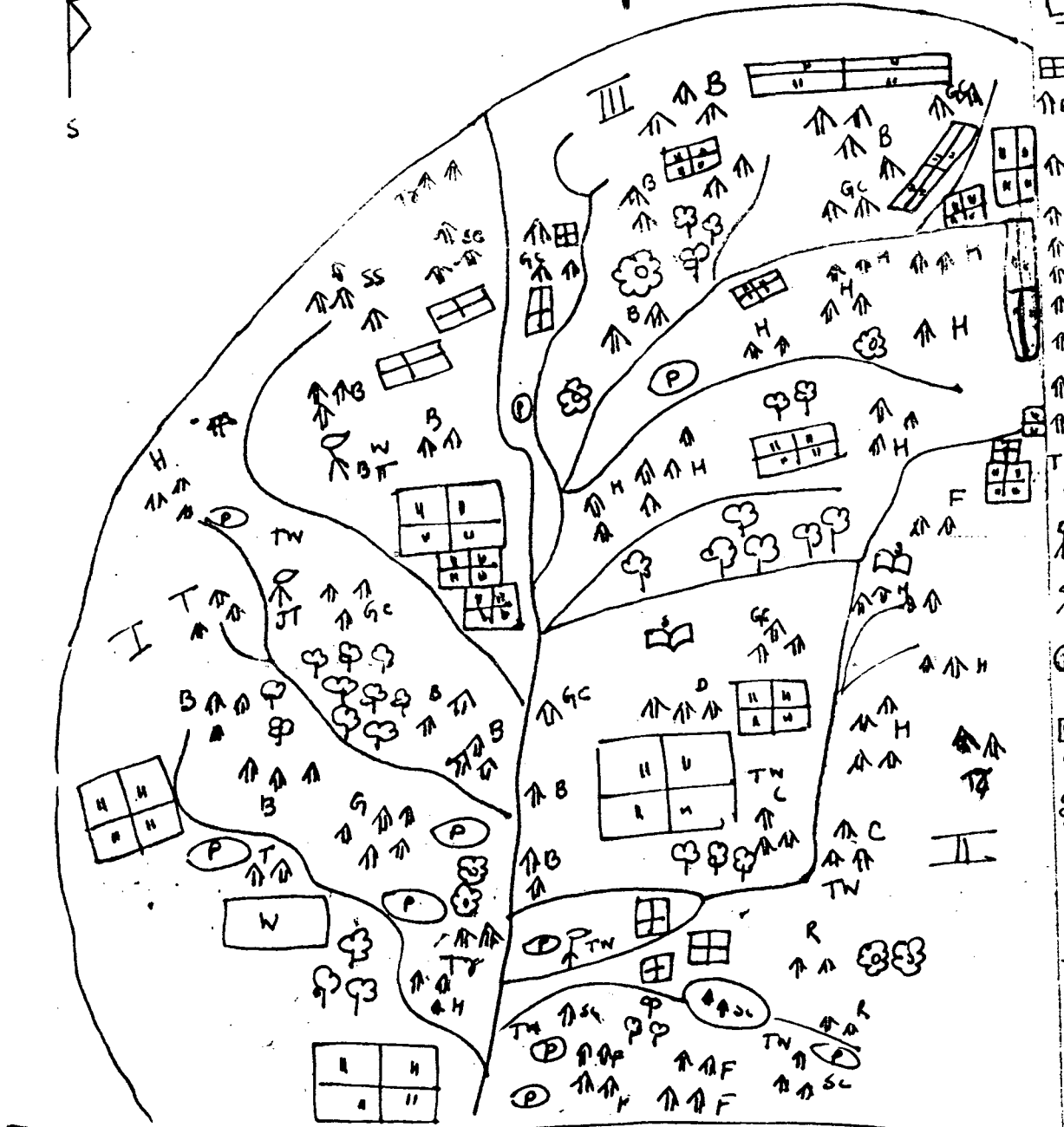
MAP OF BADAGAN
BALESHWAR, ORISSA.

MAP NO. 4



Legends

- ▣ - Field
- ↑B - Brahmin household cluster
- ↑Gc - General caste
- ↑T - Tel
- ↑H - Harijan
- ↑G - Gardener
- ↑F - Fisherman
- ↑Sc - Scheduled caste
- ↑R - Rajput
- ↑D - Dhobi
- TW - Tubewell
- W - Well
- ⊙BE - Basuli temple
- ⊙J.T. - Jagannath temple
- ⊙P - Pond
- Λ - Mound
- - Wasteland
- PPP - Forest
- ⊙ - Garden
- ⊙ - School
- I - Patharpeath
- II - Patana
- III - Taharpur
- C - Chuda
- T - Tribal



N.H. NO. -5

SOUTH - EASTERN RAILWAY

that in other villages. The village has three divisions and the number of households in each of the division is found separately in the Panchayat office. Patharpenth being the largest of the three divisions, has the highest number of households (432) followed by Taharpur (306) and Patna (92). The total number of households in Badagan is 830 and of the 830 households, 172 belong to Scheduled Castes. Scheduled Caste households which are scattered over Taharpur and Patna.

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

Patharpenth :- The map no.4 shows that this division covers the maximum area of Badagan. It is bounded on eastern side by Taharpur and on south-east by Patna. On its south-eastern limit the DNSS (NGO) is located. In the compound of DNSS we can find Laxmi-Narayan and Durga Temples, tube well, deep tube well, pond, garden, cultivated land etc.

In this part of the village we can see the natural features like forests, agricultural land, garden, field etc. These natural features also act as boundaries of the inhabitation zones of various castes. For example, on the eastern limit of the village and north of DNSS, there is a large cultivated area on the west of which are clustered the

houses of Brahmins and other general castes and Other Backward Castes-families. On the north live the Gokha caste (fishermen) and on the east Radi (flattened rice makes). The Dhobis' (washermen) hamlet is separated from the general castes hamlet (which lies on the south east) by cultivated land again. On the northern part of Patharpent, the Scheduled Caste households are again separated from the Brahmin households by cultivated land. The temple of goddess Basuli lies amidst the clusters of Brahmin households. There is a school in this division.

In the north-western part, we find a cluster of Harijan households which is again separated from the other general castes and Brahmin households by a pond, tube well and Jagannath temple. However, this separation is only geographical, as the pond and tube well are used by every one. The Brahmins and general caste households extend towards further south, but are separated from the Harijan households in the extreme south by two ponds and a garden. We also have a cluster of Teli caste (oilmen) households on the west of Jagannath temple. On the extreme south western limit, this division is bounded by cultivated lands, pond, a cluster of Teli households, waste land, forest, green field etc.

The whole area is criss-crossed by roads, showing that the communication system is not a problem.

Patana :- On the south-eastern limit lies the division of Patana which is spread on the northern side of N.H.No.5. On the north of the high way lies a hamlet of fishermen and other Scheduled Caste households interspersed by forested land, pond and tube wells. On south-eastern limit, the Rajput households are separated from Scheduled Caste households by a road, pond and cultivated land. The Western boundary of Patana division also divides the flattened rice maker (Radi) household clusters which lie on the both sides of the boundary upto half a Km in Patharpent and half in Patana. Going further north, we have clusters of Harijan households, a school, fishermen's households and cultivated land on the northern most limit which extends into the eastern boundary of the third division, i.e., Taharpur.

Taharpur :- Taharpur is almost divided into two diagonal halves, the south eastern half inhabited by the Harijan households and the north-western half inhabited by Brahmins and other general castes.

Interspersed amidst the forest lands, cultivated land, fields, ponds, gardens are the Harijan households. Similarly, amid the clusters of Brahmin and other general

caste households also lie garden, forest area, cultivated fields, ponds etc. As stated earlier, it is bounded on the east by the cultivated land. There is no school in this part of the village. The children of this division either go to Bahanaga, Patharpenth or a school in Sipura (a neighboring village) for their education.

There are 32 households of the Santhal tribe. They are mostly in Patharpenth and few households in Patana.

The above description of settlement pattern shows that the village has maintained its traditional demarcation on caste lines. However, when it comes to sharing the resources like education, water from the tube well, pond etc., these demarcations are not important. Thus, the establishment of school, government common ponds and tube wells have brought about some changes in the traditional mode of social living in the village.

POPULATION

The total population of Bahanaga Block is 1,02,561. Of this about 6.39% are found in Badagan. The total population of Badagan is 6,550 and is divided among 830 households. The density of population of this village is remarkably higher than the other 165 villages of the Block and even higher

than the population density of Orissa.

RELIGION

Religion plays a vital role in shaping the socio-cultural values of the community. By studying the long term effects of the original faith of the region and its intermingling with the belief systems of new religions which made incursion into the area in later times we get some idea about the various layers of the present cultural values of the community.

The village Badagan was originally a forest area and was under the ruler of Nilgiri. The village was connected to the outside world by a road constructed by this ruler, which runs from Nilgiri to Bahanaga passing through this village. This route is shown in the map no.5.

The first migrants to this village were the members of the Pradhan Community (Brahmins). They first started worshipping Goddess Basuli. When the worship of Goddess became prominent in the area, many people following her faith came to settle here, the Scheduled Castes being one of the earliest among them. Gradually the population increased. And then harassed by the British exploitation, the Rajputs migrated into the village and started worshipping the

Goddess. The district of Baleshwar being heavily forested remained largely untouched by the British. The Rajput Community is still there in Badagan bearing the surname of Singh.

The people of this village say that they are not the original residents of Orissa. They have perhaps migrated from neighboring states.

The original name of the village is unknown. But it is believed that for the worship of Goddess Basuli, it was called Basuli Village. Later, worship of Mahadev and Jagannath also started here. The folk belief is that this village is the birth place of lord Jagannath, the lord of the universe. The people of the village believe that the most significant feature of their village is the location of the Jagannath temple.

Like other festivals, every year the Car festival is celebrated by the people of Badagan. The people of this village deeply believe in worshiping gods and goddesses. The old women of the village keep *manoti* when any member of their family falls ill, specially for their sons and grandsons.

The tribal households have retained their original faith and have their own festivals. They make their own rice

beer and offer it on religious ceremonies. There are no Christian and Muslim households in this village.

CASTE COMPOSITION

The focus of the study is only on the Scheduled Castes. However, to understand their relationship within the village, we try to understand the caste composition of the village. The information regarding this was collected was done largely from Panchayat office records and talking with the key informants such as Block Development Officer, school teachers, Sarpanch and health workers.

Of the total population of 6,550 in the village, about two third (4,341) constitute the general castes and the Other Backward Castes where as one fifth are Scheduled Castes. Population clusters are found based on caste lines. This means that the people of a particular caste tend to live in houses located in the same part of the village. These clusters in the village are plotted in map no.5.

There are two major religious groups: the Hindus which constitute 798 households and the tribals which constitute 32 households.

Among the Hindus the main castes are general castes and

Other Backward Castes consisting of 626 households.

Scheduled Castes constitute 172 households.

The main sub-castes living in the village are -

General Castes-

- 1) Brahmin
- 2) Kshatriya
- 3) Karan (Kayastha)
- 4) Rajput

Other Backward Castes-

- 1) Teli (oilman)
- 2) Bania (Gold Smith)
- 3) Radi (Flattened rice maker)
- 4) Gudia (Confectioner)
- 5) Tanti (weaver)
- 6) Kumhar (Potter)

Scheduled Castes-

- 1) Gokha (Fisher man)
- 2) Chamar (cobbler/Butcher)
- 3) Hadi (Sweeper)
- 4) Dhobi (Washerman)

Although we have not collected the exact number of particular caste, households, but our assessment after talking to the people is that among the general castes Brahmins and Kshatriyas are maximum in number. Among the backward castes, the Telis dominate in number over the Tantis, Radis and others. Radis are the smallest group among the backward castes. Among the Scheduled Castes, Gokhas are the largest group. They also are the dominant caste among the Scheduled Castes as they have landholdings, are educated and therefore, have access to resources. Among the Scheduled Castes, the Dhobis are the smallest group. There are only

three households of Dhobis. All the sub-castes live in close proximity and interact with each other. Social distance is maintained only among broad inter-caste groups of general castes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Each household is surrounded by a fence. This is done in order to have autonomy over land and preventing others from disturbing one's privacy. This however makes a little difficult to move from one household to other. The reason behind it is that it helps to a large extent in growing of various trees inside the garden. This is the special feature of each and every household irrespective of their caste and class position. Their garden is full of various types of fruits and vegetables depending upon season. This is a kind of business for those who have a fenced land and fruit trees.

OCCUPATION AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

There is a close connection with occupation and the caste of the person to which he belongs. In Badagan, agriculture is the main occupation and apart from it the villagers are engaged in various other occupations.

The Brahmins are priests, the Telis (Oilman) are generally shopkeepers, Baniyas (Gold Smiths) are engaged in

making ornaments and selling them. Gudias make sweets, Kumhars make pots. These occupations are considered 'clean'. The villagers who have the notion of clean and unclean occupations, have the perception that the higher castes and Other Backward Castes are involved in 'clean' work.

The lower castes are engaged in occupations which are considered 'unclean' by the villagers such as the Dhobi-washes dirty clothes, Chamar cuts trees and kills the animals for meat, Gokha-engaged in fishing and Hadi-working as sweepers. These occupations are considered polluting and not so valuable as the occupations of the higher castes. The notion of unclean occupations contribute a lot in restricting interaction with higher castes.

