

**GIRLHOOD IN RURAL UTTAR PRADESH AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH – A STUDY OF TWO
VILLAGES IN ALLAHABAD DISTRICT**

*Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the Degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY*

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With love to 'Trishala'



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21ST JULY, 1993

CERTIFICATE

Certified that the dissertation entitled "GIRLHOOD IN RURAL UTTAR PRADESH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH - A STUDY OF TWO VILLAGES IN ALLAHABAD DISTRICT submitted by MALOBIKA is in partial fulfilment for the degree of MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY of this University. The dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University, and is her own work.

I, recommended that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Social disadvantages of women have been recognised, investigated, and represented in social science literature. These studies show that women are instrumental in their own as well as other women's exploitation (Chettur, 1966; Soman, 1992). Our interest is to understand what induces them to inflict suffering upon themselves as well as upon other women. Therefore, it was felt that exploring the socialization processes during childhood that build up the personalities conducive to self exploitation, would throw some light on the problem.

An understanding of this self-inflicted deprivation helps us to unravel some aspects of the process of women's exploitation in general and their poor health status in particular. As is often observed, women, even in well-off sections, tend to neglect their health and deny themselves early access to medical care. This is not necessarily due to absence of resources or families refusal to cooperate (Soman, 1992).

SOCIAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

In most of the Indian sub-continent there is a predominant desire for male children. In Vedic times the social status of women in India was supposed to have been more or less equal to that of men. The old texts of Rig Veda give expressions of sex preference in children. These

recommended special herbs and a number of hymns to the Sun God for having sons. There are also 'mantras' to have daughters but with 'desirable' qualities (Raina, 1990).

Over the years the status of women has fallen and son preference has gradually increased. Gender bias is entrenched deeply in the cultural heritage of India. This is reflected in the widespread practice of female infanticide in northern, India during the 19th century (Miller, 1987). A law condemning this practice was introduced in 1870 (Jeffery et. al., 1984).

A number of studies have found evidence of sex bias in different aspects and at different periods of life such as conception, birth, childhood and the rest of her adult life. Some of these initial areas are the following.

Selective Abortions

Many girls are unwanted. Discrimination against them begins even before birth - over the last two decades the availability of amniocentesis for foetal sex discrimination has brought another tool of avoiding the birth of female fetuses by selective abortion. The test has become so popular that in the city of Bombay alone, 200-300 centres offering sex determination tests were in operation in 1988 (Behal, 1988; Kroeber, 1989). Several studies on the preva-

lence of female foeticide have been published in early 1980s. According to an estimate, about 78,000 female foetuses were aborted after sex determination tests between 1978 and 1983 (Kulkarni, 1986). Another study revealed that almost all of the 15914 abortions performed in a clinic in Bombay during 1984-1985, were undertaken after sex determination tests (Kulkarni, 1986; Joshi and Smith, 1987). In a hospital in Bombay 7,999 out of 8,000 abortions were performed on female foetuses (UNICEF, 1990). The same report also estimated that approximately 40,000 female foetuses were aborted in Bombay alone during 1984.

In addition, parents are ready to pay any amount for prenatal sex determination tests. According to a spokesman from the Delhi Medical Association, gynaecologists practising sex determination by amniocentesis as the mainstay of their work may earn as much as Rs.95,000 a month charging Rs.2000-3500 per case (Behal, 1988).

The selective abortion of female foetuses has been frequently discussed in mass media, among the politicians, and in women's organisations (GOI, 1989). Several of the women's organisations have been in favour of a legislation banning the use of amniocentesis for the purpose of sex determination.

A study of opinion regarding sex determination in

Punjab demonstrated that, approximately 70% of the respondents supported the idea of giving information on foetal sex to the parents so that, they could plan their families with children of the desired sex (Singh & Jani, 1985).

Feeding and Health Care

Girls are often neglected in matters of feeding and health care. It has been shown by a number of studies that the gender is the most significant determinant of nutritional status (Wyon and Gordon, 1971; Levinson, 1974; Seventh Annual Report, CHD, CMC, 1978; Chen et al, 1981; Das et. al., 1982; Sen and Sengupta, 1983; Ghosh, 1985; Gopalan, 1985; Dasgupta, 1987; Chatterjee, 1990). These differences set in during infancy (even among urban population) and they persist through early childhood (Nutrition in Punjab, CHRE, 1974; Gopalan, 1985).

Studies have indicated that the dietary intakes of females are less than those of males in quantity and lesser quality (Chen et.al., 1981; Jorgensen, 1982; Mitra, 1983; Devadas and Kamalanathan, 1985). Starting with feeds at their mothers' breast, girls receive less milk, less frequently and for shorter periods of time (Feldman et. al., 1981; Ghosh, 1987). Das et. al. (1982) reported that this is especially significant for girl children born to families who already have a surviving child.

There is a preference to feed boys highly nutritive foods such as milk, eggs, butter or ghee and fruits and vegetables while they also continue to receive breast milk (Khan et. al., 1983 and Das Gupta, 1987). Thus several studies have demonstrated that girl children suffer more frequently from malnutrition than boys (Ghosh, 1987; Chen et. al., 1981; Chen, 1982). Moreover, in times of food crisis, girls suffer from higher rates of malnutrition and mortality than boys (Bairagi, 1986).

Macro level surveys conducted under the auspices of the ICMR in three areas of the country showed that 99% of girls aged 6-14 years in Calcutta, 65% in Hyderabad and Delhi and 20% in Madras are anaemic (ICMR, 1982).

Only exception to this is the macro level surveys conducted by the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (NNMB). The NNMB data have consistently shown either no difference in nutritional status between girls and boys or a better status of the girls. The latest NNMB survey report of 1988-90 that pooled data for eight states shows a similar gender differences with 11% of girls being normal as compared to 9 % of boys. Further 44% boys suffer from moderate malnutrition compared with 42.8% of girls. There are very little or no differences between both sexes in mild and severe malnutrition. This trend does not seem to tally with

generally observed social and nutritional status of the girls in various micro level studies. The reason obviously lies in the methodology used by NNMB. While rigorous, randomization technique are used for selection of districts and villages and states, the selection of households within the villages is done simply on the basis of headman's advice. This has obvious problem in providing adequate representation of the population.

Furthermore, our culture allows male members in the family to eat first, and when they have finished, women and girls may eat the remaining food (Mojumdar, 1987; Dasgupta, 1987; Kabeer, 1991). The nutritional intake of women is much below the standard intake and also less than that of men (Satyamala, 1986).

All this indicates that a female - as a child or adult, get proportionately less to eat. Furthermore this fact is not related to poverty alone as it is present in families both from the upper as well as lower economic groups (Sen and Sengupta, 1983; Dasgupta, 1987). There is a connection between the status of women and under-nourishment since the relations between the sexes determine the distribution of food within the family. Thus, there is a linkage between the power relations of the sexes within the household and entitlement of food (Chanana, 1989).

Surveys conducted in various states of the country at different points of time reveal that these undernourished women and female children are more susceptible to illness and receive less health care compared to the men and male children (Dandekar, 1975; Chakraborty, 1978; Taylor and Faruque, 1983). Hospital and clinic attendance records invariably show a preponderance of boys (Chen et. al., 1981; Kynch and Sen, 1983; Ghosh, 1985; Mankekar, 1985). Similarly, Khan et. al. (1983) have reported that a larger number of boys were treated at the Primary Health Centres in U.P., Gujarat and Rajasthan. It has also been observed that girls are taken to less qualified doctors when they are ill (Das et. al., 1982; Khan et. al., 1983). Expenditure on medicine was higher for boys than girls particularly during infancy and among better off families (Dasgupta, 1987). Girls receive treatment at more critical stages of illness as compared to boys (Singh et. al., 1962; Kielmann et. al., 1983; Kynch and Sen, 1983). The atypical pattern of sex differentials in childhood mortality has been attributed largely to such behavioral practices, rather than innate biological or genetic differences between the sexes (Koeng et al, 1986).

The provision of facilities, such as women doctors or hospital beds reserved for women in the public health institutions, are significantly less than that for men, although,

more women than men report illnesses at any given time. Women's illness tend to be neglected. If they are treated, it is at the more critical stages and generally with free treatment (ICSSR Report, 1977; Mankekar, 1985; Chatterjee, 1990).

Literacy

Though female literacy has gradually been catching up with male literacy there is still a yawning gap. According to the 1991 Census, the literacy rate for males is 63.87% and for female it is 39.4 %. In the rural population, female literacy is only 25 % as compared to 54% in the urban population (Bose, 1991).

Many women remain illiterate, since in childhood they are denied opportunities to attend school because they are needed at home to share their mothers' responsibility. In addition, whenever there is a shortage of man power in the family, often girls are withdrawn from the school. This is reflected in enrolment ratios (1988-89) of boys and girls. It was 115.7 and 82.5 for boys and girls for primary level; for middle level (6th - 8th) it was 70.8 and the 42.3 respectively (GOI, 1990). Dropout rates (1985-86) for primary level were 45.84 and 50.27, and for middle level they were 60.70 and 70.04 respectively for boys and girls (GOI, 1990).

Girls' lack of schooling is clearly related to their being used as unpaid labour in households. Mothers expect a great deal of domestic work from their daughters as they themselves are overburdened.

According to Bhattacharya (1985),

...the social belief that a female child is an economic liability can be countered by the argument that in rural India a girl works for 9 hours a day and an average of 315 days in a year, in the field and at home, providing the family an annual labour which at minimum wages would cost Rs.2200 to hire. By the time she ceases to be a child she has provided economic help to the family worth Rs.39600, surviving on food below nutrition level, and struggling against prejudice and discrimination.

Burra (1987) quotes a recent study undertaken by Ishrat Ali Siddiqui:

A study by two experts from Bangalore shows that a girl child provides for 29 % of the total time on fuel wood gathering, and 20 % on fetching water. In eastern U.P. where a woman spends between one and four hours daily on household activities in addition to a back-breaking day on the field, at least 30 % of the burden is shared by the girl children between group 6-11. And in a country where women share 45.75 % of the agricultural work, more than 20 % is shared by girl children.

According to 1981 Census 1.4 crore children were classified as 'workers'. Out of it 2.1% are male and 4.3% are female children under fourteen years of age. Remaining at home girls may engage in home-based industry, or they may be

involved in family/wage labour. They receive lower wages than boys of the same age (Rosenzweig, 1980).

Participation of women in agriculture has been as high as 86.9% (Bose, 1991). These women often work for longer hours than men and spend more energy for equal duration and still receive lower wages than their male counterparts (Batliwala, 1982).

Marital Life

Women in India are still married off early in life in spite of a law prohibiting marriage for women under the age of 18. In most states in northern India the average age at marriage for woman is between 16 and 17 years (UNFPA, 1990) and in several areas child marriages are still prevalent. The newly married woman is expected to prove her fertility by getting pregnant as soon as possible after marriage. In women, already stunted due to malnutrition during childhood, early pregnancy increases the risks of complications at childbirth as well as a high infant mortality rate (Gopalan et. al. 1989; Chatterjee, 1990). The maternal mortality is estimated to reach 400-700 per 1,000,000 live births in most states of India (GOI, 1989). This means that approximately 100,000 women sacrifice their lives every year due to pregnancies.

Further remarriage is welcomed for men while it is

taboo for women. The tradition of burning a widow together with her deceased husband has been executed till recently (Desai and Krishnaraj, 1990).

We see therefore that females as children or adults are often unwanted, neglected and undeveloped: considered a liability and exploited. Regarding the implications of such discriminatory behaviour of the society it is said,

So heavy is this weight of discrimination that it even sways the survival chances of the girl child. All other things being equal, girl children have a better natural chance of surviving the early, vulnerable years. But all other things are not equal.... And in this gap between natural and actual survival rates, discrimination can be measured.... In other words, a million girls die each year because they are born female" (UNICEF, 1992).

A striking demographic features in India over the last nine decades has been the decline in overall mortality rates from about 45/1000 in the early twenties to about 10/1000 in the 90s. This is in contrast to the progressive decline in the sex-ratio throughout this century. The ratio which was already unfavourable in 1901 (972/1000) had fallen to 946/1000 by 1951, and the figure of 929 in 1991 indicates a further fall of 17 points over the next four decades. The explanation of these are to be found in the social realities of the women's lives.

SOCIAL ROOTS OF DISCRIMINATION

The declining proportion of women in the population is a glaring reflection of women's low social status (Qadeer, 1991). In a large survey covering most states of the country it was found that 60% of families with three daughters and no sons wanted more children while the corresponding figure for families with three sons and no daughters only reached 13% (Operations Research Group, Baroda, 1990). In our society women are not valued as much as males. This differential variation of male versus female offspring can be traced to complex socio-cultural practices and institutional arrangements.

Women's lives are deeply embedded in the household and family, so in order to understand the position of women it is necessary to examine intra-household relationships, their dynamics and their wider social relations (Kishwar, 1979; Saradamoni, 1982; Krishnaraj and Patel, 1982; Dietrich, 1983; Jhabvala, 1984; Jain and Banerjee, 1985).

Women's various roles within the family are shaped and perpetuated by the norms of our patrilineal society (Horowitz and Madhu, 1982). Traditionally in such a society males are the carrier of the family name. Male members are considered the heads of households. Major decisions within the

family are taken by them. They are the owners of the family property or resources. The power of decision making and ownership of property are also passed down to sons in the following generation. Customs and religious beliefs give the necessary social sanctions to such practices. The role of a woman in such societies is mainly that of wife and mother. Her true destiny is to get married and her important contribution to the family is to bear male children. Thus she is denied the power of decision making and control over family property. Further to be a good woman, values such as self-sacrifice and self-denial are encouraged (Satyamala, 1986; Raman, 1989).

This view of womanhood is still encouraged in female children right from an early age. A woman's identity still rests with her husband, widowhood brings a curse to her life.

In addition any expenditure on the son (such as education and medical care) is seen as a productive investment since he is the one who will continue to stay with and look after the parents in their old age. In other words sons are considered as important economic assets for the family, while daughter imply expenditure, particularly at marriage (Mamdani, 1972). The female child on the other hand is not considered worth investing in because she is believed to be the 'property' of her future husband even before she is

married (Satyamala, 1986).

This view of woman as property, finds expression in common practices such as raping. Raping a man's mother, wife or daughter is often a manifestation of revenge against him by another man.

Although tradition of dowry is prohibited by law in India, it has been active and formed new social categories (Srinivas, 1983). The dowry often amounts to sums of money that leave a family with debts for several years (Desai and Krishnaraj, 1990).

Denials of decision making power and control over property, her low social status without a related man in her life especially husband, parents' attitude towards her as a burden and an expenditure, and denial of any effort for her development, put a woman in such a vulnerable and weak position that she becomes easy prey for any kind of exploitation in the family. Through its child-rearing practices and beliefs, society sets all those norms which help to perpetuate this discrimination against women generation after generation (Lakshmi, 1985).

One must see the life of an Indian woman from birth, through infancy, childhood and adolescence to adulthood, marriage, motherhood and widowhood as a continuum.

The women's movement in India has focussed a great deal of attention on the adult woman, her productive and reproductive roles, her plight within the family and society and her consequent multiple burdens as wife and mother, producer and earner. Less attention has been paid, however, to the roots of her alienation and seeds of her discontent: her unwanted birth, her neglect in infancy and childhood, her exploitation as a daughter, her deprivation of opportunities for development and her early socialization into and acquisition of adult roles.

Even the fight against amniocentesis focuses only on her right to be born and not on the process of her growth and socialization. It is during this early phase that a baby girl needs care love and appreciation similar to her male counterpart. At this vulnerable phase of her life she is made to absorb unconsciously the attitude of others towards herself unquestioningly.

Our study basically attempts to understand the social process at work within the family during this phase of growth of young girls and it hopes to articulate the pain and confusion of a growing girl and the nature of handicaps forced upon her, which not only affect her health but also make her vulnerable as a human being.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE PROBLEM

One's childhood is shaped by factors rooted within the social dynamics of the family. Parental attitudes, relationships, traditions, hopes, compulsions, the material conditions of the family and the social norms and pressures of the wider socio-economic structure within which families are located, are some of the key determinants of early life.

Different groups of a society have different material conditions and experiences of life. These shape the internal milieu of the families as well as of the children. For example, availability and access to the services of various social institutions in the society, the information and experience acquired from outside the family and the relative material conditions of the family, determine partially the attitudes towards childhood within a family. In other words, strong and differing social influences (from within and outside the family) in childhood shape the unfolding of a child's genetic potential and personality.

Besides the differences in childhood experience between socio-economic groups, gender is also an important factor in the allocation of roles, status and power in all societies (Kanhere, 1989). The patrilineal families confine women's role mostly to the domestic sphere, allocating them to a subordinate status of authority and power compared to men.

This is achieved through inheritance and property ownership and through strict segregation of sexes. Men are perceived as the major providers and protectors of a family, while women are perceived as playing a caring and supportive role, attending to the hearth. This is particularly so in the rural society.

These perceptions are rooted in the very structure of patrilineal society which helps to perpetuate the exploitation of women's labour in the family (Horowitz and Madhu, 1982; Krishnaraj and Chanana, 1989). The structure also sets the pattern of socialization and child rearing beliefs and practices. The behaviour of people towards children thus is very much a part of social dynamics within and outside the family which creates people's present understanding of children and what they might be.

For the purpose of study of childhood, therefore, two aspects are critical: (a) the socio-economic status of families and differential within the existing socio-economic groups regarding child rearing; (b) gender differences in the upbringing and differential treatment of sexes.

The 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. To know the processes of such dis-

criminations in childhood the following social aspects of a girl child's life have been studied.

- Food distribution and consumption,
- Various chronic and major diseases & illness,
- Health care during illness,
- Schooling,
- Types of household works assigned to the child,
- Play time, and
- Emotional care/attention paid by family members.

These aspects of her life have been studied in relation to the child's

- Socio-economic background,
- role in total life process of the family,
- relation to the parents,
- various ways and explanations to cope up with such discriminatory behaviour, and
- perception about themselves and their families.

At the family level the study would explore differential treatment between male and female children and restriction on access to family resources for girls.

In this respect parents' understanding of their child and about childhood is significant. It determines the levels of differential treatment between male and female

children. This understanding is an outcome of their experiences in life as a whole (specifically as a child), their type of socialization and their level of education. On the basis of their understanding they justify their differential biased behaviour towards their children. Hence all of these would be explored.

At the larger level in a stratified village population, where resources are unevenly distributed in different socio-economic groups, it would be necessary to understand and identify them. Each group would be explored for:

- 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, and
- social norms set for socialization and child rearing practices and beliefs.

Thus, childhood would be studied from various points of views, particularly from the point of view of the girl child herself to highlight the roots of the vulnerability of women in general and their poor health.

OBJECTIVES

This study was designed to examine the meaning of childhood in the rural population and to understand the differences between the processes that determine the childhood status of the two sexes.

The main objective could be broken into following sub-objectives:

- to understand the socio-economic structure of the village,
- to study the children upto 12 years of age of the two sexes regarding their food, health, schooling, type of work, play-time, emotional security and their relationships,
- to identify the factors at family and larger social level which determine the understanding and behaviour of parents,
- girl child's perception about her own life,
- differences in all the above in the different socio-economic groups.

DATA REQUIRED

Considering the major objective of this study, it is necessary to collect wide-ranging information on the different aspects. Three sets of data were required for this

study.

General qualitative information was collected on social and economic life of the villagers with specific focus on upbringing of children upto 12 years of age. For the purpose, men and women were contacted individually or in groups at the household or outside.

Through discussion and observation, an idea was developed regarding people's understanding of children and their childhood of both sexes in different economic categories, their views on socio-economic aspects of life and their understanding of the social constraints within which they bring up children.

Quantitative information on the socio-economic status of the villagers and on health, education, nutritional status of the children upto 12 years of age were collected through a baseline survey of the villages. This baseline survey served the following purposes:

a) Information on social and economic status of every household was collected, covering occupation, land holding and caste categories. In addition, the family size, education and age of all members, number of living rooms and source of drinking water were recorded.

b) Information on ill-health was collected on the basis



of reported persistent and acute illness of children upto 12 years of age during the previous one year. Children were weighed for their nutritional status.

Case reports and indepth interviews were developed for indepth exploration on all children upto 12 years of age and on their parents in all economic categories.

Specific social aspects illustrating the processes of discriminatory behaviour of parents towards their children and their determinant factors were purposively chosen for this purpose. Thus insights were developed into their discriminatory behaviour towards children, and what were the significant areas where discrimination was most prevalent; how this discrimination was handled by the children and how they coped; what were their reactions to and explanation of such behaviour of parents. What were the parents justification for their discriminatory treatment. Case reports on mothers of girls helped in understanding the long lasting impact of such experiences of childhood on their later life.

DESIGN

Selection of Study Population

This is an exploratory study of two villages. While selecting the village certain things were taken into consideration:

a) Accessibility of health services and schooling in the village or nearby villages,

b) Population distribution should not be atypical, and

c) Population size should be manageable within time constraint.

The size of the study population was 985. There were 389 children upto 12 years of age in 142 households. Boys and girls upto 12 years of age were considered for the study of childhood. Generally, 12 years onward period of puberty starts.

d) Convenience of the researcher in terms of language and staying place.

RESEARCH TOOLS

The main research tools used for the study were as follows:

Group discussions and individual interviews: Interviews of key personnels as the panchayat members, school teachers, medical practitioners and health personnel.

Indepth interviews of girls were taken and observations were used to note the validity of these interviews.

Observations by the researchers of people, treatment of children and events were an important tool of data collection.

A schedule was used for the baseline survey which covered all households of the villages. It was conducted only after a certain rapport was established with all classes. The schedule used, is appended (Appendix 1).

For the case reports repeated visits were made and apart from children and parents, all other members of the family were talked too. When required, neighbours and health practitioners and health personnel were also interviewed.

Cross-checking of information was done at the possible levels.

Secondary sources were also consulted during study.

TIME SCHEDULE

This field work started in September 1992 and finished on January 1993. During these five months, the investigator stayed in the study villages which helped to establish good rapport with the villagers as well as provided an opportunity for a close observations of the daily life of the villagers.

DEFINITIONS USED

Household: A household is defined as the collection of people related to each other sharing the food prepared in the same 'chulha' or hearth. The term 'family' has often been used synonymously with the term household.

Persistent and Acute illnesses among children: A persistent illness is defined as any illness persisting for six weeks and above. An acute illness is defined as the one which led to being bed ridden for one to five weeks.

ANALYSIS

Stratification of the study population is the basic necessity of this study. It helps to locate different families in the social dynamics of the villages and makes it possible to study childhood in relation to socio-economic status.

On the basis of the baseline survey, the surveyed population was classified into different economic groups. According to the land holding capacity in combination with other occupations, families were categorized into the well-off, subsistence and poor economic groups. (Table 1). All data collected is analysed with reference to these groups which are defined explicitly in the table. In subsistence group, there are eight families (five Yadavs and

having
ing they
group.

Within the economic groups social stratification was also incorporated to see the nature of overlap.

The caste structure has two major components the Scheduled Castes and the non-scheduled castes. The latter is dominated by the Brahmins and the rest are various occupational castes known as Backward castes in the villages. There are four households of Muslim.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Time was a major constraint and very often restricted the depth as well as duration of observations which would have generated more details. It also forced us to confine ourselves to a total period of five months of field work and fewer numbers of case reports than we would have liked.

It was difficult to develop case reports of children under 10 years of age as they were unable to express themselves.

Quantification of trends emerging from the qualitative exploration of behaviour of girls and of parents towards them was not possible due to shortage of time. Therefore, the findings of this study are only suggestive and exploratory.

tory.

The four Muslim families are included in economic groups only. They are not discussed separately as a cultural group firstly because they were too few and secondly, because adequate rapport could not be established in the short time available.

Table 1. Distribution of Households in Different Economic and Caste Groups

Economic Categories	No. of Households	Caste Groups			
		Scheduled Castes	Backward Castes	Brahmins	Muslims
Poor					
No land to two bigha of land with/without petty business*, daily wage or both.	63 44.4%	37 58.7%	20 31.7%	3 4.8%	3 4.8%
					100%
Subsistence					
More than two to five bigha of land with/without service,** petty business or both; or no land to one bigha land with big business or service.	54 38.0%	6 11.1%	18 33.3%	30 55.6%	0
					100%
Well-Off					
More than five bigha of land with/without big business, service or both; or two to five bighas of land with big business*** or with both business and service.	25 17.6%	0	6 24.0%	18 72.0%	1 4.0%
					100%
Total	142 100%	43 30.3%	44 31.0%	51 35.9%	4 2.8%

* Included betel leaf shop, electric goods repairing shop, blacksmith shop, tailoring shop.

