

**Understanding Life Style of Girls and Young Women in Remote
Rural Hilly Areas of Uttarakhand**

**Dissertation
in
Shri Bhuvneshwar Mahila i Ashram(SBMA)**

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**Under the Guidance of
Prof. Rahul Ghai**

**Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management
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**School of Rural Management
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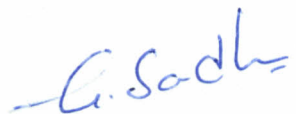
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This is to certify that **Dr.Archana Gupta** student of PGDRM, Batch 3rd School of Rural Management, Institute of Health Management Research; Jaipur has undergone her Dissertation on the topic entitled **“UNDERSTANDING LIFE STYLE OF GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN REMOTE RURAL HILLY AREAS OF UTTARAKHAND”** from 3rd March 2014 to 17th May 2014.

The Candidate has successfully carried out the study assigned to her during dissertation and her approach to study has been scientific and analytical. This dissertation is partial fulfillment of the course requirements for the award of Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management.

I wish her all success in all her future endeavors.


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This is to certify that the dissertation titled "Understanding Lifestyle of Girls and Young Women in Remote Rural hilly Areas of Uttarakhand" has been successfully completed and submitted by Ms. Archana Gupta Enrolment No. IIHMR/PGDRM/2012-14/03-44 under the supervision of Prof. Rahul Ghai for award of Postgraduate Diploma in Rural Management of the Institute carried out during the period from March 03, 2014 to May 17, 2014 embodies my original work and has not formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma associate ship, fellowship, titles in this or any other Institute or other similar institution of higher learning.

Archana Gupta

Signature:

Date: 30/5/14

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(Archana Gupta)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was done to understand life style and situation of young females of remote areas of Uttarakhand. The study titled **“Understanding lifestyle of girls and Young women in Remote Rural Areas of Uttarakhand”**. Attempts to understand situations they face in their daily life; conditions in which they are spending their time; about the status of their health and education; and what is their existence in society. The study was conducted in 20 villages of Gairsain block in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand. Villages were divided in 2 groups , first group was of interior villages and second group was of villages that were nearer to road.

Objectives of study were to understand challenges adolescent girls face in hilly rural areas, to find out different activities girls are engaged at the household and farm level and to understand socio- psychological problems among young girls.

Methods of study were Group Discussion with girls and women and Personal interviews .To involve target group into productive talk and for rapport building the some processes were adopted: Participation in different trainings and Programs of SBMA, School survey, Personal interactions in farms during their work.

This study is about comparison between girls of interior villages and girls of villages that are situated nearby roads. The girls of interior villages are facing greater challenges in comparison to girls of roadside villages. It is found that the average age of Marriage is just after 18 years. Alcoholism was found to be rampant that is impacting life of girls in very bad manner. The girls and young women spend more time in work

related to farming, animals and house that affects their education. Girls and young women of both type of villages have many issues and challenges related to health, education and their condition in society. Some problems are common and some are different among girls of two areas.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades we can see a significant improvement in situation of girls and young women in India as compared to previous decades. This has been made possible by not only dedicated policy action by the state but growing awareness of the civil society of a modernizing India. But in the rural countryside especially in the remote rural pockets where the hold of the traditional society still persists there are issues and challenges adolescent girls and young women face even today.

In general some of the challenges and difficulties girls and young women face today are access to basic services like health, education. The persistence of traditional patriarchal ethos systematically excludes youth from higher education as well attaining dignified employ-ability skills and condemns them to discrimination, atrocities and violence.

Educational access is less in rural areas for both boys and girls, but particularly for girls. Differences reflect family expectations of future returns from their educational investments. Faced with a choice, some parents prefer to educate sons because there are more and better-paying jobs for men than for women. Some parents invest less in girls' education because economic returns will go to their future husband's families after marriage. Disparities in educational access also reflect the lower value parents accord to education as compared to household chores which are still considered as a natural role for girls.

In addition to these general challenges that this gender group faces all over the country, particular geographical area have their own specific set of issues as well.

The present study attempts to understand these in the context of hilly areas like Uttarakhand. It has been observed that as compared to plain areas the daily life routine of hill communities burden them with activities that are more time consuming. Some of these are collection of fodder for their animals from distant areas, tending cattle, and engaging in agricultural work in fields. Their situation is compounded by that most male members migrate out to other regions in search of work. It has been estimated that the contribution of women in agriculture and animal care is as high as 90 percent. The men come in only to plough the land. Women take decisions regarding the agricultural operations

This study was done to understand life style and situation of young females of remote areas of Uttarakhand. My topic of study was **“Understanding lifestyle of girls and Young women in Remote Rural Areas of Uttarakhand”**. Situations what they are facing in their daily life; conditions in which they are spending their time; about their health and education; and what is their existence in society.