Thus, the notion of purity and pollution dominates the life of lower castes in the village. Socio-economic and caste discrimination towards Scheduled Castes is present in Badagan but not in extreme forms. The lower caste people are not allowed to enter into the Basuli temple and Mahadev temple. But anyone can enter into the Laxmi Narayan and Durga temple which are constructed by the Director of DNSS. The other institutions such as school, health centre, government offices etc. are also breaking the caste barrier.

Among the general castes and Other Backward Castes, the

Brahmins seem to be more conservative and they do not even touch the Scheduled Caste people. Among the lower castes, most of them are poor and they work in the farms of the general caste farmers as wage labourers. They are generally engaged in such an occupation which does not involve direct contact with the owner. They act either as wage labourers in the field or work at their home as servants such as cleaning their cattle-shed or grazing the animals, cutting the grass or cutting the wood etc.

When the lower caste wage labourer and higher caste wage labourer work in the same field, the distance is maintained by the land owner and by the labourer themselves. For the higher caste labourers the food is given in common pots belonging to the household and used by it, but for the lower caste labourers, food is given either on banana or sala leaves or in separate pot. After eating, only lower castes clean their pots and the place is mopped by them with cow-dung. The higher caste labourers are allowed to go into the owners' houses and do important household works which the lower castes cannot do. So the occupational differentiation is very much prevalent in Badagan.

Apart from this, the cultural discrimination is very common in Badagan. There are certain festivals such as

'Savitri Vrata' (fasting for long life of husbands), 'Ananta Vrata' (worship of Naga for acquiring wealth) which are celebrated only by the higher castes. There are also sharp differences between ritual practices, marriage rituals, type of worship, food habits and language. The higher castes including Other Backward Castes offer worship through a priest, but the Brahmin priests never come to the lower caste households on any occasion either for worship or for performance of marriage rituals.

The lower castes have their own priests who are very often criticised by the Brahmin priests. These criticisms centre around the fact that the lower caste priests do not know the Vedas and Puranas and Mantras.

With the passage of time, the process of change and transformation has taken place in this village. Now a days, the rich people among the Scheduled Castes celebrate some of the special festivals like 'Savitri Vrata' and other festivals which they did not observe earlier. This has not been objected to by the upper castes but at the same time they do not accept these households into their fold and keep strict distance from them. Secondly, as the better of Scheduled Caste households have now acquired some education and have also been in contact with the outer world, they use

the dialect which is more of the elite rather than of their own group. These changes indicate a process akin to Sanskritisation.

Within the Scheduled Castes, there is not much differentiation in their cultural practices. It only exists in terms of food, dress and language etc. and is essential due to the fact that the better off Scheduled Caste families have the money to buy and spend on these items. They do not discriminate against the poorer households.

Most of the agricultural labourers get work in the village except in the off seasons when they go for fishing (in the month of November and a month in summer).

INSTITUTIONS IN THE VILLAGE

There are several social, economic, political and cultural institutions and a non-governmental organisation working in Badagan. These institutions work for the development of the village.

School is an important institution in the village which acts as an important agent for social change. There are two schools in the village: one High School and one Primary School. The school children upto fifth class are provided mid-day meal in their schools.

There is no bank in the village. The villagers deposit their money either in the village Post Office or in the Gramya Bank at Bahanaga.

The Panchayat office is the most dominant institution in Bahanaga. Sarpanch is the head of this institution. He and his team is mostly responsible for the developmental work of the village such as construction of village roads, water supply, digging of wells, afforestation in the village etc.

Apart from that, the Sarpanch solves the various problems that arise among the villagers, such as dispute over land, irrigation and other personal fights. For this purpose, the ward member of the village also do something for the betterment of the people.

The cultural institutions such as Drama Club and Youth Club are there in the village. The cultural functions are celebrated and managed by the Youth Club of Badagan. Sometimes the members of the Youth Club take initiative in road construction, digging of pond etc. This perpetuates and strengthens the tradition of collective celebrations of village festivals to a great extent. The members of the Youth Club also help the villagers on many occasions such as marriage, death ceremonies and at the time of their

suffering.

The non-governmental organization-Daridra Narayan Seva Sanstha (DNSS) plays an important role in the developmental work of the village. It has given a new shape to the village. It provides loans on subsidised rate. It provides education to the people in the fields of agriculture, fishery, honey making etc. An English medium school has been established by this organisation. It also works in the field of water supply. The health centre of the organisation is the best in the area in terms of beds, instruments, cleanliness and service.

There is no market as such in the village. Small traders have opened kiosks to cater to the everyday needs of the villagers. There is a daily market at Bahanaga. There is one shop for clocks, six shops for sweets, three small hotels, four/five tailoring shops, four to five stationary shops, four cosmetic shops, four electric gadgets shops, five shops of vending cloths and many vegetable shops and one fruit shop. Apart from this, every evening, this place becomes crowded with various vendors for selling purposes. The fishermen also gather there for selling fish.

There is a big weekly market which is held on every Friday at Barickpur which is three kilometres from the

village. Every household of Badagan uses this market for buying essential commodities, repairing the agricultural equipments and selling agricultural products.

There is a maternal and child welfare centre in Badagan and DNSS also provides health facilities to the villagers.

Since Badagan is a coastal area, very few wells are dug and these are private wells owned by the Brahmins. Two wells are used by the public. Tube wells are plenty in the village-approximately one for 12 households. However, during summer most of the tube wells dry up. There is a water tank inside the village, but it is accessible to the higher castes only. The quality of water in all the sources is fairly good. A metaled road connects the village with N.H.No.5. There are many roads branching out from this main road. Most of them are absolutely Kachha and some of them are partly or completely metalled. The main road in the village is surrounded by cultivated land and it has no drain beside it. The branches of Kachha roads which leads to the village have drains on one or both th sides. These open drains are mainly designed by the people for draining the rain water from the roads.

Very few people in the village mainly belonging to the upper castes have private toilets. The large majority of

people use the jungle or open fields for this purpose.

The women in the village participate in work depending upon their economic status. Very few Brahmin or upper class women work outside their houses. Mostly, women from Scheduled Caste groups work in the fields. Women's education is also very limited in the village as there is no school for girls and very few families like to send their girls to the middle or high school. So the number of girl students decline very sharply after primary school.

CHAPTER-IV

SECTION-I

SCHEDULED CASTES IN BADAGAN

OCCUPATION

Agriculture is the main occupation of Scheduled Castes in Badagan. However, some of them are engaged in business and few are in govt. services. Among the Scheduled Castes each sub-caste is characterised by a particular occupation.

The Scheduled Caste population in Badagan comprises the following sub-castes :

1. Gokhas (Fisher men)
2. Dhobis (Washermen)
3. Chamars
4. Haddis, etc.

THE GOKHAS: Badagan is situated 15 kilometers from the Bay of Bengal and no river flows near the village. These Gokhas go to the sea for fishing. Some of them buy fish from the coast on a subsidised rate and sell it at Bahanaga Bazaar, Barickpur hat or in any other village. Very few women among this sub-caste are engaged in fish selling. Generally, the women play no direct economic role here, except that they are instrumental in distributing food, and look after the

house-hold like all other groups. Some poor women also work as wage labourers.

THE DHOBI: Dhobis are found only in Patharpent. They wash dirty clothes of the higher castes and backward castes. They play an important role in the ritual celebrations of the higher castes and Other Backward Castes. Their work is considered as a 'purifier' in any ritual, and hence, his presence is a must. In marriage ceremonies, the Dhobi's wife is required to put 'Sindur' on the forehead of the bride and bridegroom which is regarded as auspicious for the higher castes and Other Backward Castes. In the death rituals, the Dhobis must wash the clothes. The economic role of women in this caste is important. They share the responsibility with their menfolk in washing and returning the clothes in time to their customers.

THE CHAMARS: The Chamars are engaged in cutting trees and slaughtering animals for meat. They make good profit out of cutting trees in the village, especially the palm, date palm and coconut trees. They also collect 'Tadi'-a type of juice from palm and date palm trees. The local people drink it as an intoxicating drink. They sell meat at Bahanaga, or in the village itself or at Barickpur hat. The women among this

caste are mostly house wives and some of them work as wage labourers and a few among them repair the broken baskets, mats etc. The girls act according to their family background such as study, household works or any other occupation.

THE HADDIS: Haddis are involved in cleaning and sweeping activities. They work in the nearby railway station at Bahanaga. Some work at Soro hospital etc. Social interaction of Haddis with other castes is very limited as they are thought to be engaged in the dirtiest work of the society. Some of the women among this caste work as sweepresses and wage labourers, but majority of them are housewives.

As mentioned earlier, agriculture is the main occupation of Scheduled Castes in Badagan. The concentration of land in the hands of few renders many people landless. Hence, they work as wage labourers in other's agricultural fields. However, this does not give them sufficient earning and they supplement their income by other works too. To maintain a standard living under this condition is quite difficult for these people.

The Schedule Caste land holders, business men and people in government service in Badagan are well off as compared to their landless poor brethren. Those who are agriculturalists/farmers, generally work in their field with

their wage labourers. They get up early in the morning and make ready the bullocks and arrange plough and other instruments or prepare themselves for any other work in the fields. They eat watered rice or rice cake in the morning and start working in the field. Some of them use tractors for ploughing, but other works such as sowing seeds, reaping the harvest etc. are being done by hired labour only. They produce rice twice a year. The main production starts from last part of April to October. Since there is little scope for irrigation facility, they generally depend on the monsoon. The harvesting season lasts from December to January. The other season for rice production is from January to May. This depends totally on the irrigation facilities, manpower and fertiliser. The amount of production here is more than half of the seasonal rice production. This is very expensive for the poor sections. So, few people do it. The off season of the year falls in November and to some extent in May.

Those who are engaged in business and govt. services, cultivate their land by other members of their family or give other landless people on a sharing basis. Those who manage business are basically small traders or petty businessmen. They manage their shops in the nearby market or

town. Some also deal in fish trading.

THE SCHEDULED CASTE WOMEN AND GIRLS IN BADAGAN:

The women of Badagan are very supportive to their husbands as well as to their family. They are very hard working and are prepared to face any situation in their family. They get up early in the morning and do the usual morning chores. The adolescent girls actively participate in the domestic affairs and some of them even take the whole responsibility when their mothers are busy in other outside activities. Some women also help their husbands in agricultural activities and work simultaneously in their houses. They have to take all the responsibilities such as household work, family maintenance, take care of old people and children, and also keep an eye on their children's education, health, food etc. They are very particular about maintaining social relations that exist between relatives. The invitation and gift giving to relatives and its timing are largely managed by them. They are very obedient to their husbands and in-laws.

The women belonging to higher and middle classes generally don't go out to work. Very few among them go to their fields in order to help the male members. They some

times take food, tea and water to the fields if it is quite far away from their home . The women in Badagan are involved in making varying amounts of extra earning from their gardens and from their cows, goats etc., by selling fruits vegetables and milk.

The lower class women keep goats, cows, hens in their houses and collect large amount of fuel and cow-dung for selling purposes. Some of them are involved in grass cutting for selling purposes. In this way the female members contribute some amount to the family income. Some of them also work as wage labourers.

In a family where both the parents are wage labourers, the adolescent girls play a vital role by performing various household duties such as cooking, sibling care, animal care, care of the grand parents, grass cutting etc. In the morning they generally eat watered rice with anything that is available in a very economical way. During off season they sometimes live without food. Whoever serves, the mother or the daughter, first takes care of others, then only of herself.

CULTURE

The Scheduled Castes in Badagan maintain very simple

life in the matters of cloths, food, recreation, etc. The men generally wear *dhoti* and women cotton sarees in a traditional way. Very few women wear it in a modern way. The girls wear dresses, those who are illiterate start wearing saree from the very early age. Generally the villagers, specially women don't use foot wears except the young girls and boys. The women put various types of traditional gold and silver ornaments, which is a sort of cultural compulsion for them. There exists no purdah system among the women in Badagan. They speak typical Balashwari version of Oriya.

They generally eat thrice a day. Rice is the staple food and apart from that they eat rice cake, flattened rice, etc. Puffed rice is the most favourite dish of the people. They eat watered rice which is a typical and favourite food of people all over Orissa. My observation in this regard shows that the Scheduled Castes in Badagan try to save expenses on food. They are very reticent in the matter of purchasing food items from the market and they try to manage in the most economical way. However, the degree of this tendency varies from class to class. They prefer not to buy fruits and vegetables from the market and try to manage them from their own gardens. They generally get fish from their own pond or pool, and those who have business of this kind

they eat fish almost regularly.

Neighborhood plays an important role in Badagan. The Scheduled Castes women borrow things from their neighbors in case of scarcity which ranges from salt to oil. They are very co-operative, even share sorrows, sufferings and pleasure of their fellow beings. They discuss various issues which arise in their families. A common way of offering criticism is through making jokes among themselves. Singing various folk songs is a kind of pleasure and entertainment for them.