** Included Class II, Class III and Class IV government employees and also pensioners.

*** Grocery shop, flour mill, contractor, printing press, stationery shop L.I.C. agent.

CHAPTER III

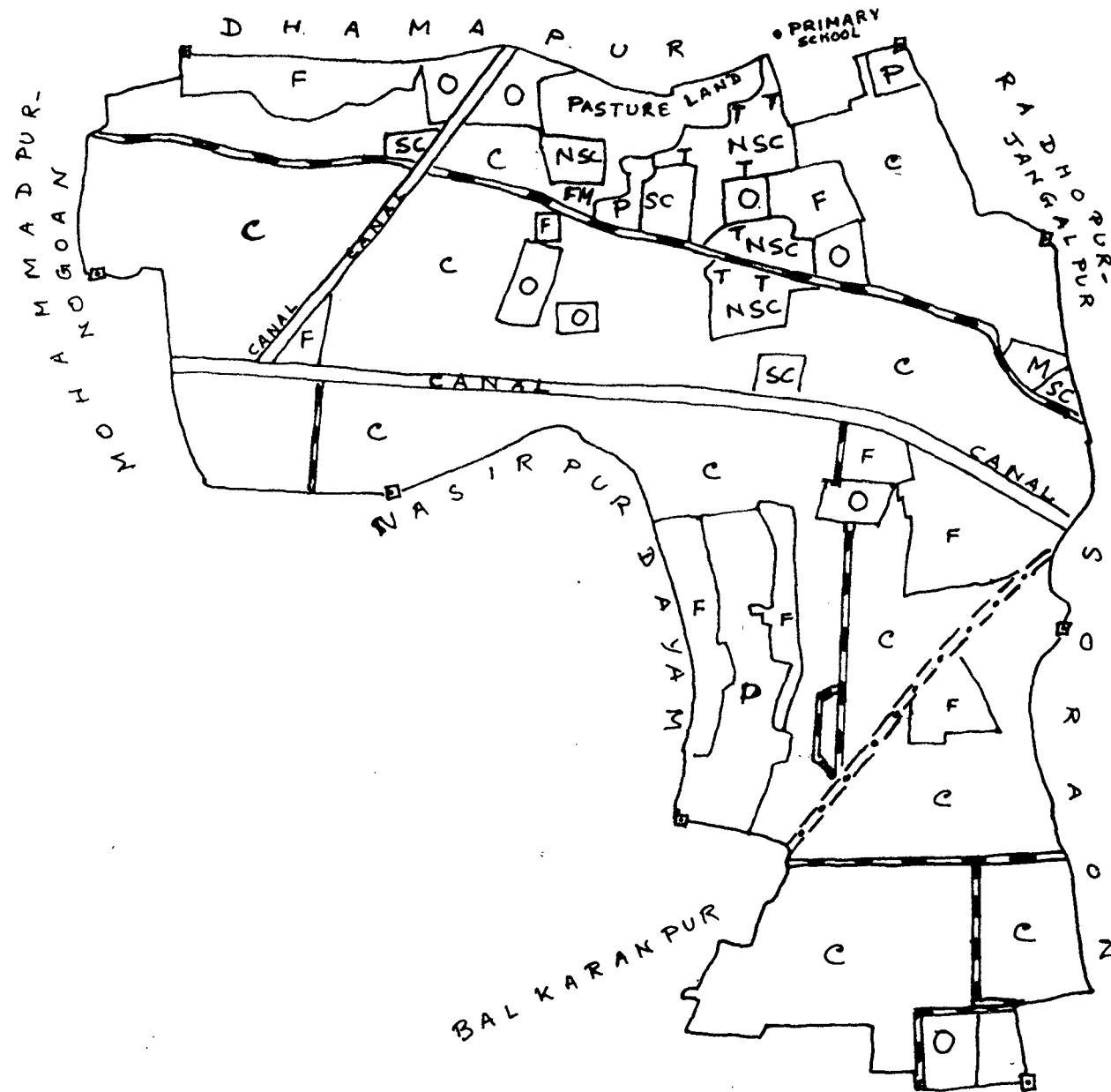
THE STUDY VILLAGES

The two villages selected for the study are Rajapur Malhua and Radhopur Junglepur. They are adjacent to each other. Both the villages come in Soraon Tehsil. This is 24 kms north of district Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh State. Rajapur Malhua and Radhopur Junglepur are two of the four villages in one Gram Sabha which has other adjacent villages. The study villages are mainly agricultural and are amongst those few villages across Ganga river which have very fertile land.

Soraon is the Block Head Quarter having the minimum facilities of health, education, road transport, communication, market, bank, co-operative society, entertainment, cold storage, small scale bakery, places of worship etc. Rajapur Malhua is 2 kms and Radhopur Junglepur is 1 km from Soraon. Being so near to the Block Head Quarter, the villagers have many facilities within their reach. Therefore, in Rajapur Malhua itself there is nothing except three betel leaf shops and two grocery shops which cater to the needs of that village only. There is one big flour mill which serves this, as well as the surrounding villages. There are seven places of worship but none of them are popular in other villages. In the case of Radhopur Junglepur no such services exist.

FIGURE 1.

A MAP OF RAJAPUR MALHUA VILLAGE

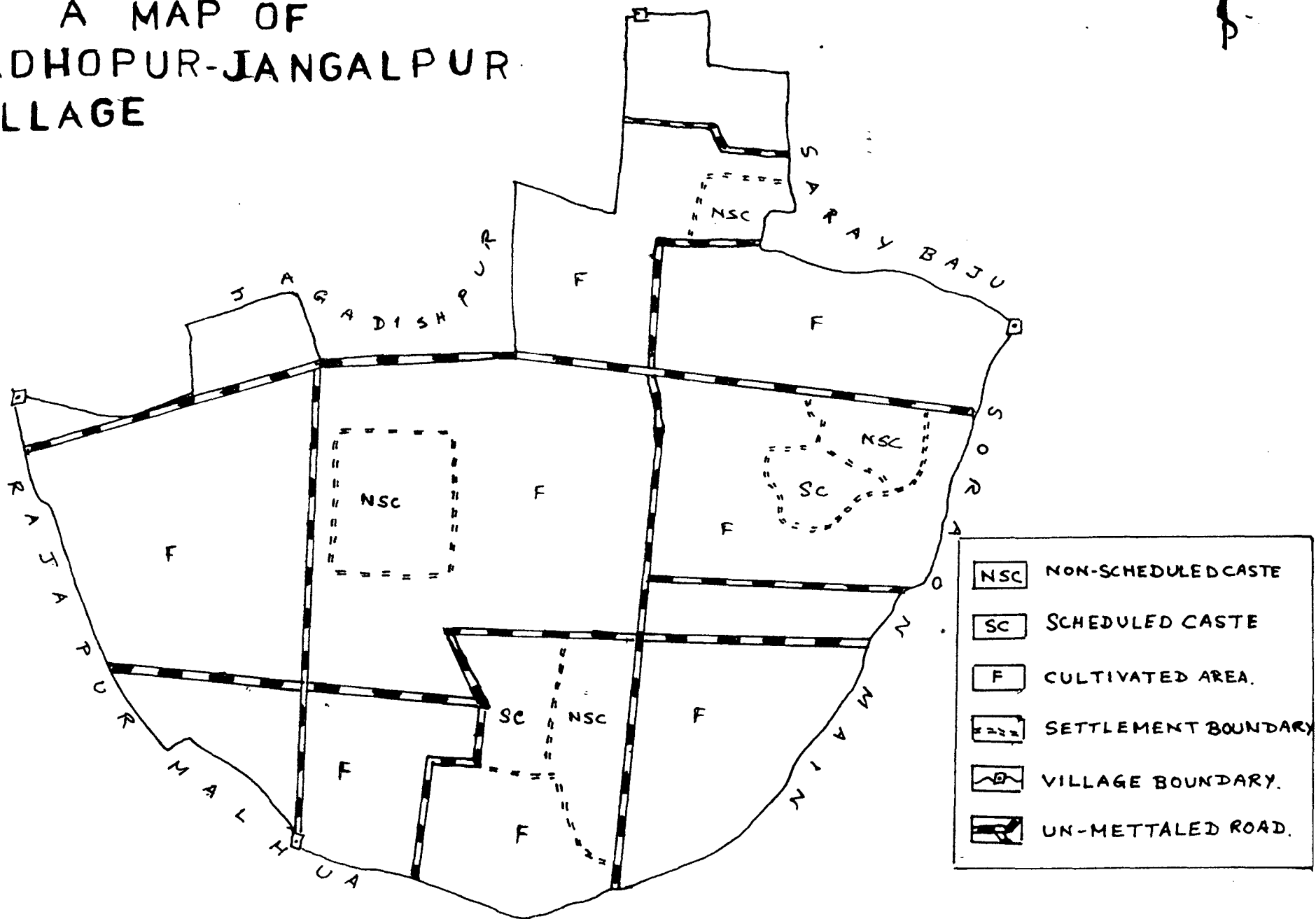


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- NSC NON-SCHEDULED CASTE
- SC SCHEDULED CASTE
- M MUSLIMS
- P POND
- O ORCHARDS
- T TEMPLE
- FM FLOURMILL
- F INFERTILE FALLOWLAND
- ▬▬▬ METALLED ROAD
- ▬▬▬ UN-METALLED ROAD
- ▬▬▬ VILLAGE BOUNDARY.
- C CULTIVATED LAND

FIGURE 2,

A MAP OF RADHOPUR-JANGALPUR VILLAGE



SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The villages are surrounded by agricultural fields on all sides (Figs.1 & 2). Households are located in clusters, separated from one another by narrow foot paths. Rajapur Malhua has one *pucca* brick lane in the village constructed under Jawahar Yojna. Radhopur Junglepur does not have such a *pucca* lane. A striking thing regarding settlement pattern is that scheduled castes are residing in the centre of the villages surrounded by Brahmins and other castes.

The housing pattern of these two villages is traditional - mud walls with tiled roof. Around 40% of the households have two small rooms, the inner rooms of which are often without any ventilation. As villagers find it difficult to maintain *kachha* houses, they are trying to replace them with *pucca* houses. They prefer to replace portions of the house by *pucca* from time to time according to their capacity.

Both the villages have Jal Nigam water supply and electricity facilities since 1979 and 1980 respectively. Villagers use electricity illegally, even those who have legal connections, just to save their electricity bill. The water level of this area is very high so installing a hand pump is far more convenient and cheaper than water supply connection, which supplies water only at fixed times. Also,

villagers have to bribe the Jal Nigam authority for connections. Those who have water supply connection have hand pumps also. Apart from private water supply connections and hand pumps there are community water sources provided through the Panchayat (Handpump-3), UNICEF (Handpump-1) and Jal Nigam (Tap water connection-2). Out of three handpumps provided through Panchayat, only one is in working condition. There are few wells in the villages, some of which are unused. For drinking purposes, the villagers use any of these water sources according to their convenience.

General sanitation of the villages is not good. The drainage system is inadequate. The water outlets from all households flow through the villages and lead to a big pond. In many places drains overflow here and there. In some places people have made big pits to drain their wastes. These stink very badly. Except for a few households which have private laterines, the majority of the population use fields, banks of canals or roadsides of the villages for defecation. As the inhabitants are increasing, villagers are finding it difficult to retain open spaces for defecation. Also Mango, Mahua and Jambolan groves in the villages are being auctioned off by the owners of the land to timber merchants in the town. These trees are also being cut in order to clear land for cultivation, or to obtain woods to build houses, or for fuel. The women of the villages who

used this area for defecation have therefore lost it. In rainy season it is impossible to walk on the road and lanes of the villages. In ^{the} dry season it is not that bad.

AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY

Agriculture is the basic and major source of livelihood for the villagers of the two villages. These two villages are amongst the few having very good and fertile land with good irrigation facilities. The villages are surrounded by a big and a small canal which both provide water throughout the year. Apart from these, there are four tubewells for the dry period or when the canal water dries up. These two agricultural facilities make this area prosperous. Poverty is there but not to the extent of starvation. Even landless villagers can have two square meals to satisfy their hunger.

Share cropping is very common in this area. It has increased with newer agricultural technology. Share cropping serves the interests of both the owners and tillers of the land. 31% households in the villages are in service with or without other sources of income. Service is one of the important reasons of higher prevalence of share cropping in this area. As they cannot look after their total land individually, they prefer to give for share cropping, areas of land which are far from their house. For the poor this is a boon.

Share cropping means everything is shared equally between the land owner and the land tiller. Any input like seeds, fertilizer, pesticides etc. in the crop and any output like grain, hay etc. will be equally shared by both. Two things -- land revenue and charge of canal water are not shared between them. Land revenue has to be paid by land owner and charge of canal water by land tiller. If irrigation is done by tubewell then this expenditure is shared equally by both of them.

One important point which needs to be mentioned here is that, this is not a permanent term between the owner and tiller of the land in share cropping like Barga operation of West Bengal. It is not necessary that once one gets land for sharecropping one can cultivate it as long as one wants. The land owner can take back his land from the tiller any time. Share cropping terms depend upon the personal relationship between both of them, and on production. If production is good in that particular land due to tiller's effort, then prospects to get this land for further share cropping is much higher. Only permanent feature is that if one has land for share cropping in paddy season then he will have it for the wheat season as well.

OTHER ACTIVITIES/OCCUPATIONS

It is said by the villagers and by the authorities of Tehsil and Block Development Office, that production of one bigha land is sufficient for four adult members in a family round the year. To cultivate that much of land and produce optimum level of production one needs good seeds, sufficient fertiliser and pesticides, labour and other agricultural inputs. In other words, to fulfil these requirements one has to have other source of income besides one bigha of land. Apart from food, there are other necessities which one must have to lead a minimum decent life such as house, clothes, health, education, etc. Therefore villagers said that either one has to have a minimum of 2 bigha land with/without any other source of income or have one bigha of land with other source of income.

Development at the larger level has led to Soraon becoming an important place in terms of different avenues for income. Being a Tehsil and Block Head Quarter, villagers keep on coming for education, treatment, marketing, business, entertainment and for transport and communication apart from their official work. Day by day business of any sort is flourishing there. Road transport facilities have improved people's mobility to go to the city for further business, service, labour and for better education and treatment. As many Government offices, schools, health

centres, etc. are functioning, many employees from outside commute and some of them stay there. Now the people of Sor-aon have started renting out their houses. At the same time affluent villagers are also planning to construct some accommodation there for renting. Many private medical practitioners — local as well as from Allahabad come to practice there. Postal and Telegraph and STD booths have further facilitated the businessmen, specially wholesalers of potatoes. Four cold storages are there for potato cultivators. Along with government and private schools there is one coaching centre where students get tuition. Also educated unemployed youth have a source of income as a tutors here.

Apart from agricultural activity, other sources of income for the villagers are daily-wage labour, business and service, and other combinations of these sources of income.

Daily wage labourers are those who do not have land or have less than two bighas and are usually from the lower castes. The rate of daily wage is about Rs.20-25 in the villages while in the city i.e. Allahabad it is a minimum of Rs.40-50. It depends upon the nature of work. As Allahabad is only 24 kms away from Sor-aon and has good road transport facilities villagers (men) prefer to go to the city for work. It costs them Rs.8-10 in conveyance. Invariably,

they get some work there everyday. Women of the villages do not go outside the village for labour. They mainly do agricultural labour in the village itself. They get lesser wages than men, ranging from Rs.15-20 per day, or 4-5 kgs grains (paddy or wheat). It depends upon the season. Skilled labourers like carpenters, masons, etc. get more wage than unskilled labourers. 41.5% of total households are involved in daily wage labour amongst them, 64% are Scheduled Castes and 30.6% are Backward Castes.

There are villagers who are involved in various types of business. Villagers do not want to invest their profits from agriculture into further expansion of agriculture. Villagers are getting more and more interested in business according to their capacity. Those who are affluent are involved in businesses like, printing press, air conditioning, furniture shop, stationery shop, general merchant shop, sweet shop, flour mill, grocery shop, wholesaler of potato, LIC agent, etc. Those who are poor are involved in business like betel leaf shop, small tailor shop, electric goods repairing shop, vegetable or icecream hawker, blacksmith and carpenter shop etc. Mostly these businesses are running in Soraon and few of them are in Allahabad. 26% of the total households are in business with or without other sources of income. Among them 48.6% are of Backward Castes and 29.7% are of Brahmin families.

Service is other the most common source of income of mainly Brahmins. 31% of the households are in service with or without other source of income. Among them 77.3% are of Brahmin families. Generally services are of accountant, school teacher, head constable, clerk, police, driver, peon and lineman in power-house, etc.

POWER STRUCTURE OF THE VILLAGES

The power relationship within the villages are formed on the basis of people's control over economic resources. Any change in control over economic resources, brings change in power relationship. In addition, caste plays an important role as a means of mobilization in power relationship in the villages.

In these dynamics, Brahmins are the one who have the major share of landholding in the villages. Along with this they are highest in caste hierarchy and in their population. Poor and Scheduled Castes work in their fields. Thus the Brahmins have control or influence on them. They are the ones who take decisions on the behalf of the villagers at the village level. They have a say in any village dispute. They dictate their terms on Scheduled Castes. Pasis are not allowed to rear pigs because pigs make surrounding dirty. So a few of Pasi families rear pigs secretly. Gradually Brahmins are illegally occupying the lands of Gram Samaj.

which is a grazing field. Now the poors are finding difficulties in grazing their cattle. But no one has the courage to speak against Brahmins. As one poor scheduled caste said, "We are like a tongue between 32 teeth."

In another instance one Pasi said "Pasi cannot built their house taller than Brahmin's house." He further said,

To protect our house from dampness, I made the foundation of my house much higher. For which the rooms of our house are high. That is why my terrace has become higher than that of Brahmin house in front of us. One day the Brahmin son came to me and placing his hand around my shoulders told me sarcastically, 'Have you become so big that your terrace has become higher than ours?' And after few days they came with police with complaint that I have constructed my house wrongfully. Police sided with them and told me, 'Stop making further construction, otherwise we will demolish your house.' I am spending my own money and making a house on my own land but I cannot do so since I'm a pasii.

Other landed or big business families from other Backward Castes dominate only their own community. They are consulted and taken into confidence, when any major decisions at village level are taken.

Panchayats election for Pradhan, Uppradhan and village level members is not bas^oed on any political parties. It is a fight am^ong caste domination. In Rajapur Malhua Gram Sabha, there are four Mouzas (villages). All of them are dominated by different castes in terms of their population and economic position. Therefore, to become a Gram Pradhan

in Rajapur Malhua Gram Sabha, it is necessary to have formal or informal alliance between castes or have good personal relationship along with goodwill of other castes.

Village level committee of four members is non-functional in both the villages. Any activity like settling community disputes, implementation of programmes and selection of beneficiaries for particular developmental programmes is decided by the influential families especially by Brahmins in the village irrespective of whether they are in the village level committee or not. At the family level families extend their help in times of need according to their personal relationships.

HEALTH SERVICES

The Community Health Centre (CHC) is located in Soraon. This health centre is one amongst the two best centres in Allahabad district. There is a sub-centre in Rajapur Malhua. At present this sub-centre is manned by only a auxiliary nurse-cum-midwife (ANM). It is providing services to around 5,000 population.

There is no proper building for the sub-centre. The ANM keeps her files and other medical equipments at present in one influential Brahmin's house.

Villagers go to the CHC or to the private doctors to

immunize their children as this sub-centre hardly functions. Usually the poor villagers do not even know who the ANM posted in this sub-centre is. The Lady Health Visitor (LHV) is more popular and respected in the villages. She visits frequently. She follows up her family planning cases regularly and advises on matters of ill-health. According to LHV many times vaccines are issued to the ANM of Rajapur Malhua sub-centre, but she does not come to the village to immunize children. Salary of the ANM has been withheld since four months but it hardly bothers her, as she earns much more than her salary through her private practice. The Panchayat and the villagers do not discuss or monitor the functions of the sub-centre.

There are two trained *dais* in Rajapur Malhua belonging to the Scheduled Caste community. They provide services to this as well as to the surrounding villages. There is an ANM staying in the Rajapur Malhua. Who is from Holagarh Primary Health Centre (PHC). Earlier villagers used to go to her for immunization and for iron tablets. She charges so much that villagers stopped going to her. Even for delivery cases she charges exorbitantly.

Regarding the CHC, villagers said that they do not get any service there. Even if they get some service, they have to pay for it. For malaria blood test, they pay Rs.5/- to

the lab-technician. The only exception is Sterilization. But they do not get any service free of cost, if there any complication because of the operation.

The Superintendent of the CHC said

The CHC is a big racket here. Supply of medicine and other necessary things are very very poor. Doctors are sitting idly the whole day. Everybody, from doctors to the sweepers is busy in earning money by some ways or the other. I alone cannot do any thing here. CHC services remain only for those who create nuisance or trouble for doctors or for other personnel.

In other words, except few influential villagers, who are more vocal and powerful, others go to the private practitioners for their treatment.

Therefore private practitioners of different systems like Allopathy, Homeopathy and Ayurveda are flourishing in Soraon. There are X-Ray and pathology clinics. Many doctors have operation theatre in their clinic. One private doctor said that there is a need of a Nursing Home in Soraon as villagers are not willing to take their patients to Nursing homes or Hospitals at Allahabad.

A traditional or spiritual religious understanding of causality still exists for some diseases, people therefore often take recourse to religious healing. Often this is linked with its lower cost compared to modern system of medicine.

EDUCATION

There are no schools in these villages. One Government Primary school is there in an adjacent village, called Dhamapur Balkaranpur. This is situated in a place which is more convenient for people from Rajapur Malhua, instead of Dhamapur villagers. Generally, children from poor families and a few girls from non-Brahmin families of Rajapur Malhua go to this school. Children of Radhopur Junglepur either go to Soraon or to Giridharpur (adjacent village) for schooling, as these are nearer for them. Children from Brahmin families and boys from other non-Brahmin families of Rajapur Malhua go to Soraon for their schooling, and some of them go to Giridharpur too. Parents who are slightly more interested in educating their children, send them to Soraon. There are a number of schools in Soraon. There are Government Schools, Government aided private schools and private schools. One can study from nursery to intermediate at Soraon. Apart from these, there is a coaching centre for 5th standard onwards. Girls have a separate Government girls school upto 8th class.

There was an Adult Education centre manned first by a Brahmin male then a Brahmin lady. The girls of the poor section, who often had to give up studies in order to earn money, had a tremendous attraction towards this night school

set up by Literacy Mission. They said that they were very enthusiastic and were hopeful of learning to count money and writing letters.

But after 10-15 days members of the Brahmin family started to ask us to do all sort of odd jobs like clearing the grass from courtyard, sweeping, etc. As we are working in their field we could not say 'no' to them. So we stopped going there." "They used to call us, we did not go. We were told that there are books and slate etc. for distribution but things were never distributed.

WELFARE

The trees under social forestry of twenty point programme had been planted scattered here and there without bothering for their protection and survival.

In Jawahar Yojana Scheme some work had been done. A brick lane in the village was constructed, *kachha* drain was made to drain the rain water and two hand pumps were installed. According to the villagers, Gram Pradhan has made lots of money in this Yojana.

Under Indira Awas Yojana 8 *pucca* houses (one room with veranda) were constructed for scheduled castes — five for Chamars and three for Pasis. In this Yojana building material was given from the Yojana, beneficiaries were expected to put their own labour for construction.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AND CASTE STRUCTURES

Both the villages are very small in terms of their population. Rajapur Malhua has a total of 694 population comprising of 100 families. Among them 368 are males and 326 are females. Radhopur Junglepur is smaller than Rajapur Malhua. It has a total population of 291 comprising of 42 households. Among them 149 are males and 142 are females.