The field work covered two types of villages in Chamoli district- those that are situated nearby national highway and villages that were situated in remote areas or were away from road. Remote villages I selected were of 2 to 5 km from roads

Many things are common in between the conditions and life style of girls of both areas and many are quite different.

List of Villages:

List: 1

S.no.	Interior villages
1	Parwadi
2	Sarcote
3	Silanga
4	Dhanga
5	Dungri
6	Matkot chidiya
7	Nail
8	Jingod
9	Ramda
10	Malsi

List: 2

S. no.	Villages nearby roads and market
1	Salyana
2	Dunarghat
3	Sengi
4	Agarchatti
5	Mehalchori
6	Saregwad
7	Khatryana
8	Gwadtalla
9	Gairsain
10	Maroda

The study was facilitated by SBMA. SBMA is an independent organization that works with the people of Garhwal Himalayas. The SBM Ashram Evolved out of years of community struggle led by founder late Swami Manmanthan, a Crusader from Kerala, strongly committed to the progress of Uttarakhand.

SBMA has been committed to a child centered approach and today works with more than 1600 communities of 37 blocks of 13 districts in Uttarakhand with National and International initiatives. It also concentrates on building bridges between voluntary organizations, Government and community for the larger policy advocacy on issues concerning the well being of hill communities.

CHAPTER 2:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

In this chapter I review certain secondary literature that is relevant for the subject of my study.

- Even today in the 21st century India, the psychosocial and cultural environments have innumerable prejudiced traditions and redundant customs: dowry, child marriage, illiteracy, physical and mental violence, etc. The Indian girls because of their secondary status in the society may have low self-esteem and poor psychological well-being. Thus it becomes important to study the psychosocial and cultural barriers faced by Indian girls in order to offer a timely correction that can help them play a substantial role in shaping-up the future village society. The broad objective of the present study was to identify the psychosocial and cultural barriers in a village society which hindering to get girls' full potential.

Kamlesh Singh , Dalbir Singh and Suman(2009)

- India has one of the fastest growing youth populations in the world, with an estimated 190 million adolescents. Girls below 19 years of age comprise one quarter of India's rapidly growing population. The majority is out of school and has limited choices available for the future. Girls are caught in the cycle of early marriage, repeated pregnancy and poverty. The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) has been implementing the pioneering Better Life Options Program (BLP) for adolescents in India through its partner organizations since 1989. The program uses an empowerment model that offers adolescent girls a combination of life skills: literacy and vocational training, support to enter and

stay in formal school, family life education, and leadership training. A unique feature of the program is its holistic approach integrating education, livelihoods and reproductive health.

The Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) September 2001

- Sustainable Livelihoods and Lifestyles in Uttarakhand
& Associated Movements

Areas of Uttarakhand have seen many threats, challenges of different sorts and have responded

to them managing to save and sustain their communities, cultures and the environment

around to a considerable to great extent. Women plays an important role in every activity and faces much problems and bears load of different activities like agriculture, animal husbandry etc.

- The analysis of the situation of children and women in India would be incomplete without paying attention to the disparities that exist between and within states, and the inequalities that persist among different subgroups of the population, notably women and girls, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes. Disparities can be identified across several vectors: geography (between and within states, districts, and sub district level), social identity, and gender being the most notable.

UNICEF/INDIA/Niklas Halle'n United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) May 2011

- Some of the opportunities and challenges facing girls and young women today are discussed in this chapter, taking into consideration factors such as: negative attitudes, exclusion and discrimination; access to services (health, education, employment); empowerment, attitudes and values; young women as victims of violence; and maternal health issues. Attention is given to issues and concerns of special relevance to females, and to their status or position relative to that of males; within the latter context, areas of both inequality and convergence are explored. The various sections of the chapter focus primarily on health, educational and employment issues, the effects of violence on girls and women, their values and attitudes, and the concept of empowerment. The final section provides a summary and analysis of the issues addressed and of the overall situation of girls and young women.

The Situation of Girls and Young Women World YOUTH Report, 2003

- Adolescents (children between the ages of 10-19 years) account for 22.8% of the population and girls below 19 years of age constitute one-fifth of India's fast growing population (NFHS-3, 2005-06). In this document the focus is mostly on children in the 14-18 years age group, majority of whom have been forced to assume the role of adults, grapple with poverty, economic and personal security, ill health, early marriage, lack of education and exploitative environment from an early age both at home and in society. These are the young persons in our country who have not been able to realize their fullest potential. Their critical consciousness is to be developed, leading to their empowerment and to becoming

politically, socially and culturally active and respecting them as productive persons with dignity, sense of well-being and ability to realize their creative potential.