There are some rituals which the women celebrate together. They observe various festivals. They are quite religious and like to visit various temples despite the fact that they are not allowed to enter into the temple. They also celebrate some common festivals such as 'Rajaparva', 'Dwitiya' and 'Dipavali'. There is a close proximity among the various sub-castes of Scheduled Castes in Badagan. Though they are generally considered as untouchables in this area, Dhobis come in direct contact with the upper caste people whereas Gokhas, Chamars and Hadis maintain a safe distance from them. Hence, in this sphere, the Dhobis command a higher status than the other 3 sub-castes where as Hadis come last in this respect. In respect of cultural

activities, all the sub-castes exhibit almost homogeneous cultural and religious ceremonies. However, some cultural practices are performed by the well-of-families. And hence, economic consideration comes into effect. Therefore, the higher class among the Scheduled Castes have distinct cultural and religious functions in comparison to the middle and lower class. At the economic sphere the Gokhas dominate over the other three sub-castes for their land holding, education and govt. service.

CLASSIFICATION

In Badagan, for the study of health perception and health practices of adolescent girls in scheduled Caste, 52 households have been selected and divided into three classes on the basis of land they possess, and the main occupation of the family. On the basis of land and main occupation, the class division is drawn in detail in table No.4.1a.

The Table No.4.1a presents the division of economic classes with their main occupation and land holdings. There are a total of 15,17,20 households in higher, middle and lower classes respectively. Among the higher class, the

Table No. 4.1a

Landholding & Occupation

Land in acres	Class I		Class II		Class III					
	Agri- culture	Govt. Service	Agri- culture	Big Business	Govt. Service	Agri- culture	Petty business	wage Labour	Others	
>10	12(80)	1(7)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2-10	0	2(13)	13(76)	0	3(18)	0	0	0	0	
0-2	0	0	0	1(6)	0	6(30)	1(5)	9(45)	4(20)	
Sub- total	12(80)	3(20)	13(76)	1(6)	3(18)	6(30)	1(5)	9(45)	4(20)	
Total	15		17		20					

(the Figures in Bracket Show the %)

maximum households own more than 10 acres of land (86%) and agricultural production is the most dominant source of income of higher class, while business is done by none. Some people in this group own land upto 22 acres. And the nature of government services vary between Bank P.O. and Administrative officers, etc.

Out of the total of 17 households that belong to the middle class 16 owned 2 to 10 acres of land. Only one has less than 2 acres of land along with business. The households having 6 to 10 acres of land came under upper middle class, and those having 2 to 6 acres of land come

under lower middle class. Among the middle class 76 % of people have agriculture as the main occupation, government service is the main occupation of 18% of people and 6% of people have business. This Shows that the agricultural product is main source of income in middle class. The possession of land varies a lot as 23% households in this class have other occupations and smaller land holdings.

Among the lower class, 45% are wage labourers and 30% depend on agriculture. The households having 1 to 2 acres of land and up to 1 acre of land come under poor group and the landless people come under very poor group. Among the lower class, there is only one household, which sells vegetables in the hat as a vender which is his main occupation. This Shows the maximum percentage of people in lower class are landless, basically wage labourers and lead a very miserable life 20% of people are involved in other occupations such as rickshaw pulling, agricultural work in other field. (not wage labourer).

Agriculture is the main occupation of 87% of households, and govt. service is the main occupation of 13% of

Table No. 4.1b
MAIN & SUBSIDIARY OCCUPATION
UPPER CLASS

Main Occupation	Agriculture	Business	Govt. Service	Wage Labour	Other
Agriculture	13 (87)	2 (13)			
Business		10 (67)	3 (20)		
Govt. Service			2 (13)		
Wage Labour					
Others					

MIDDLE CLASS

Main Occupation	Subsidiary Occupation				
	Agriculture	Business	Govt. Job	Wage Lab.	Fishing Oth. No Occupn.
Agriculture	14 (82)	2 (12)			
Business		9 (53)			
Govt. Job	3 (18)		2 (12)		
Others				1 (6)	3 (17)

LOWER CLASS

Main Occupation	Subsidiary Occupation				
	Agriculture	Business	Govt. Job	Wage Lab.	Fishing Others NO Occupn.
Agriculture	6 (30)	3 (15)			
Business	1 (5)	2 (10)			
Govt. Job			1 (5)		
Wage Labour	9 (45)			4 (20)	
Others	4 (20)				5 (25) 5 (25)

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

households in higher class. No one in higher class is a full-time business man. From the above it seems that agriculture is the subsidiary occupation of 13% of people, business is the subsidiary occupation of 67% of people and govt. service is the subsidiary occupation of 20% of the people. No one in higher class has agriculture as the sole occupation. Among the higher class 20% of people have govt. service as their subsidiary occupation, a unique feature in Badagan.

In the middle class, agriculture is the subsidiary occupation of 12% of people. Business is the subsidiary occupation of 53% of people. And again govt. service is the subsidiary occupation of 6% of people and 17% of people don't have any subsidiary occupation, which is different from higher class, where 100% of people have some kind of subsidiary occupation.

The lower class people also have some kind of subsidiary occupation according to their capacity. In the lower class, agriculture is the subsidiary occupation of 15% of people, govt. service is the subsidiary occupation of 5% of people. Those who have agriculture as a subsidiary occupation use their home yard and small piece of land or sometimes work as share cropper. Wage labour is the

subsidiary occupation of 20% of people and the rest 25% of people don't have any subsidiary occupation. In the higher class every one has some kind of subsidiary occupation, in middle class 17% of people don't have any subsidiary occupation. So this clearly shows the various sources of income in upper class as compared to lower class, and the middle class come in between the two groups.

In Badagan, the people generally eat 3 to 4 times in a day. In some cases only upper and middle class people eat 5 times in a day.

Table No. 4.1c

<u>Frequency of Daily Intake of Food</u>			
No. of Times They Eat	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
3 Times	9 (60)	10 (59)	20 (100)
4 Times	4 (27)	6 (35)	0
5 Times	2 (13)	1 (6)	0
Subtotal	15	17	20
Total-52			

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

The above table shows 27% of higher class and 35% in middle class eat 4 times a day, and 13% in higher class and

6% in middle class eat 5 times in a day. The rest among the two eat 3 times. In the lower class 100% of people eat thrice in a day.

HOUSING :

Housing implies the type of house in which they live.

Table No. 4.1d

HOUSING TYPE				
class	Kachha	Pacca	Mixed	Total
Higher Class	6 (40)	3 (20)	6 (40)	15
Middle Class	15 (88)	0	2 (12)	17
Lower Class	20 (100)	0	0	20
Total = 52				

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

It shows that of the higher class 40% of households live in kachha, 20% live in a pucca and 40% live in mixed type of houses of the middle class 88% live in kachha, none stay in pucca and 12% live in mixed typed houses. 100% of lower class people live in Kachha houses. The nature of housing denotes the social class to which the occupants belong. While higher and middle class live in pucca and mixed type houses, the lower class people live only in

Kachha houses. Even the size of the kachha house is larger in case of an upper or middle class family but the lower class people can't afford to have large and spacious houses. Mud and thatched roof are the most common indicators of the poorest-scheduled caste household. The mud floored houses have to be mopped with cow-dung, while the pucca houses need to be cleaned with water, so the care of these houses have different kinds of tasks to perform, as cleaning the house is generally the girls or women's responsibility in the rural areas. This affects the adolescent girls chores.

Table No. 4.1e

Sources of Water

	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class	Total
Tube Well	3 (20)	2 (12)	0	5
Supply Water	1 (7)	0	0	1
Tube Well and Pond	11 (73)	15 (88)	20 (100)	46
<hr/>				
Total-52				

(The Figures in Bracket Show then %)

WATER SUPPLY

Fresh water is the basic amenity of life. In Badagan generally the people use tube well water for drinking and

cooking purposes and use pond water for other purposes. Table no.4.1e. shows that in our study households 7% of the higher class use tap water which comes from their own tubewell. About 20% of higher class and 12% of middle class have their own tubewells but no taps, and 73% of higher class, 88% of the middle class depend upon the government tubewells and ponds. Among the lower class no one has his own tubewell, So, all of them depend upon common tubewell and pond. There is no restriction in using common tubewells and any one can come and take water from common sources.

Table No. 4.1f

DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES

Class	Total No. of Households	Family Members	Average Family Size	Girls	Boys
Higher Class	15 (29)	143	10	21	17
Middle Class	17 (33)	170	10	23	15
Lower Class	20 (38)	116	6	27	12
Total	52	456	25.33	71	44

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

FAMILY SIZE & TYPE

Table no.4.1f shows that in the study group, the total family members in the higher class is 143, where 21 adolescent girls and 17 adolescent boys are found in 15 households, 29% of the selected households. In the middle class the number of households is 17, 33% of the total sample and the total number of family members are 170, where there are 23 adolescent girls and 15 adolescent boys. The third group consists of 38% of the total sample. The total number of family members in the lower class is 116 and there are 27 adult girls and 12 adult boys. An average of 10 members are found in higher class, 10 in middle class, and 6 in lower class. It seems that the higher and middle class families are generally joint or extended type and the lower class families are nuclear type.

The number of adolescent girls in the 52 families studied is much higher (71) compared to the boys (44). This is probably because of the fact that our selection was purposive and we selected house holds to get adequate number of girls.

Regarding the distance from water sources, 50% households in every class get water easily as it is near to their houses and another 50% walk for a maximum of 0.5 kilometre

to get water. Hence money and wealth does not play any role, as the tubewell and pond is made for all. A poor person may have better access to water, where the government tubewell is near to his house. Apart from the common pond, every household has a small pool for use, but in summer it dries up. In the families, where water sources are up to 0.5 kilometre away, the girls of the house generally fetch the water, the boys never take up this task, barring a few exceptions.

THE LIFE OF THE SCHEDULED CASTES OF THE STUDY GROUP

HIGHER CLASS:

Among the 52 households, 15 belong to the higher class. Agriculture is an important source of income for this group. Apart from this every household in the higher class among the Scheduled Castes is engaged in various other types of occupations such as govt. service, business and very few with their caste occupation i.e. fishing, as they all (higher class) belong to the same caste. Those who are in govt. services are administrators, revenue inspectors, Bank P.O., etc. Among the business group most of them have fish business and few households have cloth store, stationary shop, etc. As the people in this class are engaged in many

occupations, the income from all the sources is sufficient.

The farmers in this class work in their field with their wage labourers. Some farmers don't do agricultural work but employ labourers to manage their field. This group has a large amount of land, which is quite difficult to manage. When the male members work in the field, very few women among this class go to the field with food and water. The male members as well as the female members are found always busy in doing some kind of jobs with crops.

The women in this group take the whole responsibility of household work. Four among them take part in the family decisions, which is not common for all households. The women are asked to give their views on the matters such as: celebration of various festivals, children's education, what gift should be given to their relatives at the time of marriage and other occasions.

The girls also help their mothers in various ways in performing household work and taking care of their siblings. This study shows that 3 girls in the higher class are illiterate and take the whole responsibility of the household, the rest are continuing their study and do some work at home. In 6 households the girls don't do any work at home except their study. Apart from the household work, the

women also do some of the agricultural work which can be done at home. The women mop their home farms (where crops are kept) with cow dung and support the male members in every sphere. This group keep many pairs of bullocks for cultivation. The women take care of cattle, feed them and clean the cattle-shed. Every household (among the 15) have cows, and some of them have goats and hens. Every household has two or more than two gardens with various fruits and vegetables. They make profit out of it. In this way, the women contribute towards the family economy.

The women don't get time for relaxation as they are involved with various activities of their households. They get up early in the morning, finish morning household chores prepare food in time, prepare mid-day meal, gather fuel for cooking, fetching water, mop home farm if necessary, and take care of children and old people as a part of their everyday duty. The women participate in work related to the agricultural production, such as weeding, winnowing and cleansing the grain. After lunch cleaning and washing again starts. At this time the animals usually come from the field and specially the women take special care of the bullocks on whom they depend the most for agriculture. As the family is bound with various customs and traditions, the women have to

do a lot of work for celebration of various family rituals. So, they are always busy specially after lunch time. In the evening, the women again prepare something to eat.

The women in this group wear sarees in a traditional way like the other women of the village. Among 15 households, 7 women are educated and wear saree in a modern way. These 7 women also go out for recreation. The rest generally don't go out but attend some of the village fair and festivals such as Car festival, etc. The observation shows that the most favourite recreation for the women is meeting and talking with other women in the village. The girls in Badagan wear saree after they reach puberty, but now a days even the 3 illiterate girls wear salwar kameez, skirts, etc. The educated higher class girls wear salwar kameez, skirt and blouse and frocks. The girls go out for recreation, except four households.

The people in this group generally eat 4 times a day. They are quite conscious about food matters and buying varieties of food items. Although they spend more money on food than the middle class and the lower class, but it is quite less in comparison to their income. They generally take the same type of food which all the villagers eat such as rice, watered rice, puffed rice, etc. with various types

of curry.

MIDDLE CLASS

Among the 52 households, 17 come under the middle class. These 17 households belong to various castes. Among them 1 household belongs to Dhobi caste, 4 households belong to Mohalik (basket maker), 2 households belong to Chamar caste and the rest 13 belong to Gokha Caste.

The main occupation of this group is agriculture and they have some other types of subsidiary occupations in which petty business is the most common. Only one household work as wage labourer. Those who are in government services are generally clerks school teachers, cashier in the bank, etc.

The people among this group have less amount of land in comparison to higher class. So, they are small farmers. Like the upper class farmers, they get up early in the morning and after eating watered rice or rice cake go to the field. They work with their wage labourers. Very few people among this group produce rice twice in a year and therefore, only produce the seasonal rice.