Table 2. Distribution of the Population according to Economic Group and Castes

Economic Groups	Castes				Total	
	Brahmin	B.C.	S.C.	Muslim		
Well-off	Total H.H.	18	6	0	1	25
	Total Pop.	207	59	0	21	287
	Total Child. (0-12 yrs.age)	84	23	0	12	119
Subsistence	Total H.H.	30	18	6	0	54
	Total Pop.	226	138	44	0	408
	Total Child. (0-12 yrs.age)	81	53	19	0	153
Poor	Total H.H.	3	20	37	3	63
	Total Pop.	4	97	163	26	290
	Total Child. (0-12 yrs.age)	0	43	63	11	117

H.H.= Households
Pop.= Population

These both villages have a total population of 985 com-

prised of 142 family units. Among them 517 are males and 468 are females. In total, there are 389 children upto 12 years of age in these two villages. Among them 211 children are boys and 198 are girls (Table 2).

The caste structure of these vilages is perceived by its people as having three major groups. According to them, the Brahmins formed the dominant caste, the second group is Backward Castes, (this includes occupational castes of milkman, carpenter, blacksmith, oil presser and barber). Third group is Scheduled Castes (this includes Chamars and Pasis). Beside these there are four households of Muslims.

In Rajapur Malhua Brahmins are in the majority followed by Scheduled Castes whereas in Radhopur Junglepur Backward castes are more than Brahmins. But in terms of domination both the villages have same caste pattern. It is the who dominate the villages.

Our baseline survey (Table 2) reveals that the maximum number of households and population are of Brahmin and they also have the highest average family size (Table 3). Scheduled Castes have fewer households, compared to the other castes, their population is the smallest, they have the lowest average family size (Table 3).

**Table 3. Proportionate distribution of population in
Different Caste and their Family Size**

Castes	% of H.H.	% of Pop.	Family size	0-12 yrs.of children per family
Brahmin	35.9	44.4	8.6	3.2
B.C.	31.0	29.8	6.7	2.7
S.C.	30.3	21.0	4.8	1.9
Total	97.2	95.2		

Note: Four Muslim Households are excluded because of its number which is too small to comment on it.

B.C. Backward Castes
S.C. Scheduled Castes

**Table 4. Proportionate Distribution of Population according
to Economic Groups and their Family Size**

Economic Groups	% of H.H.	% of Pop.	Family Size	0-12 yrs. of children per family
Well-Off	17.6	29.1	11.5	4.8
Subsistence	38.0	41.4	7.6	2.8
Poor	44.4	29.4	4.6	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0		

This caste difference in proportionate distribution can possibly be explained by the economic positions held by these castes. Table 4 shows that 44.4 % of the households and 29.4% of the population are in the poor group and this group has the smallest average family size (1.8).

When we locate castes into economic group (Table 1) 86% of Scheduled Caste households fall in to the poor category and there are none in the well-off. Secondly, the poor also have only nuclear families while the well-off have larger proportion of joint families.

These two factors, then explain the low average family size among the poor and the Scheduled Castes.

A pertinent, finding of our survey is that the number of children in different castes is also markedly different. The average number of children per family is 1.9 in Scheduled Castes and 1.8 in poor, while among Brahmins it is 3.2 and in the well-off 4.8. The difference as we have already noticed is due to the spread of castes over economic groups.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND QUALITY OF LIFE

When Caste is located in economic groups, representation of Brahmins is higher in the subsistence and well-off groups, whereas that of the occupational and Scheduled Castes is higher in poor and subsistence group. Better-off position in subsistence group of the scheduled castes (Table 1) is entirely due to the better economic position in terms of land-holding, in share cropping, and government jobs of the Pasi families in comparison to Chamars.

The Well-off section of the villagers have the best

living conditions. They own many modern amenities for their comfort. Generally, they have leased out their land for share cropping as they cannot look after their land individually. They have surplus production which they sell out. They always try new variety of seeds and new methods in agriculture with newer technology for more production. As they can afford fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation etc. in the required amounts and at the right time, they are considered the best producers.

Along with good agriculture they have service and business. They save their total salary for expenditures like marriage, medical care construction of house, buying land, etc. They prefer to invest the money which they get from their cultivation, in buying more land, and into business.

Property is preferably inherited within the family. They cannot think of outsiders inheriting their huge property. Generally they have joint families.

They are always eager to send their children to school. Their main concern is that their children must have a government job as a permanent source of income apart from their land. As they said, "If you don't have other source of income you can't make full use of your land." Both, girls and boys go to school.

In such families women appear to live parasitic life. They can't inherit property. They are not allowed to work outside their home. Therefore their exposure of outside life is very limited. They are always protected by men of their family. Final decision on any matter is always taken by men. It is the man, who decides the type of education, marriage, medical care etc. for the children. As men inherit the property and have control of income, women are always at the receiving end. This unequal relationship exists in every caste and economic group of the villages but this is more acute in better-off and in specially Brahmin families. They want educated wives as a status symbol only.

Well-off families of Backward/~~Castes~~ constitute the "nova-rich". They are receiving education for one or two generations. In most of the families only the grand children are going to school. For the past ten years they have started to use newer technologies in agriculture also.

Those who have government jobs are more willing to have good education for their children as compared to those in agriculture. This sort of difference is not seen in Brahmin families. Backward Caste women used to work in the field. Now they are also becoming house bound. They go to the field to supervise labourers. Women of these families know a lot about agriculture as compared to Brahmin women. On

the other hand, women of Brahmin families are more literate than women of Backward castes families.

Remarriage of women is a taboo in Brahmin and Backward Castes. This taboo is strictly followed only in Brahmin families. Once a woman becomes a widow or is deserted by her man, she cannot get married again in her life, irrespective of her age. These sort of cultural bindings are not strictly followed in other non-Brahmin families. Remarriage of men is considered as a boon in all caste and economic groups.

The marriage of girls takes place at a very early age, before puberty as parents have to earn the virtue of 'kanyadan'.* This custom prevails in other castes also, but changes in this custom are taking place quicker in non-Brahmin than in Brahmin families. Despite their education and exposure to modern life, Brahmins still prefer to get their daughter married early in life. Apart from virtue, it is said, in early marriage dowry is expected to be less.

Villagers in the subsistence group have sufficient to

* In Hindu religion through 'kanyadan', the giving of a daughter in marriage, a father's sins are remitted, and blessings obtained.

fulfil their requirements of livelihood but they cannot be called well-off. These are families where day-to-day inflation impinges most.

Culturally there is no difference between well-off Brahmin and subsistence Brahmin families. Both of these have the culture of education, and have hold on money in terms of land and service through generatons, though there is a big gap between two groups of these Brahmin families. The subsistence families do not like to live their lives within their limits. There is always an effort to match themselves with well-off families.

As they cannot always afford inputs like fertilizer, pesticides, irrigation, etc. in the required amount and at the right time, they do not have always the kind of output from their land that they could store for their family for the whole year as well as sell to get some extra money. They do not experiment with new agricultural technologies like new variety of seeds etc. They try to save their salary as much as possible and manage to live on whatever they get from their land.

They are very eager to have good education for their children and become anxious if they are not doing well in their studies. Their only aspiration is to get government jobs for their children irrespective of the post, though

they feel embarrassed confessing that someone is a peon in some office. Similarly they also feel very ashamed of their son running a betel leaf shop. On the other hand they are compelled to take up such jobs as they are not getting into government posts. Moreover they do not have that much income that they can increase their land; even if they have money they do not want to buy land. As they said, "Either you have so much agricultural land that you need not be bothered for other source of income, or it is better to have less land which with a little investment and labour would give the yearly consumption of food grain."

Like well-off Brahmin families subsistence Brahmin families are very conservative about their wives/daughter-in-laws working outside/doing any service. The difference is that one well-off family can afford to have a non-working wife but they (subsistence families) are always under economic pressure. They educate their daughters only to have a good marriage with less dowry but on the other hand they wanted an educated daughter-in-law, so that she can work in times of need. They realize that now the time has come when every family member should be an earning member, but they cannot take the initiative. "The village society will say that we are letting our daughter-in-laws earn and are eating out of her income."

Women of these families realise the need of employment but men's ego and status do not allow them to do so. A Brahmin woman said,

My husband said that there was a vacancy for a lady teacher in the girl's school at Soraon. If he wanted he could appoint someone of our own in that school. I requested my husband to give the job to our daughter-in-law because school is nearby and she could come and go with him. Moreover, our son also has no job. My husband said that as long as he is alive, the daughter-in-law would not work. My son also said 'instead of him why would she go for work? Ask her is there any shortage of food or clothing at home?

In another case a lady had a big fight with her in-laws for working as an ANM. She won this argument. Now the other daughter-in-law in the same family who was educated, was also allowed to look for job.

Men of such families react to the issue of their wives working outside home in different ways. For some it hurts their ego for others it is a welcome change. As one said,

If they have work, we would be relieved. They would earn money, bring it and run the home. Otherwise there is always a burden on us that it is our responsibility to feed our wife and children, but if wives are working then we would be free of such burdens.

Brahmin always have heavy dowry in marriage. It is well-off families who set the norms of dowry for other families (specially of Brahmins) in the villages. Now grooms from subsistence Brahmin families expect dowry simi-

lar to that of well-off families.

All these conflicts in such Brahmin families — such as competition with well-off families, not having enough land, insecurity in getting government jobs, double standards regarding wives/daughter-in-law working out side home, heavy dowry etc. reflect in man-woman relationship and on child rearing. As one woman said,

Ever since childhood we were made to realise that we are a burden, be it our father's home or our husband's home. I am suffocated by this complex. There is no dearth of food or clothing at home but still there is this feeling of being a of burden. If the husband is not working or earning less, then we have to suppress our desire. My husband may smoke cigarettes of Rs.10/- daily but if we even buy a pocket of *bindi* it is a crime and is considered as useless expenditure.

Wives of Backward castes families of the subsistence group work, occasionally in their own field and occasionally in others' field to earn money. Most of the agricultural work is looked after by women of the family, as men go for other jobs. Women of such families are very vocal and militant. Sometimes they show their assertiveness in certain family decisions.

They send their children to school but they do not take much interest in their studies. They will be happy like others to have government job but they are not mentally dependent on government job like Brahmins. They do agricul-

ture along with their caste occupation, and they want their children also to do so. Those who are in government jobs, do not want their children to depend on agriculture only. They want government job for their children too.

Scheduled Caste families of subsistence group are no doubt better off in their community but they are in no way comparable with Brahmin and non-Brahmin families of subsistence group. Because of their government job and share cropping they have upward mobility in terms of economic status, but culturally they are in no way different from other poor Scheduled Caste families.

Despite the irregular nature of share cropping it gives them some relief from their poverty, for in spite of insecurity, share cropping is far better than starvation. Those who are share cropping on more than 5-10 bighas, are mostly doing agricultural work. Only when there is less work in the field they look for other jobs like mason work, etc.

Whatever the poor villagers have, it is just sufficient for their livelihood. They have the least possessions in the villages. Except for the six Pasi families all other Scheduled Caste families are poor. In the Chamar families, population is 71, among them 32 are males and 39 are females. Out of 19 families 8 families have children and among them 4 families have only one child in the age group

of upto 12 years. In total there are only 19 children. They are comfortable with their earnings.

There are three Brahmin families having only 4 members in total. Whatever they get from their land becomes sufficient for them. And they have their sons and daughters, who despite having a separate establishment, look after their parents in need.

Poor families are nuclear families. In such families every member has to work not only for his own survival but for the survival of a family. Even a 5 year old child contributes to his/her family economy according to his/her capacity. Though every body works, women work more than men in the family. They work outside as well as in the house. Women work in the villages and do mainly agricultural work. While men work in the village as well as outside villages.

In the poor families women are not solely dependent on their men. No man can take sole responsibility of the family without the woman earning for the family. Though the women earn, they do not have the freedom to spend their earning in the ways they like. In spite of their contribution to the family economy they get the last and least share of everything in the family like food, clothes etc. When there is any conflict, husbands and wives fight openly, and often in such cases wives get beaten by their husbands. On

the other hand women also desert their husband and even children in intolerable condition of life as remarriage of women is accepted in poor families.

They are very well informed about their reservation in government jobs. So they want their son to have education upto High School i.e. minimum qualification for any job. Because of their economic instability their sons are not able to continue their education, unless there is a strong will for it. A few among them have passed High School or passed 8th standard and left school, and are working as daily wage labourers.

Except Chamars, all others send their children to school. They are not keen to educate their daughters at all because of their poverty, however they are able to spare their sons for education.

They do not have dowry system in their marriages. Generally, the groom brings things for the bride. They get their daughter married after 15-16 years of age. They perform their daughters marriage and *gauna** at the same time to save extra expenditure.

* Gauna is a ceremony when the daughter is sent off to her in-laws house first time after marriage for cohabitation.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILDHOOD- MYTH AND REALITY

Children have a very important place in the life of Rajapur Malhua and Raghavpur Junglepur villagers. Villagers cannot think of a family without children. Birth of children immediately after marriage is a natural phenomenon for the villagers. For them the purpose of marriage cannot be accomplished without having children and not having a child is an abnormal thing, even to think of it is a crime. Couples try their level best to have at least one child. Villagers think that womanhood is incomplete without being a mother. They try each and every alternative, - consult doctors, vaides and quacks to have a child. As they still believe that children are gifts of gods, they go to temples and saints, worship and undertake fasts in the name of various Gods and Goddesses to have a child. If a woman is proved to be barren then she is considered as a bad omen for the society. She is not welcome in any social gatherings.

Villagers consider their daughter as 'Lakshmi' and son as 'Krishna'. Theoretically one has to have both a daughter and a son since they think that unless one has a daughter one cannot have the 'virtue of Kanyadan'. Similarly one has to have a son to perform the rites after one's death. Thus for the villagers, to give birth to a child, is a social as well as a religious duty.

There are many customs to celebrate the birth of a child. Parents feel pride and an inner satisfaction when they say that they are their children or they have children.

AGE STRUCTURE OF THE CHILDREN

There are 389 children in the age group of 0-12 in these two villages. Among them 211 are boys and 178 are girls. Sex ratio, thus, is 84 females per 100 males. Further breakup of age and sex distribution shows that upto age of 4, there are 131 children, 71 boys and 60 girls; in the age group of > 4-8, there are 133 children in total, among them 75 are boys and 58 are girls; and in the age group of > 8-12, there are 125 children, out of them 65 are boys and 60 are girls. The important thing is that in every age group the number of boys is more than the girls ones. The lower sex ratio is largely determined by the events in early childhood according to our data (Table 5).

Table 5. Distribution of Children according to Age and Sex

	Age Groups			0 - 12 yrs.
	0 - 4 yrs.	>4 - 8 yrs.	>8 - 12 yrs.	
Total	131	133	125	389
Male	71	75	65	211
Female	60	58	60	178

Sex Ratio- 84 females per 100 males.

LIFE OF CHILDREN IN THE VILLAGES

Children are not merely an outcome of a social custom or a law of nature. Villagers want them because they need them in their life processes, and children are made to perform their role in a family's life process right from their childhood. In this whole process, unlike the prevailing belief, parents very consciously plan their investment of money, time and energy on their children. They determine how much money to invest on which child and the type and amount of work to be assigned to each child. They also decide how much time to devote to each child and how much pain they should undertake for each child. They also ascertain how much they can expect from and the kind of aspirations they can have from their different children. By doing so the parents discriminate between their children. The extent and the type of discrimination differs in different groups of society and it depends upon the role children play in the economy of the family.

The general prosperity of the villages has its impact on the life of the children. This is more visible in case of boys than girls. The life of girls is not very different from that of most other rural girls of backward areas. Upto the age of 12 years generally boys are not hard pressed to work for their family, they are still in their childhood.

On the other hand girls at the age of 12 years no longer remain children, they are always under tremendous work pressure which make them more mature and responsible. Boys start undertaking any responsible work late in their life compared to their 'girl' peers. Following are the tasks done by the children in the villages:

Work

(i) Household work: like cooking, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, sweeping and scrubbing the rooms, grinding of spices, fetching water, looking after the younger siblings and cattle etc. Boys have absolutely no role in household work except sometimes, when they look after cattle.

(ii) Work outside home: like fetching fodder and fuel, taking cattle for grazing, running to the village shops or flour mill, etc. These tasks are shared by both boys and girls. Any work which necessitates going to Soraon or other surrounding villages is done mainly by the boys.

(iii) Agricultural work: like sowing, transplanting, weeding, harvesting, work related to irrigation etc. and any other activities are shared by both boys and girls.

(iv) Work for livelihood: Apart from agricultural activities where children earn, some families of Backward

castes, like the milkman, carpenter, blacksmith, barber, are involved in their caste occupation. In such families children, mainly the boys, help in their parents' work. The families which have shops in the village engage both boys and girls in running of the shops. The children in different occupational groups help and share their parents' responsibilities according to their age and sex and try to fulfill the parents' demand and expectations of them.

A child's role in the life process of the family starts much earlier in poor families than in other families of the villages. Whenever the poor think of any work first they count the total number of hands in the family. Every body has to work in a poor family, according to their age and capacity. At the age of 5-6 years, a child goes to collect the fodder and drywood for fuel. He/she collects and keeps it at one place for any elder family member to bring it home. At the age of 6-7 years they are asked to take animals like goats, pigs, etc. for grazing. They take care of their younger siblings and look after the house when the parents are out at work. Girls work more as they do household jobs like helping the mother in cleaning the utensils and clothes, sweeping the house, helping the mother in cooking, along with her outside work. As the poor do not send their girls to the school, they take care of the total household chores, along with fetching fodder and fuel etc.

when they are 10-12 years old. At this age they start taking part in agricultural activities with their parents and helping add to their parents income. In the case of boys, the majority of the families get their son enrolled in the school. At the age of 10-12 years the boys are also expected to help their parents in their work to earn more. In other words children in poor families work parallel to their parents with difference in amount and nature of work. This sort of support and help is demanded for the survival of a poor family.

Children get involved in the life process of the family much later in the well-off families than in other families in the villages. Here children are expected to study during their childhood, as boys are supposed to seek employment in their later life, and girls have to have some education to get married decently. Boys do not do any responsible regular work except for some running about to Soraon. Apart from this at the age of 12 years they are expected to visit and supervise their field when sowing and harvesting is going on, or to take care of irrigation when the crop is ready in the field. On holidays, they extend their help to the family business such as looking after the business for few hours/days etc. On the other hand as the girls usually get married by 13-15 years of age, they have to be experts in all types of household work before they get married.

Therefore, the girls start working from the age of 6-7 years. Initially they help their mother in her household jobs but gradually they take total responsibility of such regular household work along with their study, and mothers are thus freed to do other home based agriculture works. They are not supposed to do any agriculture work in the field or any other work outside home. In their leisure hours they make various things for their dowry.

Children of subsistent Brahmin families are not very different from the children of well-off Brahmin families. Here parents are more concerned about their sons' education. For them, employment is a must. Sometimes they are asked to take an active part in agricultural work in peak seasons to save the expenditure of hired labourers. In these families the girls do not get any aid in their routine household work as women in such families are over-burdened with home-based agricultural work. They cannot afford labourers for this kind of work. In well-off families sometimes women get time to help their daughters in household work.

Apart from Brahmins, the Backward, and Scheduled Caste families of subsistence group have different expectations from their children. Children of once poor families, with little or no land which have gained upward economic mobility only because of sharecropping, are no different from the

children of poor families. There are 8 such families -- 5 Yadavs and 3 Pasis. In these families children work rigorously along with their parents, because if they do not produce sufficient grain, they might lose their land for further share cropping. Even in such families if parents can spare any children from work at any time, then it is always the sons who get this privilege. They enroll their sons in the school. Boys are expected to do only agricultural work while girls have to do both agricultural as well as total household works. In such families girls are always on their toes.

The slightly better off among the subsistence group, i.e. the Backward and Scheduled Caste families have a mixed type of approach to their children regarding their work assignments. A majority of the children of both sexes go to school. Boys are asked to extend their help in agricultural activities but they generally do not bother. But the girls cannot escape from their routine household work. In peak season time both girls and boys help their parents in agricultural activities. They work in their own field to save expenditure of hired labour. There are a few families who do not send their children to the school. In such cases both of them are made to work with their parents.

—Important things regarding this are that,

- a) boys are not expected to do any routine work,
- b) boys do work where they can roam around, can play and can even spare themselves from that work,
- c) in contrast girls do routine and responsible work which they cannot avoid,
- d) a 12 year old girl is treated as an adult. She gets rebuked if she does not discharge her work sincerely. On the other hand, a 12 year boy is given leeway where work is concerned in his childhood, as parents believe that he will ^{and help them} work for the rest of his adult life;
- e) this discriminatory approach of parents towards their sons and daughters, regarding their role in the life process of the family is more or less the same at all level of social existence.

DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF SEXES

It was found in these two villages that parents begin to discriminate right from the birth of the child. They feel happy only when they have a son. They celebrate it pompously. They distribute sweets to the visitors. They themselves like to spread this news. Mothers of son get extra care from family members during their post-partum period. A woman is given good food so that she can feed her

son sufficiently. On the contrary, at the birth of a girl nobody feels happy in the family which includes the parents. They look depressed, they neither celebrate nor distribute sweets. Even the mother of the daughter^{is} not treated well by her family members. She is not given good food. If there are parents and other family members who are really happy and want to celebrate the birth of a girl, villagers start criticising them as if they are hypocrites.

Mayna's first child was a girl. She expired just one day after her birth. Mayna had a second daughter. This time her daughter had a narrow escape from death. So they have celebrated it and sung 'Sohar'*. In this case it is not that they are really happy to have a daughter but because they are having a 'child' as her former child had not survived. One can have any number of daughters, but without a son villagers do not consider that they have children. Whenever they count their children they first count their sons. Just to have one son a woman can undergo any number of pregnancies. A woman having more son is considered fortunate.

Though villagers are always happy to have a son first, they do not mind having a daughter as a first child. They console themselves, "This is the first baby - Lakshmi has -----"

* Sohar, a variety of songs sung on auspicious occasions, specially^{ly} child birth.

come home." The first son after a number of daughters is an extraordinary occasion in the family.

Male preference has been found very significantly in health care, food distribution and consumption, schooling, allocation of domestic duties, emotional attention/care, and in play time.

Major Illnesses & Health Care

Children & Health

For the better-off families, children's health is not an every day problem. They are aware of the fact that status of health during childhood leaves its ever lasting impact on child's physical and mental development. Secondly, a malnourished child will get ill frequently and for longer period than a normal well nourished child. Therefore for them health means good food, comfortable living, cleanliness and the absence of disease. "A healthy person is one who enjoys his life at its optimum level". And to have all these prerequisites for health one should have education and service. According to them the poor suffer more because they are ignorant, dirty and have more children in relation to their earning.

Table 6: Perceived Illness Episodes in One Year in Economic Categories

Expression of Illness	Identified Illness	Economic Groups									Grand Total		
		Well-off			Subsistence			Poor			No.	M	F
		Total	M	F	Total	M	F	Total	M	F			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Loose stools with increased frequency interminently over last six weeks or above	Persistent Diarrhoea* %age	3 (2.5)	-	3 (4.8)	13 (8.5)	3 (3.6)	10 (14.3)	17 (9.6)	6 (9.1)	11 (21.6)	33 (8.5)	9 (4.3)	24 (13.5)
Fever keeping bedridden for 7-10 days	Acute fever	29 (24.4)	13 (21)	16 (28.1)	100 (65.4)	44 (53)	56 (80)	89 (76.1)	41 (62)	48 (94.1)	218 (56)	98 (46.4)	120 (67.4)
Persistent fever for 15-20 days	Prolonged fever	4 (3.4)	3 (4.8)	1 (1.7)	9 (5.9)	4 (4.8)	5 (7.1)	13 (11.1)	4 (6.1)	9 (17.6)	26 (6.7)	11 (5.2)	15 (8.4)
Chills and fever	Malaria	1 (0.8)	-	1 (1.7)	5 (3.3)	2 (2.4)	3 (4.3)	6 (5.1)	2 (3.0)	4 (7.8)	12 (3.1)	4 (1.9)	8 (4.5)

Table 6 contd...

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Loose stool with or without mucous and fever	Diarrhoea/ Dysentery	55 (46.2)	18 (29)	37 (65)	113 (73.9)	59 (71.1)	54 (77.1)	124 (106)	58 (87.9)	66 (129.4)	292 (75.1)	135 (64)	157 (88.)
Consecutive loose stool, vomiting, severe stomach pain, muscular cramps, rapid dehydration	Gastro- enteritis	3 (2.5)	2 (3.2)	1 (1.7)	11 (7.2)	4 (4.8)	7 (10.0)	12 (10.3)	6 (9.1)	6 (11.8)	26 (6.7)	12 (5.7)	1 (7.)
Persistent cough (dry) with/without fever	Bronchi- tis	6 (5.0)	3 (4.8)	3 (5.3)	15 (9.8)	8 (9.6)	7 (10.0)	13 (11.1)	8 (12.1)	5 (9.8)	34 (8.7)	19 (9.0)	1 (8.)
Worms passed in stool, chattering of teeth during sleep; poor weight gain compared to diet	Worms	6 (5.0)	2 (3.2)	4 (7.0)	20 (13.1)	9 (10.8)	11 (15.7)	15 (12.8)	8 (12.1)	7 (13.7)	41 (10.5)	19 (9.0)	2 (12.)