Thus there have to be restorative policies and programs addressing the issue of the gross denial of fundamental rights and entitlements of adolescents – their very right to survival, development, dignity and protection. The fact that they have to catch up with what they have lost and move forward has to be appreciated. The more there is a delay in making wholehearted investments for them; more numbers of them would be left out lacking in capacities to claim their share in the process of building India's development and democracy. It is hoped that this document would generate a national debate and discussion on children in 14-18 years of age, make them more visible and enable steps to be taken up with a sense of urgency in formulating legal and policy framework for them.

Status of Children in 14-18 Years: Review Of Policy, Programme and Legislative Framework 2012- 2013

CHAPTER 3:

OBJECTIVES

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

- To understand challenges adolescent girls face in hilly rural areas.
- To find out different activities girls are engaged at the household and farm level.
- To understand socio- psychological problems among young girls.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- What are the life style girls and young women have?
- How does and in which type of activities they spend their time?
- Which type of difficulties girls faces in their life?

CHAPTER 4

METHOD, PROCESS

AND SCOPE

METHOD:

The study was qualitative in nature and following tools and techniques was used to gain information.

1. Group Discussion with girls and women: (68 girls in 9 groups).
2. Personal interview: (around 43 girls).

Discussion with groups:

List: 3

S.No.	Name of Village	Groups	Number of girls
1	Parwadi	2	10 + 12
2	Nail	1	5
3	Muso	1	8
4	Gairsain	2	8 + 10
5	Jingod	1	4
6	Sarcote	1	7
7	Mehalchori	1	4

Group members:

List: 4

S.No.	Village	Group	Name of Girls in Group	
1	Parwadi	1 st	Reeta	Shobha
			Mamta	sunita
			Sarita	Aarti
			Karishma	Rekha
			Babita	Preeti

2	Parwadi	2 nd	Seema	Sarita
			Neetu	Sushila
			Pooja	Shanti
			Geeta	Sangeeta
			Sushma	Sunita
			Kalawati	Deepa
3	Nail	3 rd	Asha	Chanda
			Heera	Asha Negi
			Radha	
4	Muso	4 th	Priyanka	Hansi
			Laxmi	Indra
			Lata	Divya
			Renu	Kajal
5	Gairsain	5 th	Deepa	Kamla
			Urmila	Yashoda
			Suman	Madhuri
			Jyoti	Geeta
6	Gairsain	6 th	Gayatri	Bhawani
			Divya	Shashi
			Rakhi	Preeti
			Arti	Munni
			Archana	Seema
7	Jingod	7 th	Kavita	Sangeeta

			Chandra	Laxmi
8	Sarcote	8 th	Rajshree	Kusum
			Kiran	Rekha
			Monika	Rameshwari
			Hema	
9	Mehalchori	9 th	Bhanmati	Anita
			Manju	Neema

PROCESS:

To involve target group into productive talk and for rapport building the following processes were adopted:

1. Participation in different trainings and Programs of SBMA.

Participation in trainings and programs of organization namely Gender Equality Program, Disaster Preparedness Training, Social Entrepreneurship Workshop gave me an opportunity to get involved in discussions with communities more closely and this was helpful in rapport building.

2. School survey

School surveys gave an opportunity to visit schools and tried to understand the problems of young girls and real situation of them in schools. I also found many group of girls for interaction. This was helpful to find out the number of dropouts and reasons why they left school.

3. Personal interactions in farms during their work.

Meeting them while in action at their respective farms gave an opportunity to understand closely their hardships.

Scope:

- **Geographical**

Due to very less transportation facilities this was very difficult to reach near target group

- **Shortage of Time**

One of the limitations of this study is that girls and young women have very less time for discussion.

- **Hesitation Among Girls**

Second limitation is their shy nature or less openness with outsiders.

CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following are some of the key analysis and findings:

Girls are very sensitive and emotional. And many of them experiencing loneliness, depression (insomnia), stress, worry etc. Main reason for stress among them is lack of family support and lack of education opportunities.

- There are lack of bonding between parents and girl child. Due to heavy work load mothers are unable to give time to their girl child during their upbringing. And many times they got misguided.

FINDINGS OF PERSONAL INTERVIEWS:

After personal interview I have made my opinion that some issues are common between girls of both areas and many are different.

Common finding:

Generally girls of both areas took leave from school whenever they have worked related household or farming activities and they sacrifices their education.

- In Villages of Gairsain it is found that the average age of Marriage is 18 years. Parents always tried to marry their girl just after 18. Before 18 they don't do marriage because society is aware of Indian constitutional act regarding marriage.
- There is a issue of alcoholism in many houses that is impacting life of girls in very bad manner
- The girls of interior villages are facing greater challenges in comparison to girls of roadside villages.