The women in the middle class spend the whole day like the higher class women spend it. They perform household

duties, family rituals and help their male members in the agricultural work at home. Observation shows that they are more free of burden than the higher class women as they have less amount of land, less number of bullocks, etc. The reaction is same for women in both the classes. The middle class women also exchange gossip with their neighbours regarding various family matters. Most women wear saree in a traditional way. Only four women among them wear saree in a modern way.

The adolescent girls participate with the women in all activities. The girls in two households among 17 households don't do any work except their study. The girls wear salwar kameez, skirt, blouse and frock, etc. Very few girls who are illiterate wear saree.

They eat 3 to 4 times. Rice is the staple food and they eat thrice a day. In morning they eat watered rice or rice cake. They eat rice in lunch and dinner. Puffed rice is very common food among them and they eat it in afternoon like the other people in the village. This group is also conscious of food matters. They spend less money in purchasing food items. They try to manage in a very economical way.

In this group, 23 adolescent girls are found and 19 are educated. In the middle class it is found from the study

group that the girls are relatively well treated. None of them work as wage labourer which is found in the lower class. The girls take some of the household responsibilities along with their study. Some of them are only involved in their houses. The women in this class help the male members in various ways as is in the higher class. No women in the middle class works as a wage labourer. They only help in carrying food and water to the field. They take care of their children and are conscious about their education and future. Like the higher class women, they follow some types of means to earn money such as animal husbandry, vegetable production at home garden, etc. The girls also participate in these activities. This habit is also found in all the classes in the village.

As they belong to various sub castes, they have various types of occupations, which help them in making money for better living. The Dhobi household belonging to the middle class don't wash dirty cloths. This Dhobi households has a petty business in a kiosk in the village, apart from agriculture. The two Chamar households are engaged in cutting trees and slaughtering animals for meat. They earn good amount of money from these sources and supplement their main earning from agricultural production.

The rest 13 households belong to Gokha Caste. Most of the people among these caste have fish business. My observation shows that this households go for fishing specially in off seasons, in the month of October and November. They generally catch fish in their agricultural field. At that time a plenty of small size fishes are available in agricultural land with crops.

The Mohaliks make baskets, but here none of them are engaged in it among the study households. 17% of people among the middle class don't have any subsidiary occupation.

THE LOWER CLASS

Among the 52 households, 20 households belong to poor group. Two among them are Haddis 3 Mohaliks, the rest are Gokhas. Most people in this class are landless, and very few have one or two acres of land. Wage labour is the main occupation. They are very small farmers and some are engaged in petty business. Few among them are rickshaw pullers and share-cultivators. Apart from this they follow some other type of occupation which adds a little to their subsistence. The two Haddi households are land less and work on daily wages. As they are very poor, their girls are illiterate. These two households work some times as sweepers which is

their caste occupation. In off seasons, they sometimes even live without food.

The three Mohalik households in the lower class work as labourers. They have 1 to 2 acres of land are engaged in making basket for their subsistence which is their caste occupation.

The rest 15 households are Gokhas. Maximum number of people from these go for fishing which is their caste occupation. Some of them have petty business. One among them is in govt. service, a peon in the school. Some of them are wage labourers and very few are rickshaw pullers. 25% among the lower class don't have any subsidiary occupation.

27 adolescent girls are found in the lower class. Only five among them are educated, out of which one girl is college going. The educated girls in the poor group study and perform some household work. The rest of the girls take the whole responsibility of the household. Some of them work in the agricultural field and 20% of the lower class girls work as daily wagers. They all belong to Gokha caste. The women in this class support the family economically. The two Haddi caste women and many Gokha caste women among lower class work as daily wagers. The women collect fuel, cut grass, and keep animals at home for an additional earning.

The working women (wage labourers) get Rs.20/- per day and the men wage labourers get Rs.25/- per day. The women are involved in transplanting rice plants, weeding the fields and winnowing the grains. The lower class girls who work as wage labourers are also involved in the above mentioned works.

The lower class eat 3 times a day. They eat watered rice in the morning, rice in lunch and dinner and sometimes puffed rice. My observation shows that the lower class people can't eat even the necessary amount for their subsistence. During the off season they even stay without food. Sometimes they eat rice or watered rice, with onion, chilli, salt and tamarind. Their food shows that they lead a miserable life. Very rarely in a year few of them purchase good quality of food, otherwise, they don't have the access of buying good type of food from the market.

The culture and religious (ritual) practices of these three groups are same as that of the other Scheduled Caste people in the village, which is described earlier. The general life of the three classes are same in terms of dress, local food habits, culture and ritual practices etc. But the difference is visible in possession of land and occupation which distinguishes one group from the other. The

economic position of the rich further distinguish the poor in the farms of quality of life of the people. The life of the rich as a result is quite intricate in comparison to the poor. The middle class life in comparison to the higher class and lower class can be considered as average, which is neither very simple nor very complicated. The intricacy essentially depends upon resources they have. When they have little they can neither observe social rituals nor indulge in complimented productive relationships. The role and status of women and girls differ from class to class.

SECTION-II

THE SCHEDULED CASTE ADOLESCENT GIRLS IN BADAGAN

A lot of attention is being given to adolescence these days. As we have shown earlier, most girls in rural areas don't have the opportunity of knowing this concept or experiencing it. We have, therefore, attempted to explore the lives of young girls before they get married. Our focus is to see what is the level of discrimination against these girls and to what extent schooling and changing social environment have brought out changes in their lives. In the following section we present data on the various aspects of life of adolescent girls.

EDUCATION

Education has been taken as one of the important variables for the study of adolescent girls' health as education is closely connected with the girls knowledge of health and illness. There is a general assumption that the education helps them to be aware of the physical well being of self and others. Indeed education makes a difference in improving the girls outlook, perception, self-sufficiency etc.

This study shows that in comparison to boys in all the classes, the illiteracy and school drop out rate is higher among girls. Our data also shows that the parents viewed male education as compulsory, but the female education is seen as a fashionable trend. The girls are educated and treated well in an economically sound family, otherwise male offsprings are preferred by the parents and society.

The Table No. 4.1 and 4.2 show the education of both boys and girls respectively of all three classes in our study households. In the higher class 81% of the girls are educated (out of 21) whereas we find 100% of boys are educated. In the middle class 82% girls are educated (19 out of 23) where we find 73% of male education. In the lower class only 18% of girls are educated, whereas, we find 58% of male adolescent boys are educated.

In case of higher class educated adolescent girls 35% are studying in primary school, 59% are in high school and 6% are at +2 level whereas in case of middle class educated adolescent girls 58% are studying in primary school, 26% in high school and 16% are at +2 level. In case of lower class educated adolescent girls, 40% are in primary school, 40% in high school and 20% are at +2 level. Whereas, the overall education in case of higher class and middle class girls are

far more than the lower-class girls, among the educated lower class girls, the percentage of higher education is better than the middle and higher class girls. It proves that in the lower class, those who start their education, try to continue it.

Apart from the difference in the percentage of education and its level among the three classes for boys and girls, we also found the difference in percentage of education of the girls itself in the three economic classes. It is seen that, there is a sharp contrast in the girls' education between the higher and lower class (81% and 18%).

Table No. 4.1

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF GIRLS

Education	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Upto 5th Class	6 (35)	11 (58)	2 (40)
Upto 10th Class	10 (59)	5 (26)	2 (40)
+2	1 (6)	3 (26)	1 (20)
Sub Total	17 (81)	19 (82)	5 (18)
	out of 21	out of 23	out of 27

Total-41

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

Table No. 4.2

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF BOYS

Education	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Upto 5th Class	4 (24)	3 (27)	2 (29)
Upto 10th Class	13 (76)	6 (55)	4 (57)
+2	0	2 (18)	1 (14)
Sub Total	17 (100)	11 (73)	7 (58)
	out of 17	out of 15	out of 12
Total 35	(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)		

But there is no difference found between higher and middle classes. It is found that 82% of girls are educated in the middle class, whereas in higher class the percentage of education is 81%. This might be due to the occupational pattern followed by the classes and their ability to afford investment in girls education. As these agricultural families prepare food for their wage labourers, these young girls manage their study simultaneously. Infact the girl from the very early age starts working in the family by taking care of siblings, washing, cleaning etc. Learning these household tasks is not treated as an adolescents' job, it starts with childhood itself. She directly passes into adulthood, get married and becomes a mother and a housewife

without even knowing the concept of adolescence.

In Badagan, due to the burden of work, many girls cannot study and the parents are also not interested in educating them as they are solely interested in boys' education. Where there are familial problem of money, problem of work etc., the girls have to compromise. The tables [4.3 & 4.4] present the school dropout and illiteracy rate of girls and boys. We see that the percentage of school dropout and illiteracy of higher class boys is zero, but 19% of girls in that class are school dropouts and illiterate. Only exception is found in middle class where 9% girls are school dropout whereas in case of boys, it is 27%. A sharp contrast is found between middle and lower classes. In lower class 81% of girls are illiterate and school dropouts whereas it is 42% for boys. The number of school dropout in lower class girls is half in the poor group. For all the three classes of population, the total number of school dropout and illiteracy of girls is 28 whereas this is only 9 for boys.

From the school dropout rates and illiteracy rate of the study households we found that in Badagan, importance is given only to male education. Only the better income households of Scheduled Castes send their daughters to

school.

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

Table No. 4.3

SCHOOL DROPOUT & THE CLASS OR ILLITERACY OF GIRLS

School dropout & the Class	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Class 1 to 5	0	2 (100)	7 (32)
Class 6 to 10	2 (50)	0	0
Illiterate	2 (50)	0	15 (68)
Sub total	4 (19)	2 (9)	22 (81)
	out of 21	out of 23	out of 27
Total 28			

Table No.4.4

SCHOOL DROPOUT & THE CLASS OR ILLITERACY OF BOYS

School dropout & the Class	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Class 1 to 5	0	0	1 (20)
Class 6 to 10	0	4 (100)	1 (20)
Illiterate	0	0	3 (60)
Sub Total	0	4 (27)	5 (42)
	out of 17	out of 15	out of 12
Total 9			

Table No.4.5

PROBLEM OF STUDY FOR THE GIRLS

Problem of study	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Monitary	0	0	13 (48)
Family Problem	0	0	0
Monitary, Family & Own Fault	2 (10)	1 (4)	1 (4)
Own Fault	1 (5)	1 (4)	2 (7)
Sub Total	3 (15)	2 (8)	16 (59)

Total-21

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

Table No. 4.5 shows the various problems for which many girls could not study. In higher class, the girls couldn't study in 10% of families because of monetary problem, family problem and to some extent due to their own lack of interest. In another 5% of families, however, the girls did not study simply due to own disinterest. In these families the parents wanted them to go to school and encouraged them but they either bunked the school or refused to learn. In the middle class in 4% of the families, the girls could not study due to monetary and family problems and 4% due to their own disinterest. In lower class, 48% of parents

admitted that the girls could not study solely due to monetary problem, and 4% of them said that girls' education suffered due to financial problem, family problems and at times due to lack of girls' own interest.

The illiteracy rate of girls in lower class is extremely high in comparison to higher and middle classes. The highest percentage of illiteracy is mainly due to economic problems. Apart from that, there are familial problems also. The reason for these vary from class to class. The women in lower class work as day labourers and work in their own fields as well. So, the girls take the whole household responsibility. They also look after younger siblings. In such cases, the services of the girls at home are necessary, so they can't study. In the upper classes too families need young girls' to help to cook food for labourers and do household chores like washing and cleaning and attending siblings.

PLAY FOR CHILDREN:

The table (4.6) shows that cent percent of boys from every economic class are allowed to play outside. Only restriction is found in case of girls, and this restriction differs from class to class depending upon work burden and freedom.

Table No.4.6

THE PLAYING OF GIRLS

Girls Play	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Still Play	13 (87)	13 (76)	4 (20)
Stop Playing	0	2 (12)	8 (40)
Never Play	2 (13)	2 (12)	8 (40)
Sub Total	15	17	20
Total	52		

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

In higher class, 13% of families never allow their girls to play outside and 87% of households allow to do so. No one of the girls say that they don't play. The nature of 'play' outside, however was very limited. The younger girls played in each others yards, but the older girls only played ludo, cards or chatted but inside the houses. In middle class, the girls in 12% of families never play. 76% are still playing and 12% stopped playing outside. In lower class, 40% of parents said their girls never play outside, 20% are still playing and 40% have stopped playing.

This table shows that the highest percentage of parents in the higher class allow their girls to play outside, and

the lowest percentage of girls who are permitted to play outside are found in the lower class. This difference between classes is due to the work burden that curtails the freedom of the girls.

WOMEN PREFERENCE FOR THE SEX OF THE CHILD:

We explored with the women in the study population about their preference for the sex of their babies and found that the girls are not preferred in most cases in Badagan. There are various reasons behind this. Very few women say that they equally prefer boys and girls. This expectancy also differs from class to class.

The table (4.7) shows the pattern of women's preference for boys and girls. Among the Scheduled Castes in Badagan, within the study group 33% of women among higher class equally expect boys and girls and therefore have no preference for any sex. In the middle class 24% of the women equally want both the sexes and the percentage of women in the poor class which share equal preference is 15%. Not a single family said they want boys only.