Table 6 contd...

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Boils, itching, skin rash	Boils, itching, skin rash	3 (2.5)	2 (3.2)	1 (1.7)	2 (1.3)	2 (2.4)	-	5 (4.3)	2 (3.0)	3 (5.9)	10 (2.6)	6 (2.8)	2
Secretion of eye, red eye, itching of eye, swelling	Eye problem	1 (0.8)	-	1 (1.7)	2 (1.3)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.4)	2 (1.7)	1 (1.5)	1 (2.0)	5 (1.3)	2 (1.0)	1
"Mata"	Chicken pox	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 (0.8)	-	1 (2.0)	1 (0.3)	-	0
Fever with small red rash	Measles	-	-	-	1 (0.6)	-	1 (1.4)	-	-	-	1 (0.3)	-	0
Injuries	Injuries	6 (5.0)	6 (9.7)	-	5 (3.3)	5 (6.0)	-	7 (6.0)	6 (9.1)	1 (2.0)	18 (4.6)	17 (8.1)	0
Physical disability	Polio	-	-	-	2 (1.3)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.4)	-	-	-	2 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	0
Sore at feet	Sepsis feet	-	-	-	8 (5.2)	-	8 (11.4)	10 (8.5)	-	10 (19.6)	18 (4.6)	-	1 (10)

Table 6 contd...

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Consistent headache with episodes of severe headache and vomiting	Unidentified illness	-	-	-	2 (1.3)	1 (1.2)	1 (1.4)	-	-	-	2 (0.5)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.6)
Total No. of Episodes		114	49	65	295	140	155	297	136	161	706	325	38
Total Population		119	62	57	153	83	70	117	66	51	389	211	17
Rates of Episodes**		(95.8)	(79.0)	(114.0)	(192.8)	(168.7)	(221.4)	(253.8)	(206.1)	(315.7)	(181.5)	(154)	(21)

* All figures in parentheses are rates calculated by $\frac{\text{No. of Episodes}}{\text{Total no. of children}} \times 100$

** When it is about Persistent Diarrhoea, it is calculated by $\frac{\text{No. of children}}{\text{Total No. of children}} \times 100$

For the poorer sections, children's illness is an every day problem but they recognise it as illness when it interferes with their work and earning. They clearly relate their illness to their workstyle and conditions of poverty. Even parents have admitted that their children suffer more as they are not properly taken care off. Additionally parents feel that their economic condition forces them to give their children stale and spicy food (full of red chilli, in order to make food tasty) sell the last drop of milk and give them only tea, which make them more prone to illness. One poor woman said, "It is shown on the TV that food should always be covered but we don't have enough of utensils to keep our food always covered." They do not have any idea of the implications of childhood illnesses on their latter life.

According to them, "Babies get ill. All babies become sick." Another woman said, "when has it happened that all those who are born have survived to grow? Such an incident has to be looked for". Mortality of some children amongst the total births is well accepted in all sections of the villages.

Pattern of Illness

An attempt is made at identification of illnesses and

their rates in the study population. These are presented here according to economic and sex groups (Table 6).

Major illnesses among children of all social groups of the villages are diarrhoea, dysentery, acute fever, worms, bronchites, gastroenterities, prolonged fever, sepsis feet along with fractures and other serious injuries of hands and legs of the children.

The reported load of illness measured as episodes per year is highest in poor girls (315.7) and lowest in well-off boys (79.0) of the villages. Well-Off children have high rates of episodes in diarrhoea / dysentery and acute fever while poor children have additional high rates of episodes of worms, bronchitis, sepsis feet prolonged fever and gastroenteritis.

Children of the subsistence group have illnesses which are common to both the other groups. In addition to the major illness of the children of the villages, these children also suffer from prolonged fever, gastroenteritis, bronchitis, worms and sepsis feet like the poor children.

It is interesting to note that in all economic groups girls reported higher rates of episodes of illnesses compared to the boys. In other words the load of illness is

Table 7.

Child Births and Child Mortality in Economic Categories

Economic Groups	Total No. of households	Total No. of currently married women in reproductive stage	No. of women with no child birth	Total No. of women with child birth	Women with history of child deaths				No. of Child deaths		
					Total No. of women	Total No. of deliveries	M	F	Total	M	F
Well-off	25	51	4	47	20	86	37	49	30 (34.9)	11 (29.7)	19 (38.8)
Subsistence	54	78	10	68	27	151	71	80	51 (33.8)	22 (31.0)	29 (36.2)
Poor	63	60	21	39	24	141	72	69	67 (47.5)	34 (47.2)	33 (47.8)
Total	142	189	35	154	71	378	180	198	148 (39.1)	67 (37.2)	81 (40.9)

Child deaths as percentage of total number of deliveries given in parentheses.

M - Male

F - Female

much higher in girls in general, compared to a boys. This trend seems to be more intensive in the poor. Pattern of illness is more or less same in all economic groups but rates of episodes for the illnesses make the actual differences.

Pattern of Child Mortality and its Perceived Causes

Like illnesses, the load of child mortality is high among poor children (47.5%) as compared to other two groups. Well-off and subsistence group have very little or no significant difference in child mortality rate (35.0 and 33.8 respectively). When mortality rates are compared between sexes in relation to the economic group it is found that it is the poor girls (47.8) who have highest mortality. It is also important to note that in the poor, differences between male and female mortality rates among children are only marginal (47.2 and 47.8 respectively) (Table 7).

Major causes of child mortality (Table 8) were found to be persistent diarrhoea, acute fever and tetanus in respective rank. Economic groups have an important role in relation to child mortality due to tetanus. The poor have a higher rate of child mortality due to tetanus(19.4%).

Regarding sex, one trend has emerged, that mortality

Table 8 . Age & Perceived Causes of Child Mortality
in Economic Categories

Economic Groups	Causes of Child Morta- lity	Child Mortality and Age (in years)												Total		
		Immediate after birth to 1 month		>1-12 months		1-2 yrs		2-4 yrs		4-6 yrs		>6 yrs		Total	M	F
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
Well-off	Tetanus	1	1										2 (6.7)	1 (9.1)	1 (5.3)	
	Acute Fever	8	2	3									13 (43.3)	8 (72.7)	5 (26.7)	
	Persistent Diarrhoea			2	2	7		3					14 (46.7)	2 (18.2)	12 (63.0)	
	Congenital Problems					1							1 (3.3)		1 (5.3)	
	Group Total	9	3	5	2	8		3					30	11	19	
Subsis- tence	Tetanus	5	2										7 (13.7)	5 (22.7)	2 (6.9)	
	Acute Fever	8	3	3	4								18 (35.3)	11 (50)	7 (24.1)	
	Persistent Diarrhoea			3	5	2	8		6				24 (47)	5 (22.7)	19 (65.0)	
	Heart Disease/ Fits			1				1					2 (4.0)	1 (4.5)	1 (3.4)	
	Group Total	13	5	6	10	2	8	1	6				51	22	29	

Table 8 contd...

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Poor	Tetanus	10	3											13 (19.4)	10 (29.4)	3 (9.5)
	Acute Fever	5	2	3		2	5		1		3			21 (31.3)	13 (38.2)	8 (24.1)
	Persistent Diarrhoea			4	7	5	8		5					29 (43.3)	9 (26.5)	20 (60.1)
	TB of Lympho- des of the neck(?)				1			1			1			3 (4.5)	1 (3.0)	2 (6.1)
	Meningitis							1						1 (1.5)	1 (3.0)	
	Group Total	15	5	7	8	7	13	2	6		1	3		67	34	33
Grand Total		37 (55.2)	13 (19.4)	13 (28.4)	23 (35.8)	11 (16.4)	29 (43.3)	3 (4.5)	15 (22.4)	1 (1.5)	3 (4.5)		148	67	81	

Figures in parentheses are percentages from column totals for groups.

due to acute fever is more in males and mortality due to persistent diarrhoea is more in females in each economic group, although the highest male child mortality due to acute fever is among the well-off children (72.7%) and the highest female child mortality due to persistent diarrhoea is among the children of subsistence group(65.5%).

It is interesting to note that 55% of male child mortality has occurred immediately after birth to one month of age as compared to 16% female mortality during this period. On the other hand around 36% female mortality occurred during >1-2 years of age followed by 28% during >1-12 months of age. In other words, 64% female mortality occurred between one to 24 months of age while male mortality during this period is 36%. At the age of >2-4 years percentage of mortality decreases for both sexes but it is still higher for female (4.5% and 18.5% respectively)(Table 8).

Health Care

Children are taken to Soraon for treatment. Soraon is at the most 2 kilometres away from the villages. The concept of preventive care is extremely limited in all sections but curative measures are well accepted. This is not confined to allopathy alone but, applies to homeopathy and religious healing as well. Home remedies are conspicuous by

their absence. These religious and home remedies are adopted,* 1) side by side with western medicine, 2) after western medicine fails to give benefits, 3) when western medical services are not available or accessible to them due to various reasons, and 4) frequently, when the illness is of minor nature.

In a village where families are involved mainly in agriculture, they cannot afford to have a person look after their child for 24 hours. Everybody in the family is busy with something or the other. So the children are left free to roam around, they put in their mouth whatever they feel like. Parents/other family members keep an eye on their children while coming and going in between their work. Whenever their child gets ill they become worried and at times get irritated as it disturbs their routine.

It depends upon the parents how much effort they put to cure their child. Villagers are aware of the fact that male children are more vulnerable to death than female children during the ^{post} natal period. As villagers always say 'sons are very delicate' (*ladke sukhwar hote hain*). Therefore

* Similar pattern of health behaviour was noticed in a study carried out in 19 villages by Banerji, D.(1982), Poverty, Class and Health Culture in India, Vol.1, New Delhi, Prachi Prakashan.

they take extra care for the male child; also it serves their own desire to take more care of their sons beyond their vulnerable period. It is said by the doctor of Community Health Centre (CHC) and by other private practitioners that girls are brought to the dispensary when they are critically ill but male children are brought earlier. The ANM said that if a girl falls sick frequently, then after some times parents just stop bothering about her.

There are a few case reports showing the processes of such discrimination in health care between children of both the sexes at family level and the influence of the larger social and economic forces within which individual families exist and function.

Case Report 1 (Subsistence family)

Ramadhar Yadav is an agriculturist. He owns $1\frac{1}{2}$ bigha land and cultivates $2\frac{1}{2}$ bigha land in sharecropping. He has his own plough. He has three cows. They sell milk or Khoya in the market. He has one small private job where he gets Rs.1,000 p.m. There are 10 family members among them 6 are children. He had a total of 11 children - six sons and five daughters - of these two sons and three daughters died. Ramadhar's old parents are also staying with them. He has schooling upto 7th class. His wife is illiterate. His two sons go to the school while his 9 years old daughter is not

sent to the school as she has to look after her three younger siblings.

The mud hut they live in has two small rooms with a covered verandah. The inner room is used for both living and cooking purposes. The environment of the house is dirty, full of flies and vessels littered here and there. Their source of drinking water is a hand pump.

When Ramadhar was asked how his five children died, he called his wife to answer as she could answer better. His wife said "where and when does this happen that all who are born happen to survive. Such cases are only one or two. Boys are more vulnerable. If they are fated to go, they die shortly after their birth. God knows what happens to the girls they had repeated loose stools and gradually became bony. And then they too succumbed to their illness in one or two years time. Just see, we treated the girl who died recently so well, but she still died. She suffered from 'Sukharog' (severe malnutrition). She used to stay well for 7 days and then again unwell for 15 days. How much can one run after them?

In addition, to this sharecropping means lots of squabble. If everything goes alright then it is okay, if not, then their father comes back home and takes out all his anger on me. Above this when children fall sick, I feel as

if they should die. This every day illness is intolerable.

The daughter who died two years back was a victim of 'Sukharog' only. She was eight/nine months old when she started having loose motions. Children usually have two to three motions everyday. So at times I gave her home remedy, at times I got medicine from the neighbours as their children also have the same problem, and if it got worse I took her to the doctor. It continued like this. She used to pass more motions than she used to eat. Sometimes she improved and sometimes she deteriorated. It continued like this. Who has so much time to take her to the doctor everyday? If I asked her father to go to the doctor, or get the medicine on his way back home, he used to get angry and ask me to stop this hassle and told me to go to the doctor and get medicine if I wanted.

The girl was only on breast feed but my son who was two plus also used to breast feed. Now, tell me, from where do I get so much milk enough for the two of them? If I did not feed 'Babu' (son), he used to bring the house down. Whenever he used to see me, he used to run to drink milk. If I went to the field, he also used to come after me he never listened otherwise. How could I take the two together, so I used to leave the younger daughter with my elder daughter 'Gulabi'. She used to feed her rice etc. or whatever was

cooked. If I stayed home I used to breast feed her during the daytime or else I used to feed her in the evening after returning from the field.

Her health deteriorated very sharply, just one month before her death. Two children - Babu and youngest daughter, simultaneously started having loose motions. Babu went with me to the field one day. He must have eaten something there. He passed motion thrice there only. I did not pay much attention to it. He passed motion again a number of times at night.

The next morning his father and I took Babu to the hospital (CHC). The doctor prescribed medicines which were not available in the hospital. We bought the medicine from the market. That day I did not go to the field but sat with him in my lap for the entire day. The doctor asked me to breast feed him always which I did. The daughter ate rice and *roti*. I gave her breast milk for a short while. The daughter had become so thin that she could not even suck my milk properly and she too started having loose motions. When Babu did not stop having diarrhoea till afternoon and had fever too. I took him to the doctor along with our elder son. The doctor gave him an injection. We brought medicines for the daughter too. However, she was not taken to the doctor. When his father came home, he was very annoyed because the seeds to be sown in the field next day

were not purchased as I had taken my elder son along with me, and it was he who was supposed to get it. I did not have the courage to inform their father about my daughter's illness and that she had to be taken to the doctor also. I sat silent, girls are not vulnerable like boys.

The next day we had to sow the fields. I carried Babu to the field where I breast fed him and the daughter was left behind with our elder daughter. That day the sowing was done till late in the evening, their father was also with us. When we returned home we found the daughter was breathing very feebly. Everybody was exhausted after the day and did not have the capacity to take her to Soraon. Her father said 'Let her die'. The elder son was also not ready to come, so I took her alone. When I went half way, I saw her father coming on a cycle. So we went the rest of the way on the cycle. The doctor remarked on seeing her 'Have you come to save the dead?' The doctor put her on intravenous infusion immediately. She was there for the whole night. The elder son had come to enquire about her and we recieved our meal through him. Her father slept there only. I kept a watch over the child. Next day in the afternoon when she improved slightly, the doctor discharged her and we brought her home. Babu was with us. In the night again she had watery motion quite a few times.

Next day the daughter did not take any food for the whole day and she died towards the afternoon.

I felt extremely bad and I wept a lot Babu also had become extremely thin in these two days. Our sons are all healthy. I don't know what happens to the daughters. They look like corpses. They eat the same food. Look at Gulabi, she looks like a corpse."

The girl stood nearby. She immediately replied, "You always say-let the brothers eat first, then you eat." The mother replied, "Good, you too should die soon. If you live you only beget children. What else is there in a girls' life? A girls' life is even worse than that of a dog or cat. So it is always better if they die soon."

Case Report 2

The youngest daughter 'Sheela' of the same Ramadhar Yadav's family seems to be destined to the same fate. She is 1¹/₂ years old. Suffering from persistent diarrhoea, she remains okay for two days, on the third day she again falls prey to diarrhoea. Over the period of the study the researcher observed the child constantly losing weight. The day she has several loose motions, she is taken to a doctor, otherwise home remedy is given. Tamarind leaf water is given. The whole day Gulabi carries her. If she weeps or wails a lot, then her mother breast feeds her if she is

sitting idle or else Gulabi gives her *daal roti and chawal* to eat. The mother is totally indifferent as to whether the baby is fed throughout the day or not. The baby is in such a condition that she cannot even weep loudly. Her mother says, "What can we do? She does not recover. We take her to the Bengali doctor (private). He gives her an injection and medicine for three-four days and then again she has a stomach upset. Who will take her to the doctor everyday? I am in no condition to take her to the doctor daily (she is pregnant) and her father also does not get any time to do so from his work."

On one visit the child was found lying alone on a cot. She was wearing a frock. She had passed stool and flies were flying all around. Her mother was doing some work. She was nearby. After she was told, she roused the baby and cleaned her. When she was asked "Did not you give her medicine?" She replied, "Yes, I have given her medicine but she is not recovering. She is suffering from 'Sukharog'. The doctor advised me to breast feed her all the time. Tell me, is it possible for me? I have left her to the care of God. Female children are not delicate like most male children, girls have the life of a tortoise, it is not destroyed so easily. Now when she suffers from severe loose motion, I send somebody to bring medicine from the Bengali doctor. I can no longer run around for her sake, one lives

as long as one is fated."

It is not that villagers do not take care of their daughters during their ill health, the total approach behind their effort for treatment of their children is different for their sons and their daughters. As one poor Pasi woman said, "If a girl dies, it does not feel as if I have lost anything, there will be another child. But if a boy dies, there is no guarantee that there will be a second boy."

Similarly one well-off Brahmin woman said, "when a girl falls sick, then I feel that she should recover soon but I am not afraid, but if a boy falls sick then a fear grips my heart that he just might die."

Villagers never consider boys unwanted irrespective of their numbers in the family. It is not so in the case of girls.

However, after a certain age when girls start working, families become concerned about their health. An eleven year old girl from a well-off Brahmin family said, "Parents are concerned about me only when I fall sick. Then they start running around. Because if I die now who will do the house work." Another mother from a subsistence Yadav family said, "If a small girl falls sick, there may be some delay in treatment but if an older girl falls sick we are never late in treating her, because she is now old enough to fetch me a glass of water when required." Similarly another woman

from well-off Brahmin family said, "If the older girl falls sick, I feel scared. If something happens to her, her loss will be felt. For now she has grown up and gives me relief in household work. She helps a lot in my work."

From 6-7 years of age onwards girls start working with their mother in the house and at the age of 10-12 onwards the mother's only job is to make them work, supervise them and help them in their work if they are facing any problem. When girls start doing substantial work in the house, they become indispensable to their mother. Now the parents realise the usefulness of having a girl.

The other side of this is that even though at a certain age girls become indispensable for their mothers if treatment of any illness of the girls costs their parents a heavy price in terms of money, they always try to avoid spending that money in every possible way. Fourteen years old Jyotna from a subsistence Brahmin family said, "For the last three to four years some kind of liquid comes out of my ears. I go to school applying cotton wool in my ears. I have been shown many doctors but there has been no result. Then my uncle took me to a doctor in Allahabad. The doctor has said, 'I have to be operated on and it would require Rs.8-10 thousand. Everybody at home said that there is no need of an operation. If Rs.8-10 thousand is spent for the opera-

tion, how would she be married? We have to give her dowry. She is hardly dying out of pain."

Food Consumption and Distribution

Main crops of these villages are paddy, wheat, potato. Villagers cultivate mustard and arhar pulse for their own consumption only. They do not grow any vegetable except potato. In the name of vegetable they usually eat only potato. Their meal includes mainly *daal roti chawal*. In winter they have vegetables three-four days in a week. Adults in the villages have generally two meals a day. They do not have anything in between except tea. Those who are poor cannot afford tea. After harvesting of paddy villagers have parched rice as snacks in the evening and morning. Villagers have milch cattle mainly cows. These cattles are native ones. They give little milk. In well-off families they feed their cattle sufficiently so that they have milk to drink. Otherwise mostly villagers have milk in tea only which is which is what children also get to drink.

Villagers do not have breakfast as such. They cook extra food at night which they keep for the morning and similarly they keep extra lunch for evening. Both times before going and after coming from the school the children get stale food. Only at dinner do they get fresh food along with further left-overs of the lunch if any. Stale food is

Table 9 : Frequency Distribution of Children (0-6 years) of Different Economic Groups in the three grades of malnutrition (according to weight)

Nutritional Variables	Economic Groups			Total	
	Well-off	Subsistence	Poor		
Total Children of <1 - 6 yrs	Total	56	74	59	189
	Male	27	43	35	105
	Female	29	31	24	84
Normal	T	20 (35.7%)	24 (32.4%)	13 (22%)	57 (30.2%)
	M	14 (51.9%)	19 (44.2%)	8 (22.8%)	41 (39%)
	F	6 (20.7%)	5 (16.1%)	5 (20.8%)	16 (19.1%)
1st grade Malnutrition	T	21 (37.5%)	31 (41.9%)	26 (44%)	78 (41.3%)
	M	11 (40.7%)	19 (44.2%)	19 (54.3%)	49 (46.7%)
	F	10 (34.5%)	12 (38.7%)	7 (29.2%)	29 (34.5%)
2nd grade Malnutrition	T	13 (23.2%)	16 (21.6%)	10 (17%)	39 (20.6%)
	M	1 (3.7%)	4 (9.3%)	6 (17.1%)	11 (10.5%)
	F	12 (41.4%)	12 (38.7%)	4 (16.7%)	28 (33.3%)
3rd grade Malnutrition	T	2 (3.6%)	3 (4.1%)	10 (17%)	15 (7.9%)
	M	1 (3.7%)	1 (2.3%)	2 (5.7%)	4 (3.8%)
	F	1 (3.4%)	2 (6.5%)	8 (33.3%)	11 (13.1%)

Figures in parentheses are column percentages.

Weights of The Children are plotted in 'Growth Chart' published by Voluntary - Health Association of India, New Delhi, is appended (Appendix 2).

always eaten by the children irrespective of their economic existence.

Girls are neglected and unable to eat their fill when food is freshly cooked. However, when they have to share the left-overs the sex discrimination becomes even more visible because the quantities are small.

In well-off families, they throw more than they eat. So food is not a problem there. Children get enough food whenever they are hungry. But in the poor families, where they cannot afford to throw food, not every child, especially the girls get their equal and rightful share when they are hungry.

Nutritional Status of the Children

Table 9 shows the nutritional status of the children upto 6 years of age. Three important things are clear from this table. First normal males are more than females in all groups - maximum in well-off (51.9% and 20.7% respectively). Second 1st grade malnutrition among boys is higher, 2nd and 3rd grade are higher in girls. And third while the proportion of normal boys in the well-off category is 51.9% and in the poor category is 22.8%. The gradient amongst girls is insignificant. This shows that girls are equally affected across classes.

We will attempt to understand the linkage between the low weight and status of girls through some case reports.

Case Report 3 (Poor family)

Ghurelal Yadav owns one bigha of land. He works as a machine operator in the flour mill of the village. He lives with his family in a small two roomed mud hut. Their source of drinking water is a common hand pump.

They are husband and wife, four sons, two daughters and his old mother. His wife works in her land as well as in another's land as a labourer. All his sons go to school. Only his seventy year old sick mother stays at home with her two grand daughters.

One can make out that his four boys are healthy but their youngest children, i.e. these two daughters, aged three and one and a half years respectively, are absolutely skeletal. Their bellies are protruding, their hands and legs are thin, their looks are sickly and lethargic. Their mother said they were suffering from 'Sukharog'. "I have treated them a lot but they are not recovering. I have taken them to the private doctors in the Soraon. I have also taken thme to get them exorcised but to no avail."

This family was observed for a period of two months, thrice every week, to get an insight into the attitude and

behaviour of the family members towards the children.

It was winter time when the paddy crop in the fields were ready for harvesting and in some places harvesting had started also. During this time, the farmers are usually very busy. This family owns very little land and are obliged to work on others' land. Ghurelal's wife used to cook excess food at night because they had to go to the field for harvesting early in the morning.

The first and second sons help in the field work. The younger two sons play around in the village. There is a government primary school next to the village where classes are held for one to one and half hours only and rest of the time is free. That is why these two younger sons take their food by 8 to 9 in the morning and go to the school.