Table No. 4.7

WOMENS' PREFERENCE OF THE SEX OF THE CHILD

	DON'T WANT GIRLS				SUB TOTAL
	EQUAL PREFERENCE FOR BOYS & GIRLS	DOWERY & OVER BURDEN (SOCIAL)	BOYS EARN & HELP THE FAMILY	BOYS HELP THE CONTINUITY OF THE FAMILY, TAKE CARE IN OLD AGE & PERFORM RITUALS	
HIGHER CLASS	5(33)	5(33)	3(20)	2(14)	15
MIDDLE CLASS	4(24)	9(52)	2(12)	2(12)	17
LOWER CLASS	3(15)	8(40)	6(30)	3(15)	20

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

TOTAL 52

Our interview with the women revealed the reasons for this attitude of equal preference. Some of them said, "children are God's gift and how can we reject what we are given?" Others felt, "How will the mankind survive if we don't have both the sexes? They are God's creation to maintain and perpetuate society". Some women argued, "we want daughter-in-laws for our sons, so that she is needed for performing rituals, looking after the households and give us grand children. So our daughter must do the same for others." It is interesting to note that no body said that the girls have the same rights as the boys or that they

could perform all the social roles that boys perform.

The women who are interested to have only boys are motivated by various social roles of the boys which is not expected from the girls. 33% of women in higher class say that they don't prefer girls due to social reasons. These reasons as expressed by women were, "the girls are treated as an extra burden, and I don't want my daughter to feel the way I did". Another woman said, "Marrying off a girl is a big problem for us. The parents have to live with the burden of providing dowry". Yet another view expressed, "we have to think of times when we will need our children. Girls are born to go away. It is only the boys who look after parents." Another problem is to bring up the girls in a proper way is essential, otherwise the society will criticise the girls and their family too. The parents have to be very careful regarding their public image and prestige. This group of women say that it is easy to take care of several boys, but it is difficult to bring up one girl. 52% of women among middle class and 40% among lower class belong to this group.

20% of women among higher class, 12% in middle class and 30% in lower class say that they prefer boys because boys can earn and provide economic support to the family.

14% of women among higher class, 12% in middle class and 15% in lower class say that, they don't want girls because they think the boy is the ultimate source of help in the parents' old age and suffering. The boys definitely help in perpetuating the family lineage whereas girls would go away. The role of boys in the family is important since they perform the funeral rites of their parents and give oblation to th ancestors which brings salvation in life. So, to have a son is an obvious necessity.

INFANT AND CHILD DEATHS:

From the 52 households of the Scheduled Castes, the child and infant deaths were also studied. The table (4.8) shows that in every class the death of girl child is higher than that of boys, except the middle class families. The number of girl child deaths also differs from class to class.

Table No.4.8

INFANT OR CHILD DEATHS IN THE FAMILY UPTO THE AGE OF 5 YEARS

Infant & Child death	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class	Sub Total
Boys	6 (16)	16	15 (41)	37
Girls	9 (26)	10 (28)	16 (46)	35
Sub Total	15	26	31	Total 72

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

Of the total 72 deaths that occurred in the past under the age group of 5 in these families, 21% were located in the higher class, 36% in the middle class and 43% in the lower class. The difference was maintained in both the sexes separately as well. However, when we look at the total deaths, we find that there were 37 deaths among boys and 35 deaths among girls. When we look at the distribution of these deaths over classes, we find that it is lowest in the lower class, where of the total deaths among boys, 41% are located as compared to 46% of the female deaths. As compared to the lower class, in the higher class. Here the death of boys constitute 16% of the total deaths among boys and death of the girls constitute 26% of the total girl child deaths. This shows a preferential treatment of boys. In the middle class, this trend was not only absent but also reversed.

The high death rate found among girls in the two extreme classes may be due to lack of care and food or nutritional problem. Observation on this matter shows that the boys are better treated than girls. At the time of birth, the whole family become very happy with the birth of a male child and become very sad when they know that a girl is born. They say, "Oh no! It's a girl. I will be dead".

DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD :-

In Badagan the people eat together and in the traditional order, i.e., the head of the family, the bread winners and other male members in the family eat first. The female members are supposed to eat at the end. In many households, the girls take the whole responsibility of the household and eat at the end with the female members. This study shows the girls eat with male members in a few families. Specially, higher class and middle class families allow their girls to eat with male members. Most girls in all groups eat either alone or with female members, with mother or sister-in-law. This clearly shows the unequal treatment of girls in matters of food timing. It was also observed and heard that those who eat in the end-especially in joint families - don't get good food. For lunch and dinner, they don't get the special curry and take something else as substitute for curry. They use pickle, tamarind or chili for flavor to make up for the lack of curry or dal. This difference in food availability is of two types: one where female children get adequate food but feel the difference, as good quality of food is not given to them. We have called this "comparatively less". In the second type the girls got very inadequate food both in quantity as well

as quality. We have called this "insufficiency". The question of insufficiency of food is linked with class positions. Among the lowest economic class, where even the boys did not get adequate food, the question of good quality food and its distribution did not arise..

Table No. 4.9

FOOD AVAILABILITY FOR BOYS & GIRLS

Food	Boys			Girls		
	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Sufficient	10 (83)	12 (70)	7 (41)	11 (73)	9 (53)	8 (40)
Not Sufficient	2 (17)	4 (24)	7 (41)	3 (20)	6 (35)	12 (60)
Comaratively Less	0	1 (6)	3 (18)	1 (7)	2 (12)	0
Sub Total	12	17	17	15	17	20
	Total 46			Total 52		

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

Among the higher class families 83% reported sufficiency for boys and 73% for girls. However, as Table No. 4.9 shows, 7% household among higher class and 12% among the middle class did say that girls eat comparatively

less than their male counterparts. When we look at the problem of insufficiency of food, we find that for girls insufficiency is prevalent in 20% households of the higher class, 35% households for the middle class and 60% of the households for the lower class families. It is obvious that insufficiency is maximum among the poorest households and it is not absent even in the higher class Scheduled Castes families. While the girls felt that they get comparatively less because they eat at the last moment when all the luxury items are finished. Among the poor families availability of food itself is a problem. This is specially true for females including adolescent girls. In some houses there were no boys and girls had problems in comparing them. So our estimation for insufficiency as well as comparative availability of food may be an underestimation of the reality.

We also found that very few people give milk to their children. It is only among the higher class and middle class families that milk is given to children. In the lower class there is only one boy who gets milk. Those who get milk to drink, generally get it in equal quantities and regularly.

STUDY OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS & BOYS :

It has been mentioned earlier that the girls are overburdened with works, whereas boys were preoccupied with various compulsions. But the difference is found both in quality and quantity of responsibilities. The quality and quantity of work also varies among the girls as their class position differs.

The table no.4.10 presents how the whole day is spent by girls and boys. This table shows that in 40% of families among the higher class, in 24% among the middle class and in 5% among the lower class girls spent the whole day by studying and doing their own work without taking any kind of responsibility of the family. The difference in this practice or trend between classes is very marked and shows the importance of class. In case of boys 60% among higher class families, 42% from the middle class and 15% from the lower class belong to this group, i.e., they study only. If we compare with the girls than we can find a sharp difference that exist between boys and girls even within the class. In higher class, girls in 40% of families and boys in 60% of families do nothing except study and their own work. In middle class this percentage is 40% and 42% respectively. In lower class it is 5% and 15% respectively.

Table No. 4.10

WORK AND STUDY OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND BOYS

A Day in Boy's and Girl's Life	Girls			Boys		
	Higher	Middle	Lower	Higher	Middle	Lower
Study and own work	6 (40)	4 (24)	1 (5)	9 (60)	7 (42)	3 (15)
Study and Household work	6 (40)	8 (47)	4 (20)	3 (19)	2 (12)	3 (15)
Household/out side work including agricultural work	0	1 (5)	1 (5)	1 (7)	2 (12)	4 (20)
Household work & Wage Labour	0	0	4 (20)	0	0	1 (5)
Study and outside work	0	0	0	1 (7)	4 (24)	4 (20)
No Work	0	0	0	0	1 (5)	1 (5)
Whole respons- -ibility of Household	3 (20)	4 (24)	10 (50)	0	0	0
Not applicable	0	0	0	1 (7)	1 (5)	4 (20)
Sub total	15	17	20	15	17	20

Total-52

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

In contrast to the group who study and have no family responsibility, there are those who study but have to share family responsibilities. Our study shows that the proportion of families where girls study as well as work for the household vary from class to class. They cover 40% of families among the higher class, 47% in middle class and 20% among the lower classes. Here the girls spent their whole day by studying and doing household work such as washing, cleaning, gardening, fetching water, sibling care, fuel collection from their garden and some of them partly help in cooking. Some school and college going girls also take the whole responsibility of the household work when they stay at home. The percentage of households where boys do similar tasks along with studies is small. It is 19%, 12% and 15% in the higher, middle and lower classes respectively. No one in any families among higher class and middle class is day labourer in case of boys as well as girls. In lower class households in 20% of families, the girls work as wage labourers and in 5% of the families the boys work as wage labourers. This shows a sharp contrast between the boys and the girls in the same class.

No parents among the three classes allow their girls to do outdoor work or marketing and taking other outside responsibility. No one among the boys take the whole responsibility of doing either household responsibility or outside work or agricultural work. But the girls in 20% of families in higher class, 24% of families in middle class and 50% of families in lower class take the whole responsibility of the household. Thus the maximum burden of work is laid on the lower class girls and the percentage of such household is very high, i.e., 50%.

From the table (4.10), it is clear that only in 5% of families among the lower class the girls do nothing except their study and own work. The rest are involved in various types of duties starting from household to wage labourer and animal grazing, grass cutting, fuel collection etc. The lower class girls are the greatest sufferers. They don't know what life can be. They only know how to satisfy others through performing various duties. They don't get a chance to enjoy their life. Life for them is a continuation of duties, restrictions and obeying orders and satisfying others. At the very early age they get married and become mothers and try to satisfy their husbands.

In addition to other recreational facilities, there is a theater hall near Badagan. Out of the sample of 52 households of the Scheduled Castes, 73% families among the higher class allow their girls to go for recreation purposes where as it is 52% and 50% for the middle class and lower class respectively. The rest among the three groups don't do this either due to the problem of money or due to their belief in restriction on freedom of girls.

PERCEPTION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM AND POLITICS:

Regarding the freedom of girls this study indicates that in higher class 66% of girls have more freedom than other girls, whereas in middle class it is 58% and 25% in lower class. 13% of girls among higher class say "all have freedom". Some of the small girls don't have any idea about what freedom is. In lower class 75% of girls say that they don't have freedom. Our discussion with the girls reveals that their notion of freedom was restricted, even they are not permitted to go out or to do something that they wanted to. Most of the girls found any discussion on rights and decision making very strange and difficult. Among the lower class, they feel overburdened with work and thought that the

notion of freedom was quite irrelevant to their lives as the entire family is busy in trying to survive. And therefore, they assert that "If we stop working and do as we like than what will we eat ?" The girls however realise that boys have more freedom. In fact they accept it as a cultural norm. We also found that the adolescent girls were very aware of the differential treatment given to their younger brothers and sisters by their parents and elders in the family. According to the remark of the girls 46% of the parents in higher class treat the girl child with indifference compared to the male child. 30% of parents among the middle class and 45% of parents in lower class have the same bias against the girls.

The girls in Badagan have a little some idea about village politics as specific seats are reserved for women. The idea of girls and their attitude towards politics also differ from class to class. This study shows that 47%, 52% and 30% from higher, middle and lower class families respectively have positive attitude towards politics. Very few girls have a negative attitude and many of them say that they don't have any idea about politics or women's participation in it. the responses of those who were aware varied from, "those women who entered politics are not

good", "only the higher class women can do so as they have the power", or "we too should be active but we have no time", "only through this women can advance".

PARENTS' EXPECTATION FROM GIRLS AND BOYS:

The table 4.11 show and the parents' expectation from girls. 27% of parents in higher class, 18% in middle class and 10% in lower class want their daughters to study more. 33% of parents among higher class, 11% in middle class and none in lower class want their girls to be educated and employed. 19% parents among higher class, 18% among middle class and 75% among lower class want their daughters to get married soon. 7% of parents among higher class, 18% among middle class and 15% among lower class want their girls to be educated and get married to a qualified person.

The data clearly shows that the parents in higher class are generally ambitious about their girls' education and employment. This percentage is comparatively less in middle class. In lower class, this percentage is zero because they are poor and their daughters are illiterate. So they know there is no point in dreaming. Work and a good marriage is the best that can happen to their daughters. Some of the parents from higher and middle class group in the study

population also want their daughters to get married soon, but the percentage is very low in comparison to the lower class where 75% of the families desire early marriage for their daughters.

Table No. 4.11

PARENT'S EXPECTATIONS FROM THE GIRLS

Parent's expectations from the Girls	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Study more	4 (27)	3 (12)	0
Study upto 7th	0	2 (11)	2 (10)
Study & get Employed	5 (33)	2 (11)	0
Urgent Job	1 (7)	0	0
Get Married	3 (19)	3 (18)	15 (75)
Educated & get Married to a Good Person	1 (7)	3 (18)	3 (15)
Education, Employ- -ment & get Married	1 (7)	4 (24)	0
Subtotal	15	17	20
Total-52			

(The Figures in Bracket show the %)

In the study household we explore the expectations of the parents from their children, the value of boys and girls in their eyes and their own expectation and readiness to invest in their welfare. While for the boys, parents are ready to do every thing to make something of him, their responses about girls varied. Even those who wanted to educate them do so, mostly to get her a good match. Very few dreamed of their daughter being educated and get employed. None could imagine her without marriage.

The table (4.12) shows the parent's expectation on their sons. Only 11% of parents want their boys to be just literate in the lower class and 6% among the lower class want their son to study, earn and protect the family. 66% among higher class, 65% among middle class and 38% among lower class want their sons to be educated and employed. 27% of parents want their sons to study for good future among higher class. 7% among higher class, 6% among middle class and 28% among lower class expect their boys to any how earn money.

Table No. 4.12
PARENT'S EXPECTATIONS FROM THE BOYS

Parent's expectations form the Boys	Higher Class	Middle Class	Lower Class
Study	0	0	2 (11)
Study & Earn for the family	0	0	1 (6)
Study & Employment	10 (66)	11 (65)	7 (38)
Study for Good Future	4 (27)	0	0
Anyhow Earn to Save the Familly	1 (7)	1 (6)	5 (28)
Money, Marriage & make Parents Happy	0	4 (23)	0
Education & Marriage	0	0	1 (6)
Let Him to Think	0	1 (6)	0
Not Expected	0	0	2 (11)
Sub total	15	17	18
<hr/>			
Total-50			

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

(Out of 52 households in 2 of the lower class households n
adolescent boy was present)

The parents' expectation differs from boys to girls and between the classes. The table (4.12) shows that the maximum percentage of people want their son to study and get employed. To some extent this is also applicable to higher and middle class girls. In case of lower class girls 75% of parents want their girls to get married soon. In the higher and middle classes even if some parents want this, the proportion is very less. Thus, higher expectations from boys and girls are closely linked to class position but these class differences are sharper for girls as compared to boys.

HEALTH AND HEALTH PRACTICES:

For the analysis of health and health practices of adolescent girls, illness has been taken as an important variable along with the type of treatment sought for the girls. When comparison of girls has been made with boys, the same variable has been taken in both the cases. The girls, as they are discriminated in terms of food, nutrition, quality and quantity of work, they are also discriminated in health care. The girls in Badagan among under privileged group suffer more than the boys, and the girls' illness and treatment also differ from boys and also from class to class

depending on their socio-economic background.

The table (4.13) shows that among the higher class, only 33% girls have suffered and they all were taken to either private doctor or to hospital: 13% girls were taken to private doctor and 13% were taken to govt. hospital immediately and 7% within 3 days. It seems from this that the health care for girls is quite good in higher class. In fact, this is quite less than the care given to their male counterparts. The table shows that only 20% boys suffered and 6% were taken to hospital, 6% to private doctor immediately and 3% to hospital within 3 days. Among the middle class 53% of girls suffered from illness of which 5% were taken to private doctor for treatment within 3 days and 11% of the girls were taken to hospital immediately and 5% within a week, another 5% within 2 weeks. 11% of girls were given medicine from the shopkeeper and 11% were not taken for any treatment and got cured by themselves. This shows the negligence of the parents for their daughters. The illness of the girls in the family is not taken seriously and hence not treated promptly like that of the boys. In lower class 75% girls have suffered from illness which is more than middle class and much more than higher class. Among them only 10% of girls were taken to private doctor

Table No.- 4.13

KIND OF TREATMENT SOUGHT FOR THE GIRLS

Kind of Health Institution	Immidiately	Within 3 Days	Within a Week	Within 2 Weeks	Sub Total	
Private Doctor	2	0	0	0	2	U P P E R C L A S S
Hospital	2	1	0	0	3	
Traditional Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	
Shopkeeper	0	0	0	0	0	
Not Treated	0	0	0	0	0	
						Total- 5
Private Doctor	0	1	0	0	1	M I D D L E C L A S S
Hospital	2	0	1	1	4	
Traditional Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	
Shopkeeper	1	0	1	0	2	
Not Treated	2	0	0	0	2	
						Total- 9
Private Doctor	1	1	0	0	2	L O W E R C L A S S
Hospital	1	3	4	1	9	
Traditional Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	
Shopkeeper	1	0	0	0	1	
Not Treated	3	0	0	0	3	
						Total- 15

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for treatment, 5% immediately and 5% within 3 days. 45% of them taken to hospital- 5% immediately, 15% within 3 days, 20% within a week and 5% within 2 weeks. 5% were given medicine from the shopkeeper and 15% were not treated at all.

If we compare the prevalence of illness (when they were bed ridden) between girls of different classes, we find that the suffering is least among the higher classes and high among the lower classes. The kind of treatment sought also varies. It is qualitatively better in the higher class compared to the middle class. Even the timing of treatment in the higher class is better and promptly taken. The girls were taken for treatment immediately and none of them were left without treatment for more than 3 days.

Among the middle class, 5% got treatment within 2 weeks, 11% were given medicine from the shop keeper only and 11% were not given treatment, while there were no such cases in the upper class. In the lower class, 20% were given treatment within a week, 5% within 2 weeks and 5% were given medicine from the shopkeeper while 15% did not get any treatment. This shows that while there was little difference in caring of girls between the lower and middle class

families, there was a definite difference in the mode of treatment among the adolescent girls of lower class. While 75% reported illness in lower class, only 53% of illness reported in the middle class. Though the poor lack resources, they still take care of their girls in a way that is comparable to the middle class. This is perhaps due to the importance of adolescent girls for the family where they share the burden of the household equally with their mothers and sisters. The only difference was that 15% among them did not get any treatment as against 11% in the middle class. Our data shows the pathetic situation of girls falling sick in th middle and lower classes where their illness is not paid immediate attention.

The table (4.14) presents the illness of higher class boys and the type of treatment sought for them. Only 20% of boys in higher class suffered from illness and 13% of them were taken to private doctor and hospital immediately and 7% within 3 days. 41% of boys in the middle class suffered, 6% of them did not go for treatment, 23% among them were taken to hospital- 17% immediately and 6% within a week, 6% were taken to private doctor within 3 days. Another 6% were given medicine from the shopkeeper. Out of 45% of boys in lower class who suffered from illness which is much lesser than

the girls, 5% among them were not taken for treatment 10% were taken to private doctor-5% immediately and 5% within 3 days, 25% among them were taken to hospital- 5% immediately, 15% within 3 days and 5% within a week.

Thus, the above analyses prove beyond doubt that the economic status of a family does affect to the health, education, work burden and the overall status of an adolescent girl. On the other hand it is often told that education and information sometimes overcome the economic problems. Therefore, it is pertinent to see how education affects to the household responsibility, parent's expectation, food availability, freedom and above all health status of the adolescent girls in the study area.

Education and Household Responsibility:

The Table No. 4.15 shows that among the higher class households, 25% educated girls bear whole responsibility of the household while 50% bear partial responsibility and 25% have no responsibility. Here responsibility is in the household work which varies from helping to the whole management of the household. These girls simultaneously manage their study also. Among the uneducated girls in this class 100% manage the whole work of household.

Table No. 4.14

KIND OF TREATMENT SOUGHT FOR THE BOYS

Kind of Health Institution	Immid-ately	Within 3 Days	Within a Week	Within 2 Weeks	Sub Total	
Private Doctor	1	0	0	0	1	U
Hospital	1	1	0	0	2	P
Traditional Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	P
Shopkeeper	0	0	0	0	0	E
Not Treated	0	0	0	0	0	R
						Total- 3
Private Doctor	0	1	0	0	1	M
Hospital	3	0	1	0	4	I
Traditional Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	D
Shopkeeper	0	0	1	0	1	D
Not Treated	1	0	0	0	1	L
						E
						Total- 7
Private Doctor	1	1	0	0	2	L
Hospital	1	3	1	0	5	O
Traditional Treatment	0	0	0	0	0	W
Shopkeeper	0	1	0	0	1	E
Not Treated	1	0	0	0	1	R
						C
						L
						A
						S
						Total- 9

Table No. 4.15
EDUCATION & WORK RESPONSIBILITY

	Higher class		Middle class		Lower class	
	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated
Work respon -sibility,						
Whole respon -sibility	3 (25)	3 (100)	2 (13)	1 (50)	2 (40)	13 (87)
Part respon -sibility	6 (50)	0	9 (60)	1 (50)	2 (40)	2 (13)
No respon -sibility	3 (25)	0	4 (27)	0	1 (20)	0

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

In the middle class group 13% of the educated household adolescent girls manage the whole responsibility of the household while 60% do take partial responsibility and 27% bear no responsibility. Among the uneducated category in this class, 50% bear the whole responsibility and another 50% bear partial responsibility. In the lower class category, 40% of the household girls who are educated bear full responsibility while another 40% do take partial responsibility and 20% have no responsibility at all. The uneducated girls in this group fully (87%) or partially (13%) bear household responsibility.

In all the three classes, only educated girls in some

household households have no responsibility while uneducated adolescent girls in all the class categories have full or partial responsibility. It is clear therefore that education has a positive relationship with the nature of household responsibility.

Education and Parents Expectation from the Girls:

The table (4.16) shows that 33% of parents in higher class category want their daughters to study more while 17% among them want their daughters to be educated and get married and 50% among them want their daughters to be employed after education. 100% parents of uneducated girls in this class want their daughters to get married as soon as possible.

In middle class, 33% parents want their daughters to study more, 40% want them to study and get employed and 27% want them to study in order to get married. 100% parents of uneducated girls want their daughter to get married as soon as possible. In lower class, 100% parents of the educated girls want them to study only to get married while 100% of uneducated girls want their daughters marry as soon as possible.

Table No. 4.16
EDUCATION & PARENT'S EXPECTATION FROM THE GIRLS

Parent's Expectation	Higher Class		Middle Class		Lower Class	
	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated
Marriage	0	3(100)	0	2(100)	0	15(100)
Study more	4(33)	0	5(33)	0	0	0
Educ. & Employment	6(50)	0	6(40)	0	0	0
Education & Marriage	2(17)	0	4(27)	0	5(100)	0
Marriage	0	3(100)	0	2(100)	0	15(100)

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

So its clear that all the parents of uneducated girls in all the class categories in the study group want their daughters to get married as soon as possible. In lower class category all the parents of educated girls want their daughters to study in order to get married only while no parent want them to study more and get employed. Majority of parents from higher and middle class category want their daughters to be educated and get married or employed. So

apart from education, economic criteria does play a role because less girls from poor economic background are educated while more girls from higher class category are educated and that too for better future.

Education and Food Availability:

Adequate food availability keeps one happy and healthy. Food and nutrition has a strong relation with health and health practices. Here, it is necessary to see, whether this consciousness exists among the study group or not. And therefore, it is necessary to see whether education has any linkage with availability of food for adolescent girls in the study household.

Table No. 4.17
EDUCATION AND FOOD AVAILABILITY

Food Availability	Higher Class		Middle Class		Lower Class	
	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated
Sufficient	8(67)	3(100)	9(60)	0	1(20)	8(53)
Not sufficient	3(25)	0	6(40)	1(50)	4(80)	7(43)
Comparatively less than Boys	1(8)	0	0	1(50)	0	0

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

Among the higher class educated girls (table no.4.17) 67% get sufficient quantity of food, 25% get insufficient food while 8% get comparatively less food than the boys. Among this class 100% uneducated girls get sufficient food. In the middle class households, 60% of educated girls get sufficient food and 40% get insufficient food, while among the uneducated households in this category 50% get insufficient food and another 50% get less food in comparison to their male counterparts. In the lower class households, 20% educated girls get sufficient food and 80% get insufficient food. Among the uneducated girls 53% get sufficient food and 43% get insufficient food.

It is clear from the above analysis that education has little role or no say in food distribution. This depends largely on the availability of food. However, it is irony to mention that 8% of girls in higher class educated group and 50% in the middle class uneducated group get comparatively less food than the boys while no such disparity exists between the lower class boys and girls. This may be due to the economic role the girls play in the household. Mention may be made regarding the fact that the concept of food sufficiency differs from individual to individual, not to speak of class.

Education and Freedom:

Here freedom has been taken in its loose sense to denote to do things in accordance with one's own wishes without much restraint. And hence those who enjoy freedom of movement and freedom from restraints of various types are more free than others. Here the purpose has been to see

Table No. 4.18

EDUCATION AND FREEDOM

Free- dom	Higher class		Middle class		Lower class	
	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated
More than Others	9(75)	3(100)	9(60)	1(50)	2(40)	3(20)
Equal	2(17)	0	0	0	0	0
Less than Others	1(8)	0	6(40)	1(50)	3(60)	12(80)

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

whether education has any relationship with that of freedom which leads to a happy life.

The above table shows that in higher class 75% of educated girls enjoy more freedom than others while 100% uneducated girls from this group come under this

category. 17% of educated girls enjoy equal freedom with others while 8% from this category enjoy comparatively less freedom from boys. In the middle class households, 60% of the educated girls enjoy more freedoms than others while 40% among them enjoy less freedom than others. In case of uneducated girls from this class, 50% enjoy more freedom than others while another 50% enjoy less freedom than others. In lower class households, 40% of the educated girls enjoy more freedom than others while 50% enjoy less freedom than others. 20% uneducated girls from this class enjoy more freedom than others and 80% enjoy less than others.