The four boys take their food separately in four plates and eat out side in the sun. Mostly the mother serves the food or the children take the food themselves. The two daughters are not given separate food. They are asked to share from their brothers' plate. Most of the time, the two elder brothers do not allow them to share their food. So each sister sits with each younger brother. Because the younger brothers are also much older than to the sisters, they finish off the food more swiftly than them. If there is any vegetable, the brothers invariably eat them. They

are in a hurry to go to the school or to play and thus eat up quickly. Once the brothers have finished their food it means the sisters also have finished eating. The mother never asks whether the daughters are replete or not.

It was observed that the sisters were picking up the left over from their four brothers plates and eating and also eating food particles from the floor. One day they were asked, "Do you want to eat any more?" The elder daughter nodded silently. Their mother was eating in the kitchen. She was asked to give them more food as they seemed to be still hungry. Their mother replied that they had just eaten with their brothers and they couldn't be still hungry. Then she told them that they had just eaten, and that was enough, and they could eat again afterwards when food would be prepared.

The parents and children go out to work and to school or play and the daughters stay back at home with the old grand mother. Now these two girls play till around 12 noon. They pick up things and put them into their mouths. There is nobody to look after them. They play with the other kids. Sometimes they go to their aunt's house which is nearby.

The girls wear one frock and one sweater. They have no cap, no socks, no panty, no shoes. They have perpetual

Their mother comes back from work and prepares food at noon for lunch. By then, the two younger brothers also return from school. At this time the children eat their food in the kitchen and the youngest daughter is breast fed at this time. The youngest daughter is also given *daal* and *chawal* in a small bowl which she eats by herself. The elder daughter eats with her brother.

Sometimes the mother gets angry because the sons finish their food quickly and often remarks, "Have you finished your food? You are always in hurry to go and play. Why don't you eat one or two more *rotis*? Don't tell me you are hungry in the afternoon. Because you will get food again only at night when food is prepared. If there is any left-over then only you can have some thing in the afternoon. So eat properly." But in all these days the mother was never found to be concerned about the daughters nor was she seen trying to make her daughters take a little more food. When their father comes home to eat at noon, they sometimes eat with him. But they are so weak that by the time they finish their one mouthful, the others have almost finished their food.

By 4 p.m. when the first two sons return from school, they eat the food that is kept for them. The younger broth-

ers also share food with the elder brothers. If there is more food they take separate plates or they share from their brother's plates only. The daughters even now get very little. They are given either a small piece of dry *roti* or are given a few spoon full of rice in small bowl.

When their mother returns in the afternoon, she breast feeds the youngest daughter. The mother does not have much milk. The youngest daughter continues to suckle in the noon, afternoon and at night during bed time as she obviously remains hungry.

They have a cow at home that gives 500 to 750 grams of milk a day. Mostly tea is made out of this milk. If there is any left-over, it is given to the elder or second son to drink. The girls are not given milk because the mother believes that they have loose motions if they drink milk. Whenever tea is made, the daughters are given tea separately in a bowl.

One afternoon it was observed that when the two younger sons returned from playground, whatever food was left, was eaten by them and plates left behind. After some time the two daughters returned from their playing and sadly looked at the plates. Then they went to the kitchen to check if any food was left in the utensils. They ate whatever was left in the utensils and then came and picked food particles

from their brother's plates. Then their mother came and she was told that there was no food left for the daughters and they were hungry. Their mother said, 'The children have a habit of picking up food. The whole day they are picking at food. How can they be hungry? They have small stomachs, how much can they eat? My sons do not eat more than three four rotis. And how much you make for these gluttons (sons) there is always a shortage in their food.'

When their grand mother was asked about the girls health, she gave an irritated reply, "Oh! they are after all girls."

Once it was observed that Ramadhar Yadav's 9 years old elder daughter Gulabi (family reference - case report 1) was being scolded by her mother

you have eaten all the food, you have grown up like a buffalo, you never spared a thought for your younger brother who is hungry and what he could eat." Later on when asked about the incident Gulabi said, "Didi I was very hungry, so I ate up all the left-overs of lunch. Now Babu was asking for food and so mother beat me up." I said to Gulabi, "Now when you eat, keep back some for your brother too." Weeping Gulabi quickly said, "When the brothers eat up everything and I remain hungry then mother never scolds them. Instead she would tell me, "Why are you weeping so much. Eat when food is prepared. You are not going to die of hunger." And if I ever finish the leftovers she beats me. She always lets the brothers eat first." She said, "I ate yesterday night's left-over in the day. The food was so cold that I could not enjoy it and so I ate a little bit. That is why I became hungry. What was cooked in the morning was eaten by them (brothers).

Similarly in an incident in one afternoon, at 4 p.m. it was observed Gaddan and her two younger brothers, who had returned from school, were eating. Everybody was given 2 rotis each and chawal. Both the brothers had eaten up their rotis and they would not eat chawal because it had become cold. Their mother was sitting in front and cleaning wheat. Shiv Kumar (elder one) asked for roti. Mother told Gaddan, "You have still not eaten one roti. Give half of it to Shiv Kumar and the other half to Raj Kumar and you eat chawal." Gaddan said, "I will not eat cold chawal and I will not give my roti. They have eaten their own share. Let them eat rice now." Then the mother told her, "They are brothers and are hungry. Give them roti." You had your stomach full of roti at night." Gaddan said, "Was I sleeping the whole day that I'm not hungry. I ate in the morning and have been working/slogging throughout the day. They took tiffin to the school. If they are hungry let them eat chawal I would not give them roti." At this the mother scolded her so badly that weeping she left her food, gave the roti to her brothers, went off without eating. She said, "I am nothing to this home."

The families where food is not a problem, discriminations between the boys and girls are made in socially valued or supplementary food like milk, ghee, curd, fruits, etc. This was highlighted in some indepth interviews.

Directly there is no distinction of food in our family", says 13 years old Archana (from well-off Brahmin family), "but when my brother and I come back home from school, my mother always asks me whether Manoj has eaten after coming from school. She never asks whether I have eaten. Likewise, in case of milk, mother will always ask whether Manoj and Anup have drunk or not. If there is less milk then mother will specially come to the kitchen to say that Manoj and Anup should drink milk, and though it is known that milk would always be given to them, she would still say so. She never pays so much attention to me. Even though Manoj is three years older than me.

One Brahmin woman from the subsistence group said that the males and all children (except one child who is breast fed) in the family drink milk. A glass of milk each was given to her father-in-law, her husband and her five year old son. Then water was mixed with what was left and given to the two younger daughters. These days cows give less milk and thus everybody can not get the full share of milk.

Schooling for Children

The villagers attitude towards a girls' education is very casual. At any point of her education the parents can stop her schooling. Whenever there is a crisis of manpower in family it is the girl's education which gets affected most. First thing that the parents do is to stop their girl's schooling. There are many instances of it as she has to look after her younger siblings or has to do household work as her mother has to look after the cultivation.

In these villages the culture of education is first associated with caste then the economic existence. Chamars have very few children even then, they do not send their children to school. In fact they do not have any interest in their children's education. They say, "It in no way helps us." Children also do not have any interest in education. On the other hand Pasis are more interested in their children's education. They are aware of their quota in government services. They send their children to the school but in most cases they cannot continue their education because they have to work for the family.

Regarding a girl's education their view is "we are not able to educate our sons how can we educate our daughter." Secondly, there are number of girls interested in education but they cannot go to Soraon. They were admitted to the government Primary School of the village but after some time they found that it was a waste of time, and they were not learning anything significant.

In non-Brahmin families, extension of education is very recent. In most of the families it is the second or third generation going to school. People are not serious at all about their children's education, especially for girls. They send their children to the school but they are not very keen to continue their education. They just want their

Table 10: Educational Level of Children in Economic Groups

Educational Variables		Economic Groups			Total
		Well-off	Subsistence	Poor	
Total Children at the age of >4 - 12 yrs	Total	79	105	74	258
	Male	45	55	40	140
	Female	34	50	34	118
Non-School going children	T	6 (7.6%)	36 (34.3%)	42 (56.8%)	84 (32.6%)
	M	2 (4.4%)	10 (18.2%)	16 (40%)	28 (20%)
	F	4 (11.8%)	26 (52%)	26 (76.5%)	56 (47.5%)
School going children	T	73 (92.4%)	69 (65.7%)	32 (43.2%)	174 (67.4%)
	M	43 (95.5%)	45 (81.8%)	24 (60%)	112 (80%)
	F	30 (88.2%)	24 (48%)	8 (23.5%)	62 (52.5%)
Schooling upto Primary (1. to all School going children)	T	58 (79.4%)	53 (76.8%)	25 (28.1%)	136 (78.2%)
	M	35 (81.4%)	32 (71.1%)	18 (75%)	85 (75.9%)
	F	23 (76.7%)	21 (87.5%)	7 (87.5%)	51 (82.3%)
Schooling above Primary (1. to all School going children)	T	15 (20.5%)	16 (23.2%)	7 (21.9%)	38 (21.8%)
	M	8 (18.6%)	13 (28.9%)	6 (25%)	27 (24.1%)
	F	7 (23.3%)	3 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)	11 (17.7%)

Figures in parentheses are column percentage.

children to be literate as they have become aware that illiteracy is a stigma now-a-days. Their children should not remain 'Angutha Chhap' like their ancestors. Very few boys have finished their study upto High School. Similarly very few girls have completed their study upto 8th or even upto class five. In spite of all odds in life there are few girls struggling to continue their education.

Educational Achievements of the Children

Out of the total 389 children 258 are of >4-12 years of age. Among them 140 are boys and 118 are girls. Out of 258 children 67.4% are school going. Among them 80% are boys and 52.5% are girls (Table 10).

Highest and lowest percentage of school going children (92% and 43%) are from well-off and poor families respectively. The gap between school going boys and girls is much higher in poor and subsistence families than well-off families (Table 10).

79.4%, 76.8% and 78.1% school going children of well-off, subsistent and poor families respectively are at the primary level of education. At levels over primary these proportions change to 20.5%, 23.2% and 21.9%, respectively. Pattern of difference between boys and girls shows girls among the poor are the most deprived educationally.

Another fact was noted that as long as fees had been paid the child's attendance could be extremely irregular (almost nil) without being levelled as dropout

Case Report 4 (Subsistence family)

16 years old Suman's father is a blacksmith. He has a small shop in Soraon. He has 2¹/₂ bigha of land which is cultivated by labourers. He has three daughters and two sons. His first daughter is married, she was educated till the 8th class. Suman is doing her Inter final (12th class). The third daughter and eldest sons are both in class 6 and youngest son is too small for schooling. Suman's father himself did not pass his High School examination. Her mother is illiterate. They live in a *kaccha* house with three rooms. Their source of drinking water is a common well.

Suman said that her father had admitted her in the Primary School when she was 5 years old. "My didi who is four years older than me went to school before me. I remember I used to take interest in my didi's text books even before I went to school. My mother says that I could memorize what my didi used to learn much faster than her.

I used to go to school with didi. Then didi used to help mother in household work. I too used to do small

errands. We do not have electricity in our house. My didi and I used to study in the kitchen where my mother worked by lighting a lantern. One lantern used to serve two purposes. Food was cooked and our studies went on. That is why we used to study in the kitchen.

I always stood first in class, and that is why my father was very happy with me. My Primary School teacher called my father to the school and praised me a lot.

My mother was weak from the beginning. So didi and I used to do the household work. When I was studying in class IV, I used to cook the food for dinner and didi used to cook the lunch. Didi was already married by then but her *gauna* was not yet solemnised.

I still remember one night I was making food. I could not properly bake the *roti*, and a few were burnt. Father ate the first two burnt *roti* that I served him. But when I served him the 3rd burnt *roti*, he threw it upon my face from his seat and said 'stop her studies'. I wept a lot, threw lots of tantrum but I was not allowed to go. From that day till today I have never been scolded for any household work, nor have I refused to do any work. I still remember I was not allowed to go to school for a few months. Within a few days I forgot what studying was all about. I only used to do household jobs. I was afraid to ask to go to school.

What was it to my mother whether I went to school or not? One day on the way home my father met my teacher on the streets. I do not know what she told him but he returned home and asked my mother to send me to school from the next day. Father only said that the teacher was very angry with him. Till class V I studied without any hindrance. But household job always had the priority.

I passed class V and faced the same problem, that I did not need to study any more since I had studied a lot. Then I asked my teacher to talk to my father since I wanted to study further. In the mean time one day my maternal grand mother came. She said, she would bear the expenses of my studies and asked my father to readmit me to the school.

I used to tear blank pages from my friends' exercise copies and my old copies and make new copies for myself. I used to read old books and if I could not get hold of my book, I used to copy down lessons from them throughout the night.

One night I was studying by lantern because I never used to get time to study during the day time. I used to go to school in the morning and do household work in the afternoon. My father got up and saw I was studying by lighting the lantern. He started screaming that there was no need of studying in the night by lighting the lantern because so

much of kerosene oil was not available. My heart stopped in fear and I thought supposing he really stopped my studies again, I would not be able to pass my class VIII. My final examinations were approaching. Only five months were left and I had to study during the night.

I immediately put off the lantern and silently went to bed. I had only one answer to all my queries and that was ^{that} I

had to study. That night I could not sleep due to unknown fear. And I was thinking what I should do. I did not want to give him any reason for which he could stop my studying. In the morning I started the household work though I could not concentrate on anything because I was always apprehensive as to what would happen. My father did not say anything in the morning. I went to the school but even there I could not concentrate on anything. Returning home in the afternoon I told my mother everything. She was aware of everything. She told me I must finish my studies fast and look for some job. The moment my mother told me this, an idea came to my mind. I decided to teach the young children of the village. Though I earned very nominal fees, it was enough for the expense of the kerosene oil. But after two months the tuitions stopped and I faced the same problem again. Then I used to work in others peoples fields on Sundays and holidays and thus earned the money for kerosene oil. This led to severe disturbances in my stud-

ies. I used to get tired throughout the day. I could not relax even on holidays but some how or other I passed class VIII in 1st division.

Even after so much struggle I could not win their hearts. To them passing in 1st division or passing through copying was the same. They had no interest in my studies. Even after this they stopped my studies and I became very depressed. I had put in so much labour into my studies. If I had to sit at home, what was the use of so much trouble and studying. Girls should not be born in poor families. And if they are born, they should not be interested in studies. Had I been a boy I would have fled from home, I would have slept on streets but I would have surely studied.

Admission had started in school, the Brahmin girls who had copied in their examination secured admission, but my father did not allow admission for me. I wept a lot but I was still not allowed to get admission to class IX. I felt like committing suicide. I could never accept that I would not study further. My mind became restless. Three-four months passed but I could not believe that I was not studying and would no longer study.

Making some excuse I went to my maternal grandmother and brought money from her to get myself admitted in class IX. But I was scared to confront my mother. That is why I

requested my neighbours to tell my father to allow me to study and that I had brought money for it. I was admitted after five months.

In spite of all difficulties, I passed High School in 2nd division. I missed 1st division by a few marks. After High School I tutored the village children and also taught in the coaching centre in Soraon. I was getting a job in a school also but the salary was too meagre. That much I earn from tuition. After High School I started getting job offers in schools. Either due to this or due to the realization that they could not stop me, my parents stopped bothering me and I faced no difficulties in Intermediate.

This year is my Inter final examination. I need to have money to fill up my form, to buy some books and clothes but do not have enough money for all these. So I told my father not to engage paid workers in his field. Instead I requested him to appoint me for field work and pay me for it. I did that and the money I earned enabled me to pay for my examination fees, my books and clothes.

I would like to do something worthwhile in life. I am ready to face anything to continue my studies. I want to study and get a job so that I can eradicate poverty from my family.”

Her parents said that they would be unable to get

enough money to educate all their children. Their two sons have just started studying. They would educate those who would stay with them. Why should they spend so much money on their daughter who will get married and go off. Even if she takes up a job they are not going to benefit. They have to marry off their daughters while their maternal grand-mother is alive as she has promised to bear the expenses of Suman's marriage. After her they are not sure whether her uncle (Mama) will marry her off or not. And only after her marriage, they can marry off their younger daughters.

Case Report 5: (Subsistence family)

18 year old Vimla Yadav's father is a laboratory attendant in the Allahabad University in Allahabad. He owns 3¹/₂ Bigha of land. He does his own cultivation with the help of family members and labourers. He has two daughters and two sons. Vimla is the eldest one. He has a pucca house with three rooms. He has his own connection for drinking water. Vimla was married two years back. She studied upto class VIII. One younger brother and one sister are studying and the youngest brother is still too young to go to school.

Vimla Said, "Mother used to say that at least I passed in my class. So I could study as long as I was not

married. I used to get time to study a little around 8 or 9 p.m. but even then grandma used to scream and ask me to go to sleep, otherwise I would awake late in the morning to wash the utensils. I used to work hard and study in school because I had the constant fear that I might not get good marks and this would be enough cause for my parents to stop my schooling.

As long as I remember, I have been doing household jobs and I have to do the same till the end of my life. I think that I must do something in my life but when nothing is to happen what is the use of day dreaming? When my own people had not let me study further, how can I expect the in-laws to indulge in it?

What is the use of such education? It is better that one does not study at all. We used to go to the city from the school for tournaments. We used to feel very good. Then I used to feel that I had to study further to progress. Now when I think of all that I feel very bad and I forcibly suppress these feelings.

Now I have consoled myself that girls are only for marriage. Since my birth my parents have been eager only for my wedding. To tell you the truth, if I have a daughter then I will make her study a lot even if I have to fight with everybody for this.

If I could have got time at home to study then I would have been number one in my class. Dadi used to say, 'who asks you to go to school? What teacher are you going to be? Stop going to school from tomorrow.' She was pampered by all. I have studied so far because of my mother. Had it been within my father's and dadi's control, my studies would have long since been stopped."

Case Report 6: (Well-off family)

14 year old Vinita Pandey who would appear for High School examinations is going in to a state of mental depression and confusion. Her father is a Head Master in a Primary school, owns 6 bigha of land. He does his cultivation with the help of hired labourers. He has a kachha house with five rooms. He has his own hand pump for the purpose of drinking water.

Vinita said, "Our father is educating us not because he wants us to achieve something in life nor because he expects something from us but for our marriage prospects. So that I would not be called an illiterate in my in-laws place. Do you know my engagement is over, in a few days time I will be married. Sometimes I think if I were illiterate it would have been better. I would not have known what studies were. I would have done household work and I would have felt de-

light in it. Now I am in such a fix that neither am I an illiterate so I could be happy in ignorance nor am I happy being educated. I very much want to study further. I cannot make you understand perhaps but I want to do something in life.

We village girls are no less than city girls. But our family members do not want to make anything out of us. When my would be in-laws came to see me I told them that I would like to study after marriage also. They asked me who would do the household work. I told them I would finish my household job and then study. Hearing this, everybody started laughing in as if I am not capable of studying. My mother and grandmother scolded me a lot because of this. They asked me why I spoke like this. Girls never speak on such occasions. Mother even slapped me on that day. I wept a lot and did not take my food.

The girls' feet are shackled. Why cannot the girls do what they desire? Why? Why not? Boys have total freedom to do as they please. But why can the girls not do anything except cooking, making cowdung cakes, wash utensils and attend to the hearth. My marriage will be in Allahabad city. Just see, I will definitely do something or the other. There are not as many restrictions in cities like villages.

I secure maximum marks in Maths and Sanskrit. I always get good marks in examinations. My didi also used to get good marks. She studied till class VIII and then her marriage was performed. My didi wants to appear for her High School examination privately but she is so involved in household affairs that she is unable to do so.

I get the time to study only at night. We three sisters do all the household chores. Mother, aunt and grandmother also work but in a farmer's family there is so much work that there seems to be shortage of people even if there are many of them.

I utilize the little time I get in studying so that I pass with good marks. At times I get so irritated and feel so disgusted when I think what would I achieve by concentrating so hard to study. I cannot study further. There is no utility. That is why sometime I do lose interest in studies. My father is a teacher. He always asks us to pass with good marks. But what is the use of passing with good marks and what is the harm of passing with poor marks.

Such family members are two-faced. They do not give us opportunity to study, they do not let us study further also, but they also accuse us of being unintelligent and careless in studies. I have two younger brothers. The elder amongst the two is totally useless in studies. He does not even

understand the basics. But everybody is so concerned about them. They always ask them to study and advise that studies would help them in life. Parents say that if they get a good job they (parents) will be happy. And these two brothers neither work at home nor study but play throughout the day.

How would father manage everything? What to do? Sometime I feel pity for my parents also. They have to marry off so many daughters. From where would they bring so much of dowry. I do not understand what we girls should do. Neither are we allowed to go and take up some job so that we can earn some money and give them. They curse us all the time, saying why were we born? So much dowry has to be given. We are a burden, we are sitting upon them like stones. Girls should not get any sympathy. Mothers should throttle a girl to death the instant she is born, or else the girls should not be scared of anybody and do exactly what they please, just like boys. It is a stroke of luck that some are born boys and some are born girls.⁴

The total thrust of girls' education in well-off Brahmin and to some extent in subsistence families is only for good marriage prospects for them.

As one well-off Brahmin woman said, "we are educating our daughter Archana so that she is married into a good

family. Otherwise she is not going to do a job here or in her in-laws' house."

On the other hand, Archana said "I do not want to study at all. I am more interested in knitting, cooking, etc. but I have to have a High School certificate, so that my parents can say that their daughter is educated."

It has been found in many cases that girls' admissions have been cancelled due to sheer negligence in not paying the monthly school fees in time. After a lot of nagging they are readmitted in school. They always reach late at school. Girl students are always in shortage of basic things like books, exercise copies, pencils etc. On the other hand boys are found wasting their exercise copies by tearing unused pages for playing, and losing the pencils everyday. Even then they are never in shortage of these things.

In one incident - in a well-off family - Mamta (11 years old student of class V), asked her parents for one metre cloth for her Home Science examination one week in advance. She was reminding them daily for the same. But till the morning of the examination day the cloth was not bought. Mamta started crying in the morning. Then her mother got very angry and told her father that "if he was

schooling his daughter then he ought to do it sincerely otherwise he should stop her schooling. Then her father gave Mamta money to buy cloth on the way to the school. However, the day before Mamta's examination her father bought one pair of clothes for his son which was not at all urgent."

Parents do not have any aspiration for their daughters except marriage. So they do not take any interest in their studies and make them do as much household work as they can do. They do not spare them even during their short period of study which they somehow manage to get after their whole day's work. As parents do not have any expectation and aspiration from their daughters, and as they do not give them opportunities and facilities, most of the girls in the villages do not have a liking for studies. They are more interested in knitting, sewing, etc. For them the utility of study is in being able to read and write Ramayana, bhajans, film songs and 'kajari'* . It is not necessary to sit and wait for others' favours for these. As parents have high aspiration from their sons, they try to send them to the best school (according to their belief), specially to private so-called English medium schools.

* One kind of folk song.

Allocation of Domestic Duties

Generally villagers do their own work, especially their household work. In agriculture based families there is always a shortage of manpower specially in those families which are involved in sharecropping. In such families boys are also made to do hard work along with girls. They engage their own family members in the field so that they can save as much expenditure on labour as possible. Therefore they make every family member work in the field.

In such families girls do not literally even get time to breath. From morning they start working. They carry out household chores as well as work in the field one after another. When they do not have much work in their own field they work in other field to earn some money or grain. When there is no work in the field they have to do extra pending work at home like taking out grain, spreading it in the sun, to drying it, cleaning it, grainding it, etc. In their leisure time they make something or the other for their dowry. On the other hand, boys are not expected to do any household work, even fetching water from the well or hand pump for themselves. They are expected to do only field work. Therefore when there is no work in the field they just roam around.

In poor families boys are not spared. They start working at the age of 6-7 years. When they grow to be around 12-13 years of age, they start working with their father as labour. As poor families of the villages are not on the edge of starvation, when boys do not want to work they just make some excuse. Only during peak days of agriculture they are made to work hard. Whereas for girls they are not allowed to make any excuses for their daily work which itself keep them busy for twenty-four hours.

In subsistent non-Brahmin families, boys do work, but not as much as girls. Also they start working after 13-14 years of age while girls start working much earlier. In such families boys somehow pass 8th or 10th class and start working with their father or try to get any job or petty business where they can earn some money. And if they are not getting any work, then everyday in the morning they go to Soraon, chit-chat with their friends and come back home.

In well-off and subsistence Brahmin families boys do not do any routine or responsible work till the age of 14-15 years. They are only expected to study. And in their leisure time they only play or roam around. It was found that in well-off and subsistence families irrespective of their caste, boys work but not in their childhood. As a family members they cooperate in family matters whenever there is a need but they are not given any responsibility

regarding any work. Whereas girls by the age of 12 years, no longer think themselves as children and become more responsible and mature regarding their assigned routine household work as well as their expected work in the field. They feel that they have grown up enough to relieve their mothers from their household work as well as contributing to the family economy. As one well off Brahmin woman said, "I entrust my 10 years old daughter Arti with responsibility of the household and go and spend 10 to 15 days in my father's home with my younger daughter Priti. Her father, grand father and Anju stay at home. Arti looks after everything skillfully." Another poor Pasi woman said, "I left the responsibility of my home with my 9 years old daughter Santra and went to the city for Kumbhamela. Her father and her two brothers stayed at home. I took my youngest son with me. Santra looked after the home, brought fodder for the cow and also worked in the field. Girls grow up by this age, they can do so much. When I was younger than this, my mother used to leave the family responsibility upon me and go to the city for a holy bath in festivals."

Thus, girls are not allowed to go to school or are made to leave school as they have to look after their siblings and help their mother. Mothers said that they could not manage household chores as well as field work along with small children. Therefore, the daughter has to be there to

assist her. But interestingly the mothers of three/four sons and a very young daughter or with no daughter, are able to manage all work and sons are still allowed to continue their studies. In a few cases where girls are continuing their education, they do household work along with their studies. Sometimes they resent this behaviour of their parents.

Nine year old Kanchan from a subsistence Yadav family said,

I used to go to school before, now I don't go. My mother doesn't let me go. If I go to school then who would look after Jui (youngest sister). Girls should know household work. Brothers have to study and get a job.

I wash utensils, sweep rooms, fill up water from the hand pump, wash clothes, cook *daal chawal* and do other work related to the hearth. My mother only makes *roti* and *sabji*. I also go to collect dry twigs for fuel and bring fodder for cattle. My brothers go to school, study and play and on holidays they go to sell milk with me in the market. And my mother works in the field.

The whole day Jui stays with me. Mother feeds her milk on returning and I give her rice and *daal* in the day time. If I don't carry her mother beats me. One day when mother came back from field I kept her with mother and ran off. Mother called me but I did not come back. Then when I returned in the afternoon, mother beat me up a lot and did not give me food at night.

My mother said that I have grown up so I should not play. Children play. My brothers play in the school and at home. I have only one frock. I usually wear my brother's pant and shirt which

have got torn I wear a panty and baniyan throughout the day sometimes I wear my brother's shirt or mother's blouse. During winter I roam about in my brother's torn sweaters. (An indepth interview)

When she was asked whether she wanted a brother or sister as her mother is pregnant again she replied furiously, "I do not want a brother or a sister. I am tired of carrying Jui for one year. Now she is again pregnant and I have to again carry the new born for one year."

Similar sentiments were expressed in an indepth interview by 11 year old Mamta from a well-off Brahmin family.

- When I come back from school and see the piled up utensils of the entire day, I feel like breaking my head and tearing my hair. Mother sits idly throughout the day but she never cleans the used utensils. My didi works in the morning and I work in the afternoon. The day I do not do it, mother catches me by my hair and beats me and curses me always. I feel like leaving everything and running away. Are girls born only to work at home? The boys are also there, why don't they wash their own plates and glasses? It would have been better if I had been born a boy, I would have roamed throughout the day. I would have to neither work nor would get beaten.

It is not only household work that I have to do but in addition I have to get my brother (6 year old) ready for school. I have to feed them, dress him, bathe him etc. I have to take care of him when he comes from school in the afternoon. While my 4 year old sister look after herself. Nobody takes care of her except occasionally somebody helps her.

Emotional Support in Childhood

From birth onwards, boys get more parental love and

care compared to girls. Grandmothers are keen and happy to look after a grandson but very reluctant for^a grand daughter. They keep grumbling or make various excuses of work in case of grand daughters. Boys are pampered by every family member whereas girls are always scolded as to discipline them according to social norms. It is also seen that if the younger brothers beat or misbehave with their elder sisters and if the sisters try to discipline their brothers, the mother or other family members always scold their daughters, "After all he is your brother." Or, "If he has hit you a bit has it broken your arms and legs that you are yelling so much?" Parents cannot tolerate any negligence of their sons. When sons are taking food at home either the mother or any woman must be constantly around him. Mothers are very particular and watchful about their school going sons' tiffin while they are not particular about daughter's tiffin even if the daughter is younger than the son. If tiffin gets limited on any day then the daughter's tiffin will get skipped.

Maulā said,

It is we who continuously work and the brothers get pampered. I admit that the brothers are younger to us but there are two sisters who are even younger to them. If any good food comes home, first it is always asked where the brothers are even if we stand in front. First they are given the food. Anjani (the youngest sister) might stand and weep but nobody would care to pay any attention to her.

Mothers are particular about their sons' food, clothes etc. They keep enquiries about their books, copies pencils or anything which is needed.

One 4 year old daughter is not allowed to sleep with her mother while the 6 year old son sleeps with his mother only. Even during the daughter's illness (of course mild) she sleeps with and is taken care of by her elder sisters.

Thus, love is never made explicit or expressed in case of girls while for boys there is a abundance of loving. It almost looks as if all sympathetic behaviour towards girls is due to humanitarian feelings and not because they are deeply desired children.

Girls feel themselves emotionally insecure and lonely when they grow little older (around 10-12 years onwards). In childhood the mother is supposed to be the most close person in the family and she is the person who makes crude discriminations between children.

When girls become older they start questioning many discriminations made in the family and can articulate their feelings. If they become assertive on any issue they get punished or get badly scolded. They feel suffocated as they do not get support from any family members or at least find a person to open thier heart to, except for very close

school friends or a neighbour. Even this scope is not available to all, as all girls are not allowed to go to school or go to a neighbour's houses. There is a restriction on older girls.

The emotional trauma of discrimination is well reflected in an ^{indepth} interview with Jyotsna, a 14 year old girl, from a subsistence Brahmin family.

I feel like going to some place where I can breathe openly. If I stand in the terrace, Dadi screams, "why are you standing on the terrace? Don't you like it down-stairs? Come down immediately." Then I think that if I get married I shall be relieved of this life. What wrong have I done that I am always made to feel that I am wrong.

I still remember that when I was in class III, our father had gone to the city. From there he brought a toy for my brother and one doll for us (two sisters). We were very happy because we had never seen such toys before. Our brother neither let us touch his toy nor see it. We used to see it from a distance. When we used to complain that he did not let us touch his toy, Dadi always asked as to why we wanted to touch his toy when our father had already bought us a separate toy. One day his toy was broken. Then he played with our doll. He often used to run away with our doll and we used to fight a lot on this. I used to go after him weeping. Dadi then used to tell us, "why are you weeping, after all he is your brother? Why don't you let him play with your toy?" One day I refused to give him my doll. He took it from me and in front of Dadi and father broke its neck. Dadi said, "To hell with it, the daily quarrel has come to an end." Nobody told him anything. I wept a lot. Even today I sit and think about it. I feel very strange as to why nobody scolded him.

And we used to get scolded for all small affairs. One day I was bringing a glass of water for father. A little bit of water spilled on the floor.

Mother was there, she slapped me and said, "you have no manners at all. When will you learn?"

My didi used to do the household work and I used to help her. One day after returning from school, I helped her in washing the utensils, I cut vegetables so that she could cook the dinner and I also prepared the dough for *roti* and then I went out to play. There was water in front of our house so I went next door to play. It was a little late in the evening. My uncle had come from Allahabad. My didi came running and told me, "come home fast. Today you are going to get a thrashing." I went home in abject fear. My mother almost exploded when she saw me, and said, "You have grown up now, you do not do any work at home. The only thing you know is games and games." My brother came home after some time. Seeing him I told my mother, "Even he has grown up, why does he play?" This is all that I said and my mother beat me up so severely that since then I have given up playing. Mother said, "He is a boy. He will stay in his own house. You have to go to another house. If you are driven out of that house, there will be no place for you here." That time I did not understand the significance of all these words but I had slowly started realising that my brother and I were not the same. Why we are not the same I do not know till today.

I come first in class. Nobody teaches me at home. I study on my own in the spare time after finishing the household chores. My didi is not all that interested in studies. She likes needle work. When my brother was in class IX, he fared very poorly in the examinations. Only because my father is a teacher in the same school, he passed. Father one day scolded my brother a lot. He said, "Had I not been there, you would not have passed. One year of your life would have been spoil. Look at Jyotsna, being a girl, she always comes first in class. She does the household work and studies. You have to study further and have to secure a job. If this is your condition today, what will happen to you in future?" To tell you the truth, the happiness that I felt on that day was something unique.

I never felt so happy again — the way I felt that day because 'Bhaiya' got the real scolding. More than being happy, I was surprised to hear father's

words. Can a girl not come first? Will I not study further? Will I not take up a job? I always feel bad as to why I was born a girl? I am not envious of my brother but one question always nags me why ^{are} my brother and I not the same?

Whenever some good food comes home, brother gets the biggest share. Dadi fell ill and apple came to our house after a long time. I threw tantrum to eat an apple. Then mother cut an apple and kept away half of it. The other half she divided into two and gave to the two of us sisters. After sometime brother came. The half apple was given to him. It is always like this. If I say something I am told that he is the 'brother'. Everything becomes a question in my mind.

In our house, a glass of milk each is given to father, brother and Dadi and we two sisters get a bowl of milk each. I have never seen my mother drinking milk. Once a cow died in our house and milk became less. Then father and brother used to get their quota of a glass of milk, Dadi used to get a little milk. The rest of us did not get it. I love to drink milk but I silently suppressed the desire. One day I took out a little bit of milk in a bowl from my brother's glass of milk. Brother came to mother to ask why milk was less. I was sitting and so I told I had drunk a bit. Dadi was annoyed at it, "Why have you drunk his milk?" I said, "He drinks milk everyday. One day I have drunk a bit, so what has happened? It is not compulsory that he would drink milk every day. One day he should drink, the next day we should drink. Why should he drink everyday." The moment I said this Dadi and mother totally exploded. It seemed they would kill me. They said, "you have only one brother, your eyes cannot even tolerate him drinking milk (Bhai ka khaya tere ko phuti aankho nahi bhata). 'Kalmuhi'* , you won't even give food to your husband. Is she a girl or a monster? Why didn't she die after being born? God willing, nothing should happen to Raju (son). If something happens to him, we will not let you live either. Till today we have never seen such a girl who is jealous of her brother eating. 'KalmuChi' may your hunger die for ever. For one day you have not got milk and you say such a big

* Evil faced.

thing to your brother. Arey, he is your brother, your brother." They went on like this. After that day it became impossible for the two of us sister to live in this house. Four five years have passed since this incident but even today I am rebuked about it. What wrong did I say on that day? I work a lot at home, I am good in my studies but even then why should I not be allowed to do those things that my brother does. After that day, milk seems like poison to me. Nowadays I do not drink milk, nor does anybody coax me to drink. Not just milk, I never ask for anything except *daal*, *chawal* and *roti*. If someone gives me something it is okay. My didi has always been very quiet. Now she is married. I have to do all house work and I go to school and study too. Even then they scold and rebuke me all through the day.

Because of work at home I was often late for school and I went to school without food. If ever I went to school wearing a good dress and a bindi, Dadi would tell me, "Are you going to be a whore?"

Dadi often gives Rs.10 or 20 to brother out of her pension. Sometimes she even gives Rs.100 as pocket money and brother smokes on the sly.

Didi is married. Now my parents are looking for a groom for me. One day I told my mother that I would like to study and take up a job. My mother replied, "Do you want to become a whore and roam from village to village. Go to your in-laws home and do whatever you please. We have taught you for marriage only." That we too study and achieve something in life is neither expected nor accepted nor does anybody hope for it.

I see plays on T.V. I see women acting in them and I feel like becoming like them. The next moment I realise that I cannot become like them. I feel extremely suffocated. I feel like running away from here, I even feel like jumping into the well. I mostly want to escape from this place. There are other girls in the village, they never have quarrels at home. I too love my brother. I am not even jealous of him but I fail to understand why my brother and I are not the same. My brother and I are alike, we look same, we have similar hands and legs but why is there so much difference between us. You are also a girl like me. How could you study so much and do a job?"

The story of Shivram Yadav's 16 years old daughter
(subsistence family) is also revealing,

Nobody in the house cares whether a girl is living or dying. They do not even know the exact number of daughters they have. They only count the sons. As long as girls are working it is okay, the day we stop working, they will realise that they also have daughters. We do not have any field of our own. Father cultivate 10 bighas of land in share cropping. All the fields are far off and separately situated. Some are in Junglepur, some in Dhamapur and some in Rajapur Malhua. These fields belong to different people. If you work as a sharecropper in any field, the owner of land starts treating the entire family as servants. He would call us and ask us to either clean their wheat, spread it in the sun, dry it up, make 'Dalia', etc. Some work or other is always foisted upon us. In exchange he gives us grain as alms. If we say no he would remind us that he has given us his field for cultivation. What to do, we have to listen to them because we go to them for money in times of need. And if we say something we are in perpetual fear and apprehensive whether he would give us his field for cultivation next time.

For the last few years, we are cultivating their fields. Earlier we undertook lesser number of fields, now we have taken a lot. Our troubles have increased. There is constant quarrelling in our home. In sharecropping everything is on half and half basis but we do not always have enough money to buy seeds, fertilizers etc. There are many owners who buy seeds for the entire field initially and later they take half the money from the share croppers or settle the accounts at the time of harvest. But there are also many owners who do not pay the money for the entire field and trouble a lot. If the crop is not abundant in their field they put the entire blame upon us.

That is why father is always troubled but what to do? We do not have any other alternative other than sharecropping.

His entire wrath falls upon the two of us (sisters). He always curses us as to why we were born. If we were not here, perhaps he would not have been troubled. Our elder brother has studied upto High School, he has a Pan Shop in Soraon, but he does not earn anything. He gossips throughout the day and does not even open the shop. The younger brother roams around all the day in the name of school. And we two sisters work from dawn till night. Father has never sent us to school.

It so happened many times that we have returned home from the field in the afternoon and found the flour to be less. If we had gone to powder the wheat, it would have been late and to do it physically at home demanded the kind of energy which we generally lacked at that hour. We made *roti* out of the *atta* available, fed the members at home and we two sisters shared the leftover. The members at home do not even know how much or what we ate. I will be married next month and then Sita will have to manage the entire house work at home. Rakesh (elder brother) has no other interest in home except to get food in time.

Anju (youngest sister) has been running fever for the last few days but nobody has the time to take her to the doctor at Soraon. A doctor comes to the village on cycle, I took some tablets from him. I am giving her those but so far there has been no improvement. Yesterday evening, I took her to the healer to be exorcised. I made *kadhah** at home and fed her. Today father has said he would take her to Soraon to the doctor.

* A medicinal drink made by boiling herbs in the water or milk.



Last month when harvesting had just started, Udai (younger brother) had high fever at night. Amma and Babuji sent us to the field and took him to the doctor at Sorraon in the morning. In the afternoon he was again taken to the doctor. In two three days time his fever subsided. Girls are not adorned any where. Boys are boys, girls are girls. Boys continue the family line and look after the parents in their old age. Parents have to spend on our marriage whereas they would get money in boys marriages. Sometimes I think if we were not here, then Amma and Babuji could live in peace. They face so much hardship because of us.

another indepth interview it is said,

Didi, these people have kept me alive ^{for} so long, is it any less? There is nobody at home in whom I can confide, I do not understand with whom to talk. Didi I used to feel suffocated in this house. My uncle is very vulgar. When uncle used to stay in ^{the} city (Allahabad) for his study, it was good but when he used to come home during holidays I used to be scared. He used to do very obscene things. Out of ^{of him} fear, I could not bathe. I used to be scared to be alone at home. If he saw me alone, he used to make obscene gestures. Then I was in class VIII. Out of fear I used to weep alone in the room, but could not tell anybody anything. I could not sleep in peace even on holidays. In ^{when} my leisure time, I used to be on the terrace or be near dadi, ^{when} uncle used to cuddle me or touch me in affection, I used to feel unclean. I also used to get scared. One day in winter, we were all sleeping at night. I was sleeping in dadi's room. At mid night, I felt someone's hand inside my quilt. I screamed in fear. In the darkness I thought it was uncle who went to the other room. I started trembling in fear. Everybody had woken up. When I told everybody about the incident, they started scolding me 'Kalmuhi' go jump into the well. Dadi got angry and said, "This is what happens if such grown up girls are kept at home unmarried." Nobody told uncle a word. Even today uncle comes and goes as he pleases in my parents house. Now I am slightly at peace in my in-laws' place.

Play Time

Children of the villages generally play with clay, leaves, sticks, bricks, water, sand, etc. whatever they get around them. Generally they are not seen playing with any toy. Sometime they buy toys mainly of clay and bamboo from any fair which takes place three-four times in a year mainly during festivals like Dussehra, Diwali etc. They generally do not play any particular kind of game but they are mostly seen roaming around in group of two three. If they play any particular game they mostly remain in their own cluster of neighbours.

Upto the age of four years, children just play, they have nothing else to do, irrespective of their caste and economic status. At the age of 6 year a girl starts working with her mother and she plays also. At this age boys of poor families also start helping their family while doing simple work. Parents start expecting help and support from their children even at this age. "A *child* would always play but that does not mean that he would not help the parents."

At the age of eight-nine years, household work becomes first in priority for girls followed by studies (if they go to school). Play comes last. They do not even get the time for play in some cases. At the age of ten onwards, girls do

not consider themselves as children. As said by a 10 year old girl, "Now I have become older. I am no more a child. I do not play, only children play."

One woman said for her ten year old daughter, "She has now grown up. I do not let her go everywhere nor do I let her play. Now it is her age to learn working. If not now when would she learn?"

On the other hand, boys at this age only play and play. Even in poor families boys get more time for playing than girls. Boys feel young enough to play. Even in poor families boys are not as responsible as girls.

As boys do not have restrictions on their movement outside home, they play in the name of school going and in the name of outside work, while girls can not do the same, even if they are school going.

Even in their play a difference between boys and girls is evident. An incident observed is noted as example. One day Shivcharan Pasi's daughter and two sons and Panney Pasi's two daughters made utensils out of clay and were playing. Rotis and vegetables were made out of clay. They were making fake arrangements for their doll's baby to be born. One child ran off and pretended to call "Amma" for the delivery. It was asked whether a boy or a girl was

born. One of the girls said, "It would be a boy. If a boy is born, sweets are distributed, movies are shown on video and band party is brought. Nothing happens if a girl is born. If it is a boy, he would go to study in the school, at Saraon". A boy was born. Everybody was given fake roti, vegetables and sweets on clay plates. At that time, Shivcharan Pasi's elder son was passing through that way. He was told that a boy was born. He also was given a roti and vegetables. He asked for one more roti. When he was told that everybody had got one roti only he said, that he was a boy and thus entitled to more. when he was not given any more he broke all the toys and went off.

The Meaning of Childhood for Boys and Girls

Though younger children cannot articulate and express their feelings properly, their small comments reveal that they are aware of the discriminations practised by their parents, or by other family members between them. The girls sometimes resent, and sometime accept it, as they have seen no alternatives. Their acceptance of their fate comes early in life as shown by one 4¹/₂ year girl Bittu's conversation playing with her symbolic dolls of clay and bricks in front of her home.

"What do you want to be when you grow up?"

"A mother."

"That's a nice thing to be. What will you do?"

"I'll have Bhaiya (son) and feed him milk."

"Will you not have didi (daughter)?"

"No, she doesn't drink milk."

On the other hand a boy of the same age wants to be grown up to have a motor cycle like his father and take a ride upto Soraon.

The girl's sensitivity is crushed gradually through their socialization process. They accept their discrimination as a social norm. The girls are aware but not in a position to alter such behaviour towards them. They do not find anything uncommon in it. Each and every girl known to her in the villages is getting same kind of biased treatment within varying degree.

Besides this she finds that not only her is brother getting special treatment but all other male members like her grand father, father, and uncle are getting special treatment as compared to her grandmother, mother and aunts. Thus girls justify such biased behaviour of their parents towards them. As one 11 years old girl said, "So what, such things happen. He is a boy, he is a brother."

Though they accept it as a general phenomenon they are not able to internalise the fact. In such a state of mental

turmoil at times they question their very existence in the family.

"One day a middle aged female relative came to house to meet them after a long time. She said to Mamta's mother, "I heard that you have got operated (Tubectomy). How many children do you have?" Mamta's mother said five in total, 4 girls and 1 son. The Relative said, "You are tired after one child and you went and had an operation done. You should have waited for another child. Mamta who was standing nearby said immediately 'are we not her children?' The lady said, "Yes, you are her children but you are only girls."

Mostly it is said by girls that "Girls should not grow up quickly." Small girls play but older ones have to work, and this they do not like. Because of this they regret being a girl and in course of conversion or when they get annoyed for any reason, they frequently say, "If I were a boy!" or "I should have been born a boy, then I could do as I liked and could travel far."

On the other hand boys wanted to grow up fast so that they could roam around independently, can go to Soran and to the city (Allahabad) on their own. They are very aware of their privileges. They know that their being a boy will get them first and major share of things. As it was ob-

served while the children were playing (page.124).

In poor families, girls and boys both, are very aware of the biased treatment by their parents towards them. However in such families girls neither regret being a girl nor do they want to be born as a boy. They do not find their brother's life better than theirs. They perceive the difference between themselves and girls of well-off families. A 12 year old girl said, "one should be born in a rich family." Her own poverty did not permit her to enjoy her childhood. This image of the better off girl is only partially born out by our data which shows that she too is discriminated against compared to the boys of her class.

Boys of poor families gave me a blank look when they were asked about their future desires. Either they have never thought of such thing or are not able to articulate and express their views.

GIRLS IN THE EYES OF THEIR COUNTERPART BOYS

Boys are aware about the differential treatment of their sisters by their parents. They are also aware of their own privileges. Boys do not consider it a bias of their parents. They try to justify it. One 14 years boy from a better off Brahmin family said, "we are loved more because we will look after them in their old age and we boys share the pains and sufferings of the family throughout

life. What is it to them, they will get married and go away."

Boys also do not find any utility of sending their sisters for higher education. According to them, girls are not going to take up a job. They are only meant to do household chores, where higher education is of no use. The boys find it enough that girls should be literate so that they can read and write. Even if they do services, parental families are not going to get benefitted. So why invest? Even 12 yrs old boys' attitude towards girls was that they (girls) are not intelligent they are ignorant and dull. They can not move alone, they have to be always escorted by someone.

One 11 year old boy from the well-off Yadav family said that, girls are meant for and are good only at household work. They are not fit for outside work.

Boys consider household job "a very light one". As one said "what do girls do, only hearth related work. Boys do the real tough work in the field and outside the house.

On the other hand, they realize that in many ways their sisters made their life comfortable such as they wash their dirty clothes, fetch water for bath, they stitch their torn clothes etc.

One 6 years old boy said, "I am loved most in the family because I am the only son in the family and my mother says that, I will be a support in her old age."

When boys were asked about the discrimination in respect of food distribution in the family, many of them kept quite, because they had never thought about it. They admitted that they were favoured. The reason for this according to some, simply, was "because we are sons" or they said that, 'their mother alone can answer this question.'

Boys are not very keen^{to} share their privileges with their sisters, even the 12 year olds very casually said, "it depends on our parents".

Boys from poor families, realise that they are valued more than their sisters in the family. They said that it is because sons stay with their parents, and girls go away in their in-laws house. They do not find any discrimination as such in their family and whatever is there, it is because of poverty and social norms. Regarding food distribution, they said that, it is because, boys do more hard work in the field than girls.

THE SOCIALIZATION OF BOYS AND GIRLS

When I asked a four year girl of a well-off Brahmin

family, "Do you drink milk?" She said, "No Bhaiya drinks milk." When I again asked, "Why don't you drink milk?" She replied, "He is the brother. He has to study, grow up, get a job."

When I asked her mother regarding this, she said, "Now-a-days there is less milk in the house, only male members get milk. So when she weeps for milk, I make her understand by telling her that he is her brother. If he does not drink milk, how would he grow up, study and go for a job?"