From the above analysis, it is clear that perhaps education has no strong link with freedom. Family tradition and economic background has more positive relationship with freedom. In fact freedom is a relative concept and perhaps, this is not understood fully by the rural adolescent girls. Therefore, while higher class educated girls think that lower class uneducated girls have more freedom, the former believe that the later have more freedom.

Education and Treatment for Illness:

Table No. 4.19 shows that only 5 educated girls from higher class category suffered from illness while no

uneducated girls suffered. The girls who suffered were taken to private doctor or hospital immediately or within 3 days depending on the nature of the case.

Table No. 4.19

EDUCATION AND TREATMENT FOR ILLNESS

Treat-ment	Higher class		Middle class		Lower class	
	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated	Educated	Uneducated
Pvt. Doctor	2 (40)	0	1 (14)	0	0	2 (20)
Hospital	3 (60)	0	4 (58)	0	5 (100)	4 (40)
Shop-keeper	0	0	1 (14)	1 (15)	0	1 (10)
Not Treated	0	0	1 (14)	1 (50)	0	3 (30)

(The Figures in Bracket Show the %)

All but 14% educated girls from middle class category who suffered were treated, 14% from private doctor, 58% from hospital and 14% were given medicine from the shopkeeper. 29% among them were immediately treated, 14% within 3 days, 29% within a week and 14% within 2 weeks depending on the nature of the illness. All the uneducated girls from the study household suffered and 50% were given medicine

immediately from shopkeeper and another 50% never treated. In the lower class category 5 educated girls suffered all of whom were treated in the hospital. 10 girls from uneducated lower class category suffered. While 30% among them were not treated at all, 10% were given medicine from the shopkeeper, 40% were treated in the hospital and 20% were treated from the private doctor.

The trend of the above data shows that more people from lower class categories suffered than the higher class categories. While on rare occasions educated suffering girls go untreated, in many cases uneducated girls were not treated. Even if they were treated, that was at a critical stage. Therefore, it is proved that the consciousness and education leads to greater awareness about treatment and hence better health. However, since food and nutrition has a greater role in health and health practices of adolescent girls, the above analysis further proves that the lower class girls suffered more than the other two classes. And hence, education and economy is invariably related to the health of the adolescent girls.

In general, this study on adolescent girls' health reveals a gender and class based discrimination against the girls. The major problem behind the discrimination lies in

economic scarcity. For example, in many cases it was found that the girl would not have dropped out from the school if the parents had enough money to educate her. The gender based discrimination shows the facts that when there is a scarcity of resources only some of the offsprings get these resources and those who get the advantage are invariable boys as against their sisters. This is true in case of education, food, nutrition, health care and practice, and in all the issues where financial resources and social values matter.

However, within the above broad framework, we also see deviations. For example, even in high class families, one can see a gender based discrimination when it comes to the distribution of food among the family members. Same is also true for division of labour. There is gender bias in the quality and quantity of work and in the provision of health facilities. The gender based discrimination for education is not generally found in the higher class. Girls are educated in equal footing with the boys in the higher class. Thus one can see, although non-availability of resources brings out the gender bias, social values also play an important role in discrimination against girls. This is seen in unequal distribution of food, more stress of household work on

girls, their lack of access to freedom and recreation etc. These restrictions are born out of the social perceptions of parents regarding the roles of young girls and boys. A girl is perceived as "belonging to others" and hence she is not to be invested in through education or freedom. Also to 'prepare' her for her duties, pushing her into household work early in life is justified. We also see exceptions sometimes, as in the case of the working girls (wage labourer) in the lower class having more access to freedom as compared to the higher class girls, for they contribute to the economy of the family. In case of boys, even if in the very poor families, the parents try to sacrifice their life for the betterment of their male offsprings in terms of food, nutrition, health and education. Generally the parents' treatment towards the male offspring is motivated by various social reasons which are the general statements made by the women in Badagan, such as they are the permanent residents of the family, the only source of help at the old age of the parents, the death rituals are performed by them and they offer "Pinda" (rice ball) to the ancestors which brings salvation in life. This will be more clear from the following detailed interviews.

Detailed Interviews from Women and Girls:

Interview No.-I

Bhama, a higher class woman said about her daughters, "I have five daughters, the eldest has got married. The other four are studying. Rino 20 years, Mono 18 years are college students. They stay in the college hostel. When they come home, only Mona among them helps her sister-in-law, at her will. She does things like cutting vegetables, grinding spices etc. If I ask my daughters something to do they get angry, my sons also chide me for this, especially when daughters have to study for their exams. My youngest daughter, (12 years old) also makes excuses when I ask her to do anything. Their excuse for not doing any household work is that they are studying, they only take care of our garden and plant trees there. My sons also don't do any work, they are in govt. services."

Interview No.-2:

Budi's mother, a lower class woman said "Budi is my only daughter. All the household responsibilities are upon her, as I am an old woman and unable to do anything. We don't have any one else in the family to share her work. My son Kuna, 18 years old is a wage labourer. So, she has to do

all the work. She wakes up early in the morning and sweeps the place in front of our house after sprinkling cow - dung water, sweeps our house, mops the floor, gives straw to our cattle, cooks the meal (rice, curry), washes the utensils and serves the food to everyone. She also makes other edible things i.e., rice cake, puffed rice etc. Then she goes to cut the grass with me. She comes back before me, fetches water from the nearest tubewell and does other work in the household. She prepares every body's bed in the night. She also takes care of my youngest son, who is studying in class-II. She studied till 4th class and then dropped out because we could not afford money for her study. We also required her service at home. To some extent, she was also not that much interested to study. Now she is 16 years old. So, we are planning to give her in marriage. We are searching for a bride groom for her. My son Kulu has gone for his tuition. Today he has gone without having food, so I am worried about him. He is very small and might be very hungry. He will come back at 9 o' clock. After having food he will go to school. As he is very small, what work can he possibly do? He is studying now and we want him to study more. God knows what will happen."

Interview No-3:

A middle class woman said, "there is no problem for us. I am happy with my children, whatever God has given us is enough. Out of my three daughters, two are married. Both of my sons are government employees. My youngest daughter Indira Priyadarshini, 16 year old is a college student. At present she is the only sister of her two brothers. Both of her brothers have a lot of affection for Indira. They want her to study more and be a govt. employee. They also expect to find a well qualified husband for her. My daughter is the centre of affection in my family. Her father loves her very much. He cares a lot about her education and her future. My husband and sons bring very nice dresses and other presents for her. She gets a lot of money for her expenditure."

"I think she is also happy in the family. She seems to be very proud of her brothers. Her sister-in-laws also like her. She always eats with her father, but when her brothers are at home, they call her to eat with them especially my younger son does not eat without her company. My children spend their free time in light talks and jokes. Sometimes, my sons tease their sister about her marriage and jokingly say that they would arrange her marriage soon but Indira replies that she would like to study and find a job first."

Sometimes she helps in the household works i.e., cooking, cleaning etc. We have our own tubewell in our garden. So my daughter does not go to fetch water. I think she carries her responsibilities happily. We don't force her to do any thing against her wishes. She serves food to her father and brothers. They all are happy to get food cooked by her. She plays in-door games with other girls and some times visits her village friends and neighbours. From our cows, we get enough milk for everyone. My daughter gets the maximum quantity as she is the youngest in the family."

Interview No-4:

Suma, a girl from the poor class said, "I do everything at home. The whole responsibility starting from morning to night is mine. My mother is a wage labourer. She goes for work with my father. I stay at home and cook food for all. My brother goes to school. He is younger to me. He goes for tuition and my father also teaches him at home. He does not have time to do any work. Sometimes he just goes to buy things like oil, salt etc. In the after noon, when he comes back from school, he plays after having his food. We are five children of my parents. All are younger to me. The last two brothers are very small. I have to look after them. I

always carry them and feed them. They disturb me a lot when I cook food, especially when my mother is absent. I get up very early in the morning and sprinkle cow-dung water in front of my house and sweep it, sweep our rooms and mope the floor. I wash all the used utensils, wash cattle-shed and feed the cattle. My mother also does something in the morning. When, they all go out including my brother I tell my younger sister (No.3) to watch my small siblings. I go outside for grass cutting and collect fuel. I have to cut a large amount of grass because we are very poor. So, we sell grass to the rich people of our village. I have to come back and cook rice and curry and take care of my brothers and sisters. When my parents come back I distribute food to all. My father eats first. My mother tells me to keep the curry for my brother. She is more concerned about him and waits for him to give him food. I eat at last. As we are very poor, I make only one type of curry and sometimes we eat rice with tamarind, onion or chili. My father and siblings get angry with me when there is no curry. They all shout at me. After our lunch I wash all the used utensils, feed the cattle and goats again and go for grass cutting. I come back when the sun sets. We all pray to God in the evening, my brother starts reading and I start cooking. I don't like to

do so much works. But it is compulsory for me. It is very difficult to live in our home. Our neighbors are astonished to look at my work. They give my example to their children. I would be little happy if both of my parents wouldn't be scolding me. They both beat me up whenever I make any mistake. So, I have to be very conscious about every thing.

Interview No.-5:

One poor class girl was busy with her work when the researcher met her. She was cooking rice and curry for their lunch. She was cutting vegetables and grinding spices for cooking. Her mother was sitting there. The researcher asked the general questions regarding their family back ground and occupation.

The girl was called on later and asked many questions. She said, "I am cooking now, so, please let me finish it as soon as possible. My brother is preparing for his examination. So, he might get angry with me if I talk with you in a loud voice." She said I am not studying because I have to do a lot of household works. My mother is always busy in agricultural work in our field and we have so many cattle and goat which we both take care of. My mother is quite old, so, I have to work more than her. My brother is

studying so, he does nothing. I get up very early in the morning and every morning work has to be done by me. I prepare food and first give to my brother. My mother tells me to give him first, otherwise he can't study and remember things properly. My mother told me not to study because a lot of works has to be done by me. I also accepted this. She told me what will you do with education, in the end you have to go at the chula to cook, so, learn how to work, properly."

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

1. This study has been carried out with a view to analyse the health status of adolescent girls among the Scheduled Castes of Badagan, Orissa. For this study, 52 households have been selected from a total of 172 households of Scheduled Castes in Badagan, there were a total 71 adolescent girls across all classes. For each household, data has been collected on the social background, family size, type of occupation along with work pattern, health behavior, education, perception of the adolescent girls.
2. It is found that most of the higher and middle class Scheduled Caste families are joint in nature compared to lower economic class where it is mostly nuclear.
3. The higher class have better occupations, viz, fishing compared to the middle and lower classes who mostly comprise of Dhobis, Haddis and Chamars.
4. Agriculture is the main occupation. 86% of the higher class, 76% of the middle class and 30% among the lower class follow agriculture as their main occupation. 45% of the people among the lower class are wage labourers and 20% are involved in other activities like rickshaw pulling. This clearly shows the economic differentiation of the Schedule

Caste population.

5. The data on education of adolescent girls reveals the number of school drop-outs and illiteracy levels across classes. In comparison to their male counterparts the educational levels of girls differ from higher to middle and lower classes. In lower class specially, most of the girls are illiterate. This study shows that 55% of lower class girls are illiterate and 26% among them are school drop-outs. The illiteracy rate and number of school drop-out of lower class girls is much more than the higher and middle class girls and also more than their male counterparts.

6. Regarding the work distribution in the family, there is clear gender difference both in quality and quantity of work. The girls are overburdened especially in household work. This differs from class to class. The lower class girls are the worst sufferers as they have to do household work without any help, they do outside work and in addition have to look after siblings, collect fire wood and cutt grass. Only 20% of girls among lower classes are wage labourers and involved in household work too. They are criticised by other people in the village and paid low wages for their work when compared to male members. This clearly demonstrates the gender bias in wage payments.

7. The birth of a male child signifies prosperity and joy in the family whereas a girl child is considered as a burden. This study shows that 33% of women from higher class, 24% from middle class and 15% from the lower class equally prefer girls and boys and the rest are in favour of male children. The latter group say that there are various reasons for which they are against to have a girl child. 40% say that they are scared of the present dowry system and girls are considered a burden. It is very easy to look after many boys but is difficult to look after one girl. The notion of purity and pollution are attached to their life especially at the puberty stage whereas boys are free of this. Apart from this, other women in the same community say that there are other benefits which they can get from boys which cannot be expected from girls, such as continuity of family lineage, ritual performance, death rituals of the parents, help at old age etc. The daughters are also treated as expensive because much more money is needed for their clothing, ornaments, cosmetics etc., which are considered as extra expense apart from subsistence.

8. Even during pregnancy, the women are very scared about the sex of the unborn child. This happens because the husband feels unhappy, the relatives and other family

members are disappointed, and society looks down upon the parents that they have more female children. On the other hand, any number of male children are welcome.

9. The food intake is very poor among girls as compared to boys. In lower class specially, it is found that no girl gets milk, but only 5% among the boys get it. These people eat in a stereotype manner as the bread winner eats first, then other male members and only at the end the female members and girls are supposed to eat. As a result, they don't get proper food even for a subsistence living due to the insufficiency of food, especially of curry and other nutritious items. The poor family often goes without food. The adolescent girls cook and take the whole household responsibility as most mothers in this group are wage labourers. So they eat at the end and as a result get very little food.