Socialization of children in these two villages is determined by the presumed superiority of the males. If a new-born baby is female, the villagers do not consider her as a child but just a girl. Male children are a great source of pride. In fact, the importance of having a son is stressed to such a degree that the parents will not accept the small family norm and keep on having children if they do not have two sons, or at least one. Parents find it difficult to accept female children while they are hoping for a male child. The rearing of girls is through negative messages. The behaviour of girls is shaped more through interdiction and reprimands than through any positive measures. The girls are expected to develop the passive virtues of modesty, submissiveness, and self-control. Their roles are guided largely by prohibitions such as "don't whistle",

"don't cross your legs", "don't roar with laughter" etc. Thus girls lead a more restricted life. These prohibitions are more strictly followed in Brahmin families than in non-Brahmin families.

Boys are expected to show bravery very early in their life. Villagers always say, "You cry even though you are a boy! This expectation is even uttered by the fathers when they send their son off to school. They tell their sons, "If you come back home weeping, you will get beaten" or "If someone hits you, you must hit back. The girl is sharply rebuked if she says something naughty, while a boy is either let off or the parents merely laugh and say "Boys are like this only" and they turn it into a laughing matter. Mothers tolerate ruder and coarser behaviour from their sons who frequently speak to them in a very impertinent manner. One school teacher said that whenever the school authorities complained about a male pupil, the parents, by way of explanation and excuse, defended their son by saying, 'Boys are like this'. Whereas going home after school does not bring about any let up in the tightly controlled life of the girls, it brings much greater freedom to boys. They come back home playing all throughout the way. Whereas the girls have to come straight home. If it is a little late they get rebuked and they are threatened by being told that if it is again repeated, they would no

longer be sent to school.

Parents restrict their daughter's movement. They are not allowed to visit their friends house frequently or for longer time specially if the friend has a brother or there is a male member of same age group in her house. If any girl has intimacy with any boy in her village or in school it is the girl who would get scolded and has to bear all the blame.

Parents do not willingly allow their girls to engage in sports or in any other extra curricular activities of the school. Sons, on the other hand, are heartily encouraged to take part in sports etc.

The son's clothes are purchased from the major household income. The daughter's expenses, however, come from petty cash saved by ^{the} mother from her daily expenses. The important factor governing the selection of boys' clothing is that it must not be effeminate, with the emphasis on light or dark colours and a simple style. Little girls, on the other hand, are dressed in a very feminine manner frilly frocks with pink, red, green, yellow, or other bright colours. Sometimes small girls (especially in poor families) wear their brothers rags but boys are never made to wear their sisters torn clothes even in the poor families.

Those girls who are not going to school and remain at home run around in patched clothes. School going girls are properly dressed as compared to non-school going girls. While this difference is boys among school going and non-school going boys.

The ears and nose of girls are also pierced at an early age.

An important part of socialization of boys and girls in the villages is the acquisition of a skill suitable for their eventual role as a working adult. The two study villages have sufficient exposure to modern city life as villagers have government/private jobs in the city and a good transport system. This exposure to a different set of values has brought certain changes in the work socialization patterns of boys in these villages. For girls however, still the traditional pattern of socialisation persists. Recognition and reward or punishment are related to some kind of specific task achievement, is a part of the work socialization. A girl is considered to be a young woman and is given appropriate recognition when she is able to do certain household jobs which demand a certain period of experience.

In case of boys things are quite different, privileges and rewards or punishments are separated from achievements

in the work socialization process of the boy. As one villager said, "earlier a son became a youngman when he began to harvest with the man. The biggest change that has taken place in these villages is that parents no longer instill the culture of work in their sons; they even consciously exempt them from this. In fact, earlier the whole system of values was structured around land, now cultivators do not find agriculture profitable without another income. Villagers send their sons to the school so they he can get a government or private jobs. The prevailing situation is that neither are the boys putting their labour in agriculture seriously nor they are getting any job."

The parents value system has also changed. Government jobs have become an additional status symbol along with land holding. Villagers do not hesitate to invest money in their sons' education with the hope that this would help them to get a government job, as well as good dowry. So the villagers do not mind to exempting them from any hard work. Nor do they mind making enormous sacrifices for their sons.

Early marriage is very prevalent in these villages. Girls are expected to learn all household job before going to their in-laws house. Therefore from the age of 6-7 years they are made to do quite a lot of work. At the age of 13-14 they become quite mature and responsible as regards the work given to them. In poor families their work load is

much more than of girls from well-off families. They are also pressurised to help in family economy through earning money or in some other indirect way.

Boys have much more exposure to outside life at a relatively early age because of their freedom to move around. The girls, however, due to their restricted movement have less exposure. After their school they work only in the fields within their own village. Girls from well-off families remain at home and prepare their dowry in their leisure time. If a girl does go out frequently then she immediately becomes the subject of gossip. In fact, the highest tribute that can be paid to a village girl is to say 'no one ever hears a word about her.' Parents still rear girls according to the traditional model following the convention that "a properly reared" girl will be able to obtain a husband more easily." Early and arranged marriage is the prevailing practice. So by the age of 14-16 years girls are married.

One day in a family gathering, it was observed that the ladies were discussing a widow. She has an only daughter who is 2 months old. In her in-laws' place her husband was also an only son. Her father had passed away in her childhood, and her uncle had brought her up. The ladies were speculating how she would survive and spend the rest of

her life. Neither she has a father, or a husband nor a son who could become her anchor. It would have been preferable therefore if death had snatched away her daughter instead of her husband. Mamta, Pinky and other children were standing and listening to the conversation. Afterwards Mamta asked, "Should the lady whose husband has died should also die?"

When I talked to a of 13 year old girl she said, "A girl is always made to feel the importance of a male, from childhood - be it the issue of food or clothes, roaming, studying or working. They (boys) always have a higher priority. The girls are told that this so because they are boys, they are brothers, they are fathers, they are uncles, they are husbands. That is they are everything, you are nothing."

One lady said, "girls are an unwanted burden. This feeling is transferred from generation to generations."

A GIRL THROUGH HER PARENTS EYES

Rajapur Malhua and Radhopur Junglepur villagers discriminate between their male and female children. Even the children are aware of their parents behaviour towards them. Parents do not see children as individuals as but male or a female children.

Parents attitudes are largely determined by socio-economic and cultural factors. Inheritance of property, need for labour, cost of marriage and dowry and oldage security are the main factors. These factors, in addition, the religious and cultural needs also play a role in determining parents' attitude. These are eloquently expressed in the following interviews.

Any number of sons is always accepted and in fact one can say that the more the number of boys, the better it is, but to be safe there should be a minimum of two sons. Villagers do not want to take any risk of misfortune with ^{only} one son. In that desire to beget one son many unwanted daughters are born.

Apart from the sons, villagers think themselves fortunate if they have only one daughter and they do not even mind not having any daughter. They want^a daughter mainly to have a virtue of giving away a daughter in marriage. If they do not have a daughter of their own, they do so by giving away their grand daughter or their brother's daughter. As Geeta Mishra said, "I was married off at the age of seven, because my grand parents did not have any daughter. That is why by marrying off their eldest grand daughter at the age of seven, my grand father who was very ill, earned the virtue of 'Kanyadan'.

Villagers think about their daughters as a heavy responsibility as long as they are not married. One has to guard them as long as one is alive; one has to give to them and to expect anything from them is a crime.

On the other hand boys, will stay in their own house. If the boy grows up to be a proper man by studying, if he is capable of looking after his wife and children, he is married off. Otherwise if he is alone, he can always look after himself.

A woman from well-off Brahmin family said, "The later you marry a daughter off, the more dowry you pay. If others in the village educated their daughters and married them late, then I too would have done so. But it cannot be done in case of one family only. Villagers would say, "are you going to eat out of her income that you have made her sit back at home or they would say there must be some reason why you are not getting her married." Like this she would be defamed in some way or the other and I will have problems in getting her wed." Due to this fear we parents usually get our daughters married early. For us she is a source of worry as she can bring dishonour and criticism. The day the girl goes off after marriage one feels very sad but at same time there is a peace in the knowledge that a burden is lifted off our shoulders."

In subsistence families, villagers are worried if they do not have sons to look after them in their old age. As one woman said, "In our desire to get one son six daughters were born. Then child birth stopped on its own, but a son was not born. A son is a support in one's old age. Even if one's son and daughter in-law give food after reprimand, it is digested. But the food given by the daughter even if with much respect and love will not go down one's throat. How can I eat her food whom I have given away? I have to live in this village, in this society. That is why I am worried about my old age, now that I do not have any son. There has to be someone to give one a glass of water in one's old age. But I do not have so much property that a son-in-law would agree to become a 'Ghar Jamai'.*

The situation is different amongst the poor specially in Pasi and Chamars. One poor Pasi said, "Girls should be born in the wealthy upper caste families where they can be looked after properly. To protect girls among the poor is very difficult. We do not even send our daughters to Soraon school. The Brahmins and Yadav boys are very ill mannered. How can we withstand these people? That is why we keep our

*Son-in-law who stays with his in-laws.

daughters at home. When we send them to their in-laws house after marriage, our responsibility is over."

However in poor families, a girl is not just an expenditure. Instead they are one of the two hands who earn money. They do not have the system of dowry. As one well-off Brahmin mother said, "There is no dowry amongst lower castes. Both the boys and girls work in the fields and earn. In our families, girls do not work outside. Among lower castes, the girls work in fields even when they come home after marriage and earn the money and give it to their parents to buy the necessary things that have to be given to them by their parents to give a send off (Bidai)."

Poor have nuclear families. The boys immediately get separated after marriage. Thus the parents have to toil in old age as long as their health permits and earn their food. The son and daughter-in-law feed them when they cannot work. When their daughters get married, the daughter-in-law takes their places. Even then the status of boys is more than that of girls. The only thing is that the boys stay in the village, and the girls go away after marriage. They are (sons) useful during problems, they are available immediately in need. Besides, however much may the girls earn, the responsibility of providing for the home is upon the boys.

Inheritance of property, need for labour, cost of

marriage and dowry and old age security are the ^{socio-economic} main _λ factors. These are eloquently expressed in the following interviews.

Most of the well-off families are joint families. They possess more than enough property specially in terms of land in the villages. They want this huge property to be inherited by their own family members. If it is not possible then by their next of kin. After marriage a daughter does not remain a family member in her parents house, she becomes a member of her in-laws family. Therefore daughters do not or cannot inherit their parental property, (but there are exceptions). If there is no son then landed/unmovable property will go to the brother or nephew. If there is no son even in the brother's family only then the daughters can inherit the parental property. But the condition is that she has to look after her parents while staying in her parents house. In such cases the son-in-law becomes a 'Ghar Jamai'. If there is more than one daughter and all of them are going to have an equal share in the property, then they have to come and stay turnwise one after another. Parents will never go to stay with the daughter in her in-laws house unless there is a genuine reason. Therefore they want at least one son.

Subsistence families do not possess as much property as well-off families. Whatever they possess they also want that to be inherited by their own son only. Villagers from well-off families do not bother about who would look after them at their old age if they have no sons. They possess so much property that they can ask any of their relatives (who is financially weak) to come and stay in their house and look after them at their old age. And any son-in-law would agree to become 'Ghar Jamai' as he is going to inherit their huge property.

Subsistence families are harassed by high wages for labour. These families are not joint like other well-off families. Either the fathers control the cultivation or they give a little bit of land to their sons for cultivation.

In these sort of families, the sons are pressurised, to have a job or to have a solid income. Unlike, well-off families, such families cannot afford to have labourers to do their every cultivation work. They wanted their family members to do the work. As the daughters are not expected to work outside the house, it is only the sons who are expected to work and look after their lands and extend help in agriculture work. Thus the sons are also valued more than daughters.

Girls are an expenditure. "One has to go on giving them without expecting any return" said one Brahmin. He further added, "Brahmins ask for a fat dowry and now in other families also the custom of dowry has become popular. To get a good husband means to give a heavy dowry."

One well-off Brahmin woman said, "When so much money has to be spent in girls' marriage, how can any money be spent for her education? When nothing is available from them in return. This year, Archana has to be married. One lakh of rupees has to be spent in the marriage. Now you tell me -who will be happy if a girl is born?"

A son brings dowry in his marriage as one villager said. Any expenditure on sons is always an investment and there is always an expectation of returns. But one has to marry off the daughters, they cannot stay unmarried for long at home. They will get spoiled like cooked rice which one cannot keep for long. As 'Ladka Chawal hai aur Ladhi Bhat'.

In subsistence families, daughters are educated for marriage but literate daughters-in-law are brought not for the adornment of the house, but also for the purpose of sending them out for jobs if opportunities arise.

As one woman said, "The fashion of sending daughters

and daughters-in-law for jobs is still not popular in the villages. Inflation has increased, Moreover, boys are not getting any jobs. Thus if a good job or a teacher's job is available, the daughters-in-law can do it. That is why we want educated daughters-in-law so that they can work. And moreover who knows what misfortune may come?"

Thus people desire to have their daughter-in-law working, but due to the village society their desire have not been expressed in openly. Due to unemployment and pressures of inflation, daughters-in-law of a few families are working though their numbers are very few. But all want to do a job.

For mothers, girls are an extra pair of hands. Young girls make their mother totally free from their routine household chores so that they can do other more important work for the family, or relax. That is why parents feel, "However much you teach a girl, she has to do household chores. Studies and learning are of no avail after marriage, learning household work means there will be no problem with the in-laws. It is right that not much time is required to learn house hold work but it takes time to build the mentality that so much of work has to be done. It has to be instilled from childhood that one has to do so much work."

Girls work like a full time servant in the family. This sort of indirect contribution to the family is not even recognised, as girls are not earning something in terms of money. The parents generally feel that girls are doing nothing extra for the family but their minimum duty. Even in the poor families where girls earn money, however much they earn is a temporary measure until she gets married. It does not provide any mental security for the family.

Mothers' experience of life is yet another critical determinant of her attitude towards her daughter. The experience in her life as a girl creates her own attitude as a mother.

"What kind of life do we women have. It is a life full of suffocation. However much you do, you are always made to feel that you are a burden."

"Even dogs and cats can lead their own life, but we are worse off than even them. To lead our lives from childhood to old age we need the shelter of one man or the other. What is the use of such a life?"

Both men and women said, "A female child is necessary to beget sons. Therefore one female child is more than enough in a family."

Houslanandan's wife said, "It is curse for a female child to be born in families like ours. My first grand child is male and then I have three grand daughters. I thought there would be another grandson. Anyway whatever is the will of God. My son does not do a job, he has a betel shop in Soraon. There is very little land. How will these three girls get married? The rich people, ask for so much dowry from us that our courage is lost. If instead of these three girls, there were boys, then one or two would have died in post natal period. Boys are very delicate. But girls have strength like tortoise. Even if you do not want them, they will grow up."

Houslanandan's daughter in-law said, "I did not want so many children but men do not understand. They do not care for restrictions. For me one son and one daughter was enough. But my in-laws wanted a second grandson. In this way I had 4 children. I am very scared of operation. But men do not want to obey any other restrictions except for operation. It is not that 4 children are too many. But if these 4 were boys everybody would have been happy. My prestige would also have increased in that I would have been the mother of 4 sons. It is true that the status of boys is more than of girls. My love for the son has increased because he is all alone. Among the girls if one is gone

there is the second, if she too is gone, there is the third. Everybody is very protective about my son, if anything happens to him it would be disastrous.

Where is the happiness in girl's life that it is necessary for her to live? If people at home keep pets, they feed them properly. They are looked after with care. If there is delay in giving hay to the animals, there is a lot of hue and cry at home. A dog was kept in my mother's house. Mother used to definitely ask in the morning and afternoon and evening whether *roti* was given to the dog. However after feeding everybody, nobody asks whether *roti* is left for the girl — not even the mother. Ever since I had come to senses I have known that I was a burden on my parents' head. Parents make the daughters realise from the beginning that they are a responsibility. As the daughters grow older the parents lose their peace of mind and their night's sleep. Whenever my parents discussed about us sisters, they wore a look of depression. Seeing this I wondered what I could do to help. Sometimes I felt that if I ate two *roti* less, some money would be saved. If our clothes got torn, I used to mend them but never asked for any new ones. I have gone to school till class III and then I stopped because I had to work at home. I wanted to go to school badly but then I used to think that money was needed for school fees, dress, books and all, and from where would

so much money come. Father also had to give the dowry. Is a job not available without studies. But they would not let us do any job also. When I became little older, I thought that if I went to my in-laws' place after marriage, the people at home would be at peace. If the groom is less educated, the demand for dowry is less and if he is working, they ask for more dowry. I got married and had 'gauna' after 2-3 years. I came to the in-laws' house. My husband had no job. He has a betel shop in Soraon. There is no shortage of food at home, Didi, we have a little landed property. But if the husband has a job or earns well, one feels good. Even here I feel that I am a burden on my husband. Above that we have four children. Coming here also is the same life of suppression and suffocation. I do not want any thing for myself I work throughout the day but still feel that I am a burden. I feel guilty as if I have done something wrong.

Everyday *daal*, chawal and *roti* are made at home, vegetable is cooked twice/thrice per week. After feeding everybody, a little bit is left at times, and nothing is left at times. When I was in family way I had the strong desire to eat vegetable and *roti*. I wanted to make it tasty with tomato and coriander leaves. I wanted to eat raw tomato and raw radish, carrot, I wanted to have milk and curd. But

everything was suppressed within my mind. There is no shortage at home. Everything comes home and is prepared at home but all is for the male members. The daughter-in-law has the luck to only lick the pan. After a son is born, *sathaura** is prepared in nice way with all dry fruits etc. But after daughters are born continuously, even that is not prepared properly. At times I fail to understand what I should do so that I am not a burden on others. It is a crime to be born a girl. If I were born in the family of a Chamar or a Pasi I could have earned money as a labourer. At least I would not have been a burden on my parents or husband. There is nothing in the village by which I can earn money by sitting at home. Here I would not be allowed to do anything but I shall always be made to remember that I am a burden. To tell you the truth, I am the mother of these three daughters. I feed them, breast feed them and look after them. I cannot strangle them with my own hands but I do not want their long lives. I do not want a suppressed, suffocated and helpless life for them. The girl who dies early is very lucky."

* Nutritions food with all ghee, dry fruits, jaggery etc. and given to the mother in her post natal period.

Parasnath's daughter-in-law said, "Had it been within my control, I would not have been partial between a boy and a girl. I would have allowed the girl enough time to study and would not have made her do so much of work. But what can I do? The other members of house will devour me up if I do not teach her to work, at her in-laws house she would put the family to shame. I admit there is partiality between a boy and girl.

CHAPTER V

IMPLICATIONS OF CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Long before scientific studies of children were made, it was an accepted fact that early years are critical in the child's development. This was expressed in Chinese proverb, "As the twig is bent, so the tree's inclined." Milton expressed the same fact when he wrote, "The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day."

Most child psychologists have said that the pre-school years from about ages 2 to 5 are among the most important, if not the most important, of all stages of development. It is unquestionably the period during which the foundations are laid for the complex behavioral structure that are built in child's life time (Bijou, 1975).

Erikson (1964) said that, "Childhood is the scene of man's beginning as man, the place where our particular virtues and vices slowly but clearly develop and make themselves felt." He has further explained that babyhood is a time of "basic trust" — the individual learns to view the world as safe, reliable and nurturing; or a time of "basic distrust" — the individual learns to view the world as full of threat, unpredictability and treachery. Which of these sets of personality traits the child will acquire will depend on how parents gratify the child's needs for food, attention and love. Once learned, these attitudes will colour the individual's perception of people and situations

throughout life.

Like Erikson, Pringle (1974) listed out for practical purposes four psycho-social needs, which have to be met from the very beginning of life. These are: the need for love and security; for new experiences; for praise and recognition; and for responsibility along with basic need for food.

There is ample evidence that the attitude and emotional reactions of parents, the total cultural context of the environment in which the child grows up, and other factors in the child's total experience are of great importance in determining the pattern of personality (Baumrind, 1967, Bayley, 1968).

In other words, basic pattern of personality are laid during the period of childhood and these persist relatively unchanged as time goes on (Hurlock, 1978).

By exploring childhood experiences in meeting the basic needs in a particular cultural context, our study shows that the pattern of intrafamilial influences active in the moulding of personalities—especially of girls, tend to persist across economic categories. Though culture certainly has a socio-economic context, it is not necessary that economic changes always change cultural practices.

This study of the villages can neither be used for

generalization nor does it quantify the trends of biased behaviour of the parents towards their daughters in the study population. However, within its limits it highlights certain social processes and issues of differential behaviour of the parents as well as the society towards male and female children.

FAMILY DYNAMICS AND CHILDHOOD - HOW BASIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN ARE MET

Nutrition plays an important role in the development of a child during early childhood. For most aspects, the period of most rapid growth takes place in the early years of life (Hurlock, 1985). Severe malnutrition at this time not only results in poor health but also leads to what is known as "deprivation syndrome". Due to severe malnutrition children become so weak and lethargic that they cannot react or react, very slowly to their environment. This affects their overall development and thus they develop a syndrome of deprivation.

Most of the time the girls are fed by siblings who themselves happen to be children. Mothers do not bother about the amount and how frequently the girl is fed. The girls are given food only after the boys have eaten. Extra food is always given to the boys in the family even at the cost of girls, who have a lower nutrition status than the boys. As in the case of Gulabi (page 90) who was scolded by

her mother as she had eaten all the leftovers of lunch without sparing a thought for her younger brother. She said "when the brothers eat up everything and I remain hungry then mother never scolds them. Instead she would tell me 'why are you weeping so much. Eat when food is prepared. You are not going to die out of hunger.' And if I ever eat she beats me. She always let the brothers eat first."

Lower nutritional status of the girls, further makes them prone to illness. As frequent illness disturbs the parents' routine, the girls are further considered sources of irritation and burden and are neglected. As a result health care for girls is also poor.

The need for love is met through the child experiencing a stable, continuous, dependable and loving relationship with her parents first; later on with an ever widening circle of people. Through this relationship the children come to a realization of their personal identity and worth. The greatest impact of unconditional love is on the self. Approval and acceptance by others are essential for the development of self-approval and self-acceptance. Whether a child will develop a constructive or destructive attitude, first to herself and then to others, depends in the first place on her parents attitude to her (Pringle, 1974).

Anger, hate and lack of concern for others are probable

reactions to being unloved and rejected.

The girls in the study villages in the initial period of their lives lack the interaction they require from mothers to satisfy the basic physical and psychological needs of love and security. They are left to cry whilst the mother is working. Most of the time they are taken care of by the siblings when the mother goes for field work. At times it is very ^pressive for the sibling-as Kanchan (page113) expressed that she had become tired of carrying Jui for one year and she did not want any more children in the family as she had to take care of them. Girls are left with the siblings even during their illness^(Case No 1). They are not allowed to sleep with their mothers at night in early childhood, unlike their brothers.

As they grow older day by day they face the resentment and reproach of their parents. They are treated as if they are a liability and a permanent financial constraint for their family. During interviews with parents, they often insisted that daughters are a constant expenditure, they have to pay a heavy dowry during their marriage, and till they marry off their daughters they cannot have peaceful sleep. To make up this 'financial loss' upto some extent, the parents get their daughters married at an early age.

Thus, she witnesses the excitement at the birth of a boy and depression at the birth of a girl.

Lack of unconditional love because of her sex, makes a girl feel emotionally insecure. An additional reason for insecurity is the lack of any sense of stability of relationship and things.

The girl child is brought up with emphasis placed on her temporary membership in her parental home. She knows that she does not have many rights on her parental home and the moment she gets married she has no rights left. Thus she is always treated as a 'paraidan' (other's property). She lives with the insecurity of knowing that nothing belongs to her and that she has no right to have a bit of milk or sweets or an extra pair of clothes. In her day to day life she cannot afford to feel possessive even over small things like her toys. As Jyotsna said, "even after many years, I feel very upset as to why, nobody scolded my brother when he broke my doll" (page 116).

The need for new experiences is a prerequisite for mental growth; as essential to the mind's development as food is for the body. New experiences enable the child to learn one of the most important and basic lessons of early life learning how to learn and therefrom the joy and sense

of achievement.

Learning and education depend not only on the child's inborn capacity, but on environmental opportunity and encouragement. The emotional and cultural climate of the home as well as parental involvement and aspirations can foster, limit, or even impair intellectual growth.

Villagers do not want to spend any money on a girls' education unless and until it becomes a prerequisite for good marriage. She still would be sent to school of a lower standard whereas boys are sent to schools, that parents feel are the best, no matter how expensive. Higher education is no way going to help her parents. She is not allowed to seek employment, and even if she does, her parents feel that the in/laws will benefit—not they themselves. Therefore a girl is allowed to experience only those things which will be helpful for her in married life, e.g. household work needle work etc. The purpose of educating a girl is for better marriage prospects. ^(page/06) A girl is not expected to do well in her studies. If she shows achievement in her studies, she is not praised or recognised, as she deserves (Case No.6). She is not encouraged for her own enlightenment or for a better future. Her exposures, and interactions are limited only to the four walls of her house. She is made to do only monotonous routine jobs. She is denied a variety of opportunities where she can show her creativity.

The need for praise and recognition is provided by the pleasure shown at success and by praise given to achievement by adults who love the child and whom she in turn loves and want to please. A child's self-concept is developed through the view that others hold of her.

If this need is inadequately met or remains unsatisfied, then in the long-run the effects are destructive of self-respect and self-confidence in tackling new situations, tasks or relationships.

Girls are praised and recognised at times when they cook very well or do good needle work or are able to manage household responsibility efficiently. They are not taken as indispensable for the family. They are never brought into the limelight even if they deserve to be.

However, their invisible contribution to the family is not valued as much as the boys visible financial contribution. Even if they earn money they are not valued as much as boys are, because their is not a permanent source of income. As one villager said, "My son's income is a permanent financial contribution for the family but my daughters contribution will last only until she gets married and leaves us".

The need for responsibility is met by allowing the

child to gain independence, through learning, to look after herself in matters of every day care, such as feeding, dressing and washing and later by being given small tasks to perform for others.

The child who is denied opportunities to exercise responsibility will fail to develop a sense of self-confidence. The sense of responsibility which grows with age and with self-confidence is also distorted among girl.

Girls learn to take care of themselves independently from an early age as compared to boys of their age. The boys are pampered while the girls are in fact neglected. As Mamta (an 11 year old) said (page 113) it is not only household work that I have to do but in addition I have to get my brother (6 year old) ready for school. I have to feed him, dress him, bathe him etc. I have to take care of him when he comes back from school in the after noon. While my 4 year old sister looks after herself. Nobody takes care of her except occasionally, when somebody helps her. I also get irritated after coming back from school, when I see the piled up utensils of the entire day which have to be washed. Boys are also there, why can they not wash at least their own plates and glasses."

Thus girls are gradually introduced, encouraged or compelled to do routine household work by age of six.

By the end of their childhood they are not only able to do household work independently but they become mature enough to take on the total responsibility of it. On the other hand when it comes to work outside the four walls of the kitchen or the house they are made totally dependent on others as they are never allowed to do any work outside home independently and thereby can not gain experience and confidence in such activities. They are not given any decision making powers even regarding household work.

UNMET CHILDREN'S NEED AND PERSONALITY

With a few exceptions the rearing of a girl is considered a burden for parents as they do not want her. Whatever a girl gets from her parents remains restrained when compared with the son.

She witnesses the excitement at the birth of a brother, while she herself is seen as the object of pity. She hears only sympathy and concern showered on parents due to her existence. She watches extra-food being given to the boys in the family. So she begins to know that boys are special and girls are just second rate.

She feels frightened and confused when she realizes that she is unloved and rejected. The fear is further accentuated when her efforts to draw attention and claims

for love are rejected.

Initially she accepts the explanations given by her parents for such behaviour. However, as she grows older she starts questioning and makes demands for equal treatment. She gets angry and she throws tantrums. For this she gets scolded, punished and rebuked instead of getting attention.

When she finds that similar behaviour of her brother provokes widely different reactions from the same parents at different times, she feels helpless and insecure. She begins to realize that she has an inferior position in the family. At the same time her confusion about the standards of behaviour being set by the parents continues. Confusion arises in the girl's mind because of many basic unanswered questions and things which girls are made to accept without any logical answers e.g. many girls wonder how it can be that when they work so hard they are considered burdens. Or that, just because her brother is a boy has more rights than even her elder sister.

As a result, the girls of 8-10 years of age have varied attitudes. Some girls become subdued, some become introvert, some dreamy and some rebellious. As in the case of Jyotsna, (page.116) who fought with her parents on many occasions for equal treatment, and she was always scolded

and rebuked. Gradually in the long-run she surrendered to the social norms in confusion. Similarly in case of Mamta who was vocal enough and rebelled against the biased behaviour of her parents.

With this basic sense of rejection, helplessness and insecurity, the girl starts devaluing her self-image. As Guddan said "I mean nothing to this house" (page 91). She is not sent to the school because it is claimed that she is unintelligent and dull. She is not allowed to contribute to conversations because she is supposed to be ignorant.

For any girl, her frustrations grow when she is withdrawn from the school after few years, despite being intelligent and good at studies as was the case with Suman (Case No.4). Frustration and helplessness is also bound to occur when she is not allowed to play or to go out to be with her friends; or when she is kept hungry or denied her favourite toys because the 'brother likes them' (as in case of Joytsna).

On one hand she is always rebuked that she is a liability, on the other hand she is not allowed to become independent and stand on her own feet and help her parents.

She feels unloved, rejected, neglected and ignored by the members of her family. She is said to be an unintelligent, dependent creature. She is a constant expenditure for

her parents and a burden and liability. Till they marry her off the parents cannot sleep in peace.

The reaction to all this is anger, hate and a manipulative streak for self preservation. As she will not get equal treatment in spite of her expression of anger and demand, she surrenders to the situation and accepts that she will neither get nor that she deserves anything. She learns to acquire stealthily and gradually develops a self-image of worthlessness and of guilt.

To overcome this guilt she becomes less and less demanding and allows her own exploitation. She works day and night without expecting any fair deal from others. Sometimes she feels pity for her parents and justifies their behaviour towards her as she has caused them a lot of suffering in terms of money. She works more and more to make their suffering a bit less. And she wants to get married early which will bring peace in her parents' life. As Vinita said (Case No.6), "How would father manage everything. What to do? Sometime I feel pity for my parents also. They have to marry off so many daughters. From where they would bring so much of dowry. Today is our school holiday. We will go to harvest the crop, that got spoiled, and therefore no labourer will harvest it. If we do not harvest this crop then my father will suffer a heavy

loss. I do not understand what we girls can do to help. Neither are we allowed to go and take up some job so that we can earn some money and give them. Upon that they curse us all. Why were you born? So much dowry has to be given. You are a burden, you are sitting upon us like stones."

She cannot hate her brother or show lack of concern for him because she has been socialized such that she has accepted that boys are superior to girls and if she wants to be happy in her life she should always be protected by any related male member. She has also witnessed the suffering and pitiful status of a widow or a deserted woman, a woman who does not have any sons and a sister who does not have any brother.

She wants to escape from these. She hopes that marriage will bring about a change in her life and she starts dreaming, but with a definite lack of realization of herself as an individual. A destructive attitude for her ownself has been born out of the negative treatment that she has received throughout her life in contrast to boys who are pampered, indulged and left free to play, assert and make demands for themselves.

When finally she becomes a mother of a daughter she finds her daughter an extension of her life which she does not want to continue anymore. Miller (1981), as a psycho-

analyst said, "In many societies, little girls suffer additional discrimination because they are girls. Since women, however, have control of the new-born and the infants, these erstwhile little girls can pass on to their children at the most tender age the contempt from which they once had suffered." And thus within the norms of society, women themselves desire sons and perpetuate the myth of their own uselessness in society.

According to mothers, they love their daughters and it seems quite obvious also. The mothers know that if their daughters do not know household work and needle work properly, if they are not hardworking and are not submissive and tolerant to any extent then they will face many problems in their in-laws house. And if they are sent back from in-laws house to her parents house for any reasons then their life will be hell throughout. They will be not accepted even in their parental house. As one woman said, (page 151) "Had it been within my control, I would not have been partial between a son and a daughter. I would have allowed the daughter enough time to study and would not have made her do so much house work. But what can I do? The other members of house will devour me if I do not teach her to work, going to another house she would put the family to shame. And if she is turned out of her in laws place, there is no place for her in her father's home also."

Therefore mothers make daughters work hard day and night, ^(girls) they are disciplined and socialized in such a way that they become submissive and tolerant. In other words mothers bringing up their daughters according to the norms of the society so that they can live happily in their future. The pattern of training imparted to a female child in the villages emphasises her subordinate role within the household. Patrilineal society can allow survival of only those women who allow their own exploitation and would labour silently. A mothers love, thus, becomes distorted.

INFLUENCE OF LARGER SOCIO-ECONOMIC FORCES ON DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF GIRLS

Though certain family level processes are observed in all the groups, their manifestations vary in different socio-economic groups. For example, though girls are generally neglected during illness, they are taken for treatment at a critical stages, but levels of health care are not uniform in all groups. The poor are the most disadvantaged. The reported load of illness is much higher in girls in general, it is highest in poor girls. Similarly, the load of child mortality is high among poor children. And when it is compared between sexes in relation to economic groups, it is the poor girls who have the highest mortal-

ity (Table 7).

When we examine the causes of death among children, we find that persistent diarrhoea, acute fever and tetanus causes the maximum number of deaths, this pattern is constant in all groups. It is interesting to note that death among the well-off due to tetanus is only 6.7 per cent while amongst the poor children tetanus causes 19.4 per cent of the deaths (Table 8).

Another pertinent finding is that in all sections males comparatively have more deaths due to tetanus than females. Although this does not support our general understanding of discrimination. We suspect that this is because of over enthusiastic caring of male babies who are given extra amounts of oil massage without really bathing them, and applying dry heat to the cord.

Table 11. Distribution of Children according to Castes

Castes	Children			Sex Ratio
	Total	M	F	
Brahmin	165	91	74	81
Backward Castes	119	67	52	78
Scheduled Castes	82	42	40	95
Muslim	23	11	12	100
Total	389	211	178	

Table 12. Distribution of Children according to Economic Group

Economic Groups	Children			Sex Ratio
	Total	M	F	
Well-off	119	62	57	92
Subsistence	153	83	70	84
Poor	117	66	51	77
Total	389	211	178	

A very interesting finding of the demographic aspect is that the sex ratio among 0-12 shows a strong relation to economic position of the children. It is 92 in the well-off and 77 in the poor group (Table 12). Even more interesting is the fact that sex-ratio when seen against caste backgrounds, actually improves amongst the Scheduled Castes. In the Brahmins however, this ratio remains even less than the sex ratio of the subsistence group.

The improved sex ratio amongst the Scheduled Castes shows the equally poor health of the boys. The relatively poor sex ratio amongst the Brahmins probably reflects the fact that economic improvement does not necessarily bring about changes in family relationships. Also, boys benefit more than the girls in these families.

Similarly regarding nutrition, generally girls get less compared to the boys, irrespective of their economic groups; the level of hunger satisfaction and quality of food differs in all groups. Our data on weights of 0-6 years of age show that girls are equally affected across classes but the poor are the most affected.

In addition, the girls have very low educational achievements. It has been found that the gap between male and female enrolment in school is much higher in poor and subsistence families than well-off families. Girls among the poor are the most deprived educationally.

The economic status of the family impinges upon the nature and amount of work done by the girls. In the poor families girls have to work for household chores as well as in the field to earn money. Their leisure time also gets curtailed. Poor girls do not get any help from their mothers who are also overburdened. In these poor families every body has to work according to their age and capacity, even the oldest. Children, especially girls are therefore left alone without anyone to look after them or pay attention to them. In the better off families at least grand parents do not have to work for their livelihood and stay back at home and look after the children.

Despite the physical advantages, a girl's social status

in better-off families is determined by the expenditure on her. The thought of a heavy dowry depresses parents as soon as a girl is born. It leads to early marriages (page 139). Even expenditure on girls education is not considered a duty but a prerequisite for good marriage.

Our Case Report No.1 and indepth interview (page 20) reveal that in the families, attempting for upward mobility through share cropping, have lots of tensions because of economic insecurity. The wrath of this insecurity and tension often falls on the girls in the family as they are in generally unwanted.

Unlike girls from better off families poor girls do not want to have a boy's advantages, they wish to be born in rich families as they do not find anything attractive in the lives of boys in their families.

These common processes manifested in different degrees within different economic groups point towards the influence of the larger socio-economic forces on the differential treatment of the girls.

IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH CARE

Our data show that reported illness and mortality rates are high in girls in all economic groups and that they are worst in the poor groups. This has been already discussed

in the previous section. Here we discuss the problems of health care.

The villagers' biased behaviour towards female children makes them even more vulnerable during illness. People are aware of the fact that male children are more vulnerable to death compared to female children during the post-natal period. Therefore they take extra care for male children. Parents' desire to take extra care of their male child goes beyond the child's vulnerable period. Girls are brought to the dispensary when they are critical but male children are brought earlier. If girls fall sick frequently, then after some time, the parents just stop bothering about her. (N₆1)
Ramadhar Yadav's case report is a good example of such an attitude.

Our data shows that persistent diarrhoea (45.3%) is the major cause of child mortality in the villages (Table 8). And 63% female mortality is due to persistent diarrhoea. Most of the villagers had stated that their children died due to 'Sukharog' i.e. severe malnutrition. Negligence during diarrhoea and lack of concern towards a girl's nutrition leads to severe malnutrition and subsequent mortality. We have observed that the girls with persistent diarrhoea were given medicine initially. But no attention was paid to the quantity and quality of food given to them. If they did not recover they were cursed and left to the gods will.

It is not that villagers do not take care of their daughters during their ill-health however the total approach behind their effort, is different. They never consider boys unwanted irrespective of their numbers. Immediate care is sought. They do not want to lose them at any cost. It is not so in case of girls.

However, after a certain age when girls start household work they become indispensable for their mother and parents realise the usefulness of having a girl and families become concerned about their health. If they fall sick then who will do the household chores? Even then, if treatment for a girl costs a lot in terms of money, then the parents always try to avoid spending that money in every possible way.

In brief our data reveal not just the discrimination against girl child right from her birth but also the conscious and unconscious social processes which generate this. It focuses on the differential in the discrimination between economic groups and explores the reason for this differential. And last but not the least the data provides insights into the implications of this discrimination for the health and health care of the girl child.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study explores the meaning of childhood in a chosen rural population and attempts to understand the differences between the processes that determine the childhood status of the two sexes.

— It was conducted in two villages in Allahabad district in Uttar Pradesh. It uses the case study method with a complete census of socio-economic status of the population; perceived illness pattern, mortality, nutrition level of children of 0 to 12 years of age and their educational achievement.

— It brings the qualitative aspects of childhood for the two sexes and explores the discriminatory behaviour of parents towards girls regarding their day to day caring, feeding, schooling, work, play and emotional security.

The major findings of the study were the followings:

— More than 17% of the households belong to the well off category, whereas 44% were in the poor and 33% were in the subsistence category. The villages were dominated by the Brahmins. 94% of the Brahmin households and 54.5% of the Backward Castes belong to the subsistence and well off categories, whereas 14% of the Scheduled Caste households belong to subsistence category. There are no Scheduled Caste households in the well-off category. Over time the

Brahmins had made maximum use of the educational and employment opportunities.

— Opportunities of share cropping with newer technologies had helped 14% households of Scheduled Castes to attain upward mobility to the subsistence category. It had also helped many Backward Caste families to improve their economic status.

— Despite the general development of the villages, the quality of the life of the girls was poor. They continued to stay within the boundaries of the household and worked hard without being treated as equal with the boys.

— Girls had higher rates of yearly illness and higher percentage of mortality as compared to boys (illness rate is 214 and 154 for girls and boys; mortality is 49.9% and 37.2% respectively). Since girls are known to be biologically stronger sex, it is obvious that the other factors, like neglect of their general health as well as neglect during their illness is partly responsible for this finding.

— Persistent diarrhoea, acute fever and tetanus were the major killers. These were seen to be responsible for the maximum of deaths. This pattern was constant over all economic categories.

— Persistent diarrhoea was seen to cause 63% of female

mortality. These deaths were equally higher across all economic categories. Acute fever caused a greater number of deaths in males. Deaths due to tetanus were higher in poor families as compared to the well-off categories (19.4% as compared to 6.7%). Here again we find that males had a higher mortality rate due to tetanus.

— This pattern of mortality reveals that, male die more often due to acute infections as compared to females who die more due to chronic diseases.

Explanations of our findings regarding health status of the girls were located in their social existence. The following were the key features of girlhood in the study villages.

— The age group of 0 to 6 years showed that malnutrition affected girls across classes but the poor girls were the most affected. The number of boys more in the normal and in the 1st grade malnutrition while the number of girls was more in 2nd and 3rd grade malnutrition.

— The number of females as against males attending school was much lower in poor and subsistence families than well-off families. Girls among the poor were the most deprived educationally.

— The girls were made to work more than boys and they

start working at a much younger age. At the age when girls were considered adult and mature, boys were considered children.

— Boys were always considered assets in the families irrespective of their numbers. Therefore they were made to feel more wanted.

— Girls were denied certain needs which were a must for their overall development. For examples, they are not fed properly or cared for during illness. Their need for love, security, new experiences, praise and recognition, and for responsibility were not met with.

— Repercussions of this denial of their needs could be seen in their behaviour. Some girls had become subdued, some had become introverts, some dreamy, and some rebellious. These reactions were often reflected as anger, hate and a manipulative streak for self preservations. The girls were said to be unintelligent and dependent creatures. They were also considered constant expenditures for their parents and a burden and liability. This had contributed to a basic sense of rejection, helplessness and insecurity. The girls started devluaiing their own self image.

— To overcome their feeling of guilt they became less and less demanding and allowed their own exploitation. They even felt pity for their parents as they thought they cost them

suffering in turms of money. To make up they worked hard day and night without expecting a fair deal from others. They wished to get married early so that they might bring peace in their parents' life.

— They are made to believe that boys are superior to them and that if they want happiness they need a man to protect them.

— A self destructive attitude is thus born out of the negative treatment that they receive. When finally they become mothers, a daughter become a reminder of their own misery and helplessness which they want to reject. Thus within the norms of the society women themselves desire sons and by rejecting their daughters, perpetuate the myth of their uselessness.

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APPENDIX-1.

Scheduled for Basic Information on the Socio-Economic Conditions of the Family.

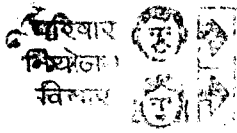
Date : Sl.No.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1. Head of the family | 5. Source of Drinking Water |
| 2. Occupation | 6. Types of House and no. of rooms |
| 3. Landholding | 7. Other facilities-Latrines, Electricity |
| 4. Caste | 8. Resident Children 0-12 yrs. |

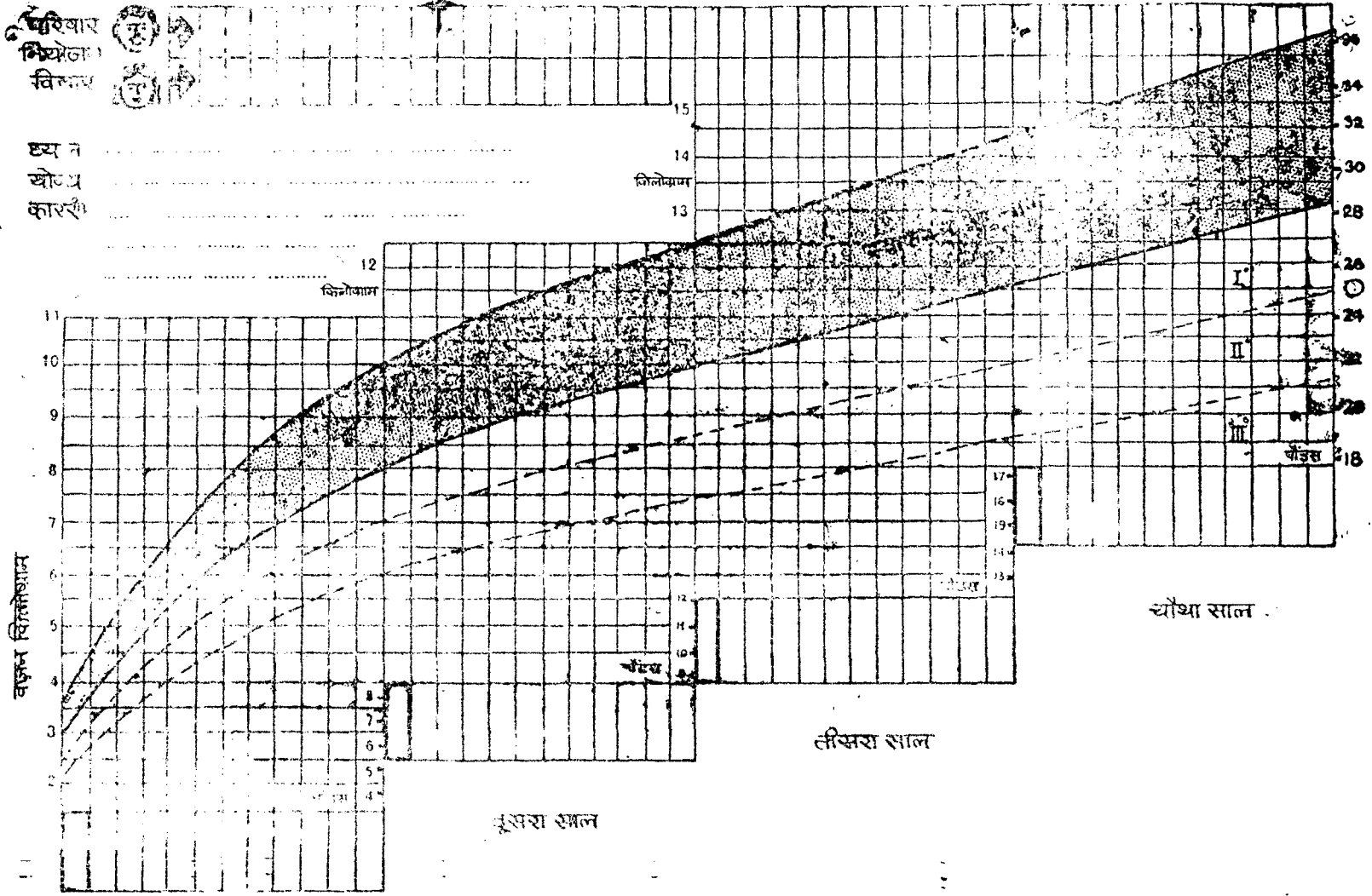
1. Name no.	Relationship/ with Head	Age/ Sex	marital status	Education	weight (0-6 yrs of children)
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persistent illness (6 wks-above)	Acute illness bedridden (1-5 wks.)	Total No. of child birth	Total No. of child death	Death at age
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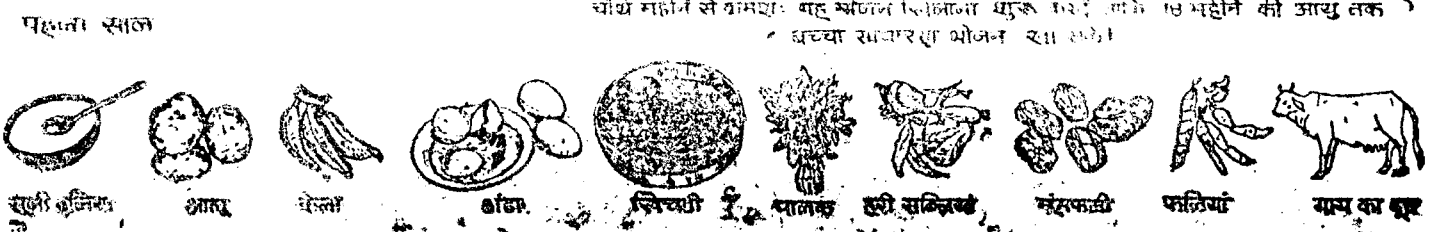
Causes of death	Remarks
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उम्र
 औषधि
 कारण



बिल्ली देर ही बाले
 की का दूध मांसो को
 नहीं खाते, बल्कि चास
 को ही खाता है।



पहला साल चौथे माह से काम शुरू बच्चा सामान्य भोजन खा लेता है।

सूपी दूधिया आम्र केला अंडा चिचोरी पालक हरी सब्जियाँ मटरफांटी फलियाँ गाय का दूध

चौथे माह से काम शुरू: वह भोजन सिखाता शुरू करते हैं। 18 महीने की आयु तक बच्चा सामान्य भोजन खा लेता है।