10. The whole day is spent by girls taking care of responsibilities or performing various duties. Some of them take the responsibility of both household and agricultural work. The other girls study and take some of the household responsibility. There are very few exceptions in the higher and middle class families where they do nothing, they only study. It is just the opposite for girls from lower classes

where few girls are educated. These girls work more than the middle class girls and much more than the upper class girls and also work more than their brothers.

11. Generally, the parents in Badagan, among the Scheduled Castes, want their daughters to get married vary soon. But now a days the stereo-typed thinking is changing to some extent. This study reveals that the perception of people differs from class to class and it is found that some upper class and middle class parents want their daughters to be educated and employed like their boys. This study again shows 33% parents among higher class and 11% among middle class want the same, whereas in lower class 75% of parents want their daughters to get married soon. The people in Badagan are very conscious about the public image of their daughters. They want to stay away from criticism of the village people regarding the girl's social relation. So, they think early marriage is an escape for them.

12. So far as health care is concerned, first of all, the girls suffer from more illness than boys. The suffering as well as treatment also differ from class to class. Among the higher class, 33% of girls who suffered were taken either to a private doctor or hospital immediately and few of them were taken within one week. In the higher class only 20% of

the boys suffered and they were taken to hospital and private doctor.

Among the middle class, 53% of girls suffered from illness were taken to the hospital and some were given medicine from the shopkeeper and some of them were not taken to any health institution. Among middle class girls, only 5% were taken to private doctor for treatment.

In the lower class, 75% of girls suffered from illness, which is more than middle class and much more than higher class. Among them only 10% were taken to private doctor, 45% were taken to hospital, 15% among them did not go for treatment at all.

13. Apart from the above mentioned facts, the girls are strictly controlled by the parents, grand parents and brothers in their mode of behavior, such as, talking, laughing, mixing with the opposite sex and going out. Going out of the house during night is a taboo, which the girls have to follow strictly. The restriction is also found in other matters such as in clothing, food, going out etc. In some families the girls are not allowed to eat meat and they are allowed to eat non-vegetarian food only on some days of the week. There are certain special days, during which the girls are required to observe fast. So the society as a

whole contribute a lot to a situation in which girls are discriminated and their life gets restricted. At every step they have to think what is good and what is desired by the society, what should be done and what should not.

Education has a positive linkage with the overall position of adolescent girls. In all the three classes, only educated girls in some households have no household responsibility while uneducated girls in all the class categories have full or partial responsibility. The parents of educated girls have pinned some hope on them while the parents of uneducated girls want them to marry as soon as possible. While education has little to do with food availability, it has some positive role in freedom of adolescent girls. Education has still a major role in contributing to the health status of adolescent girls. While on rare occasions educated suffering girls go untreated, in many cases uneducated girls were not treated at all.

Economy has no doubt a major role in the overall status of family in general and adolescent girls in particular. While the well to do family in the upper class category educate their girl children, the poorer strata constituting the lower class category put their girl children in various types of work since childhood. Ignorance and illiteracy lead

to various problems ranging from early marriage, ill health, low education and so on in case of the lower class category.

Similarly, gender plays an important role in determining the availability of food, nutrition, health care and other facilities. This is even noticeable within a family, not to speak of various classes. Customs, rituals and religious beliefs with superstitions only strengthen and perpetuate the already existing gender based discrimination.

In a larger societal context, caste plays an important role in providing some facilities to some at the cost of others. Untouchability and caste based social stigma only increase the polarity on cast lines. And hence, some are denied what is due to them, just and basic facilities while others try to enjoy these exclusively.

Therefore, stratification plays an important role in India in general and in a village society in particular. In fact, caste has occupied a predominant position in the stratification system in India, for it is often told that caste system is Indian reality. The caste based stratification is more extensive in rural areas and Badagan is not an exception. Since this study has been conducted on Scheduled Castes only, an attempt has been made to look at stratification on economic basis in order to check how the

health perception and health practices of adolescent girls differ from one class to another. This is a small exploratory study and hence an attempt has been made to cover various aspects of village life in detail. Then it attempts to look at the sociological dimensions within economic classes of Scheduled Castes and their implications for girls.

The system of stratification based on economic class is found to have a very strong influence which breaks the traditional feudal values, social norms and even religious practices. We also found that the system of economic stratification is critical for almost every aspect of Scheduled Caste households and their development in Badagan keeping all other factors constant such as place and time. It is found that even though some low class people can afford to send their daughters to school, as they prefer to send their sons, they consider that giving education to a girl is not worth while, it is sheer waste of money. The general perception is that since they are not the permanent residents of their family, some one else would be benefited out of girls education.

It is generally assumed that the Scheduled Castes in rural areas belong to the lowest social and economic groups and therefore, they have the poorest health status. Our study showed that even though health status is poor among Scheduled Castes there is no uniformity. The health status differs within the same community when the economic class of individuals is considered.

Though this study indicates that there is close connection between economic class and health, but certain social taboos on the adolescent girls do not permit to take proper care on their health even if they have a superior economic position. Though the higher class girls position is better than the other two classes, their position in comparison to boys of the same class is low. This corroborates with the findings of Monica Das Gupta (1987) who has shown the poor condition of health of girls compared to boys. Our study shows that patrilineal family structure, parents dependence on sons and social pressures to keep the girls under confinement are the main reasons for this discrimination.

The families' differential treatment of girls was associated with a lower interest in their health needs. Our data however, helps us to see that this differential

treatment between sexes within Scheduled Caste households is also affected by the system of stratification and other factors such as education work distribution and availability of food which are dependent upon economic status of families. Parents' expectation from their daughters, the preference for a male child by mothers were additional social factors which will be more clear from the following pages.

Traditional Feudal Values :

A belief based on values, that is something good and desirable. It defines what is important, worth while and worth striving for. Traditional values rest on a belief in the righteousness of established customs and norms, so the people have to follow it. Social values are shared by the members of a society. The girls life in rural areas is guided by well established traditional values of society. Their subordination is directed by the elder members of the family. Thus, even when girls are educated, marriage remains the main objective in parents eyes.

Religious Beliefs :-

Many sociologists and social Anthropologists have defined religion in various ways. To E.B.Tylor, religion "is

a belief in spiritual beings." Durkheim has defined religion as "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things." Avoidance and acceptance accrue in religion. Therefore, individuals learn what should be selected and what should be left. Religious norms practiced by families are closely linked with the life of the adolescent girls. The male preference found in this study, signifies the Hindu belief that a person can obtain 'Moksha' when 'Pinda' (rice ball) is offered by his sons and grandsons after his death. In our society the individual life is characterised by a lot of 'duties' towards others, therefore, the parents take the full responsibility of their children and provide emotional support to them. In return the sons are required to provide social security to their old parents. Service of old parents is seen as a sort of blessing. Since the girls are temporary residents of a household the male offspring is preferable.

Many restrictions are imposed on girls dress, food, public images etc. The girls are neglected in terms of food and seeking medical care. The girls are not allowed to talk with out siders. The concept of "purity and pollution" is attached to their life. Any relation with opposite sex is considered as stigma and the girls as well as the family members are criticised.

Caste:

In the study area, within the Scheduled Castes, various sub castes are found, each trying to dominate the other. The numerical strength, the land holdings, education, of fishermen sub-caste dominate the other sub-castes. The highest amount of land holding, education and govt. services found among them. Their access to health care is also better. Their language, quality of cloths and quality of food differ from the other sub-castes. Although they are allowed to celebrate various rituals, the higher class fishermen celebrate some special kind of religious ceremonies which were only celebrated by the higher castes earlier. The process of 'Sanskritisation' has taken place in this village. 'Sanskritisation' is a term propounded by Srinivas to describe the process of socio-cultural mobility followed by the traditional people of India (Coorgs of Mysore). The lower castes followed some of the customs, traditions, ritual practices of the higher castes and gave up some of their own, such as wine consumption, animal sacrifice to their deities etc. which were regarded as impure by the higher castes.

The Institutions in the Village:

In the village, currently many governmental and non-governmental organisations are working for the personal hygiene and health, but they have no such provisions for adolescent girls. These organisations include Primary Health Centre and maternal and child welfare centre. Integrated Child Development Scheme also works here. A non-governmental agency is also working there. Their work usually involves going around the village and talking to women regarding family planning with no emphasis on girls. Therefore, young girls have no benefits of this agency.

The thing which striking attention is that even in schools the curriculum comprises of themes which always indicates that girls should compromise in all matters. For example, the story '*Sitaya Pati Bhati*' which is about Sita's respect and devotion to Rama even though injustice was done to her, is cited in schools as a good example which girls should follow. This shapes the ideology of the girls and determines their future behaviour.

Education:

In the set up of the Scheduled Caste households the only positive shift we find is the funding towards education

of girls. This does affect their self perception and awareness. Thus despite restrictions and absence of institutional change or outside intervention, education is one factor which is opening up possibilities of more freedom for girls and even better care for health. Our data shows that girls who went to schools are given more attention by the families, they have their own dreams of getting jobs and even if they worked at home (as in the poor households) they had more confidence.

Changing Perception of Girls:

Regarding the freedom of girls we find an important contrast in perceptions in the view of adolescent girls of one class about girls of another class. While those of the upper class girls saw the girls of the lower class as having more freedom, the poorer girls saw the rich girls had more freedom. This is because the upper class girls saw the girls from the lower class going out for work as freedom, something that they couldn't do. The poorer girls on the other hand viewed having facilities to study and not work as freedom. Both failed to understand the constraints of each other. This shows the need for interaction with each other and forums where they could learn about each others problem.

Though the present study corroborates to the findings of various studies conducted by many scholars in different regions in India, it has its uniqueness for the simple fact that every region has its own peculiarity. This study emphasises on the people's perception of health rather than the status of health. Its findings show that in some cases even in lower classes the position of girls is better and the poor girls are also educated.

Rekhadevi Raju's (1988) findings show that preferential treatment in matter of education deprives girls of the right to education. S.P. Punalekar (1991) mentions that inhuman and deliberate neglect of girl child is common but it varies from class to class. Indira Kulashrestha (1994) analyses the exploitation of girls starting from birth to motherhood and death. Meera Chattarji (1987) describes how from birth till age of 20 woman is discriminated against, a girl as unwanted and hence a lot of inhuman behavior is visible in society. Monica Das Gupta (1987) found girls are often neglected in matters of feeding and health care. Thus it could be a reason for higher mortality among girls.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

I.

- Serial No. _____
- House No. _____
1. Name of the head of the family & age: _____
2. Total Members
Joint/Nuclear/Extended
3. Girls 10 - 16 age: _____
4. Boys 10 - 16 age: _____
5. Children under 10: _____
6. Occupation of the family
(a) Main
(b) Subsidiary
7. Household type
Rich Middle Landless
I II III
8. Land holding: _____
9. Housing
(a) Pucca
(b) Kacha
(c) Mixed
10. Source of water & distance: _____
11. Education of boys & girls between 10 - 16
- (a) Name & age Name & age
Boys Girls
- (b) Schooling School dropout
Boys Girls Boys Girls

12. Why girls could not study? _____

Father

Mother

II

13. At what age does the girl begin to take responsibility for?

- (a) Kitchen & cooking
- (b) Cleaning
- (c) Washing
- (d) Animal care & grass cutting
- (e) Agricultural work in the field
- (f) Agricultural work at home
- (g) Sibling care
- (h) Outside work
- (i) Fuel collection
- (j) Any other

Work of boys

- (a) Out side work
- (b) Agriculture
- (c) Animal grazing
- (d) House hold
- (e) Wage labour ~~children stop~~
- (f) Gathering fuel
- (g) Any other

13. Age at which children stop playing outside

(a) girls: _____

(b) boys: _____

14. Menarche practices: _____

15. Do you eat together or in same order? : _____

16. With whom does the girl eat? _____

17. Why girls are not desired by most women? _____

18. If given a job after education, do you think it is worth educating the girls? _____

19. Number of child or infant deaths in your family
boys
girls

III

20. Girls work (i) circle when completely responsible
(ii) circle when partly & help
- (a) household
Cooking/washing/cleaning/Sibling care
fetching water/fuel collection/serving &
feeding others
- (b) Agriculture
animal care/agricultural work in the field/
agricultural work at home
- (c) any other out side work
wage labour/maid service/occasional
- (d) student
21. How many times you eat in a day? _____
22. Do you get as much as you would like to eat? _____
Does your brother eat as much as he likes to eat? _____
23. Do you and your brother get milk to drink (equal quantities & regularly) _____
24. A day in your life & a day in your brother's life
(a)
(b)

25. Do you go anywhere else for recreation? _____

26. Do you want to study more? _____

27. Why did you stop education? _____

28. Have you had your menses? _____
29. What kind of restriction came with your periods? _____

30. What is your parents expectation from you as a daughter? _____

31. What is your parents expectation from your brother as a son? _____

32. Illness in the last one year _____
when you were taken to a doctor/bed/hospital/traditional
practitioner _____
33. Brother's illness over last one year when he was taken to a bed/doctor/hospital/traditional practitioner _____
34. Difference in treatment of younger sisters & brothers by elders _____
35. What do you think about women involving panchayats? _____

36. Do you think that other girls of your community have more freedom?

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