Specific:

- Girls of interior villages facing many difficulties. Like they are engaged in household works. People of interior villages still having milch cattle and work related to cattle like fodder collection, milking etc. done by females of that house. For green fodder collection they walk for many miles and this activity consumes lots of time and energy of girls.

- Girls living in interior villages have great distance from their schools so that they are irregular. During interaction with girls Reeta and Pushpa from NAIL (Khansar Ghati) told that many time they got late for the school so because of work load and distance and due to this got punished by teacher.
- Girls of road side villages are facing much health problems than girls of interior villages. Problems like Anemia and Depression is more prone in the girls residing roadside villages.
- Health problems are totally different in between two areas. E.g. Girls of Sarcote, Parwadi and Khansar which are most interior in Gairsain Block have health problems related to poor hygiene (Leucorrhoea, Typhoid, Diarrhea, Colic, Jaundice, Worm infestations, etc.) and Roadside villages girls have health problems like Anemia, Vertigo, Menstrual disorders, Headache etc.
- The girls of interior still on homemade food and girls which lives near market are opting Junk food.

(FGD) Focus Group Discussion:

- Group one and two:

Parwadi village is situated 3kms far interior from any road and school where children of Parwadi studying is also 3 – 4 kms from village. There is no girl continuing their studies after 12th. Only one girl name Sarita (19) is doing her graduation. When I asked her in group the reason of this situation they told that her

father is a govt. employee so parents are aware for further studies. The other parents think that if their girl will go for higher studies then in future some difficulties may come in searching suitable match.

Almost all girls wake up early in morning criss cross the difficult terrain to cover a distance of 7 – 8 kms for fodder collection and after came back they goes for their school. In evening they looks after of their younger siblings and cattles. And girls who left their studies after 12th and not married are engaged in household works from morning to evening.

The main health issue in Parwadi village is Jaundice due to impure drinking water. This also hampers their routine life.

- **Group 3:**

Nail village comes in Khansar Ghati area. Khansar Ghati is a big area and quite backward too. People of Khansar are very rigid towards changes. They don't like visits of outsiders in their village. After discussion with girls of Khansar area one girl Vimla told that her sister left her study in 8th class because she often got late for her school due to household work and one day teacher have beat her very badly. When she told her mother about this she ignored. After that she left her study and nobody forced her again.

Other girls of that group focused on another big problem in their life that alcoholism is more prominent in their area and girls not allowed to go alone

outside after evening. There is also danger of wild animals after sunset so they always walk in groups.

- Group 4:

Muso village is a small village. Group discussion was conducted at primary school of muso. This school is situated in forest area around 2km away from the village.

Girls of Muso are engaged in brooming, gardening, and other works accept study and boys were sitting in classroom and studying. School of Muso reflects the dominant biases of patriarchal society where women and girls do all works related to farms and houses. So in school boys are sitting in classroom and studying where girls are working in sun heat.

- Group 5th and 6th :

Gairsain is situated near market and on road quite developed. Girls of Gairsain have not much household work because maximum families not have any cattles. They have farms but they did not keep their girls engage in farming activities. Here girls have many health issues. All girls of these 2 groups have some kind of gynecological problem like leucorrhoea, menstrual disorders etc.

They are also having nutrition related problems. They are anemic, weak.

- Group 7

Jingod village is a small village and there is a school only upto primary. After 5th children goes to school of agarchatti that is around 4km from jingod. After discussion with group of 4 girls the issue of dropout of girls was came in front. 2 girls of jingod took admission in agarchatti school in 6th standard. These girls belong to economically weak families and parents are not willing to educate them. Other girls told that they remain busy in household chores and don't interact with others. Both of them face family restrictions.

- Group 8

Sarcote village is a backward village according to people of other villages. People of sarcote are very rigid towards changes. They don't want to accept things of new world. FGD was quite difficult here because like all villagers , girls were not interested for interaction . In this village female population is more then 100 and only seven girls and women talked. They told that in our village all decisions are taken by men and females are not able to share their health issues with them. Females face many problems here. Health problems in girls are related to personal hygiene. For example – most of females have problem of leucorrhoea and other gynecological problems, resulting from poor personal hygiene.

Other health issue is tuberculosis among people but this is more in girls due to their poor nutritional level.

Educational status of that village is also less. Not one girl in that village is study after inter. And most of the girls leaves studies after 8th standard .the condition was worse before 2004. at that time education of girls was not there, after interventions of SBMA from 2004 ,the condition is improving.

School is around 3 km far from this village and there is no road facility at that route. Collage is 15km far from village.

Daily girls go to many km for collection of fodder so they have less time for themselves. And with this they have no permission to go outside for other reason.

One good thing about this village is that problem of female feticide is not present here.

- Group 9th

Mehalchori is a developed area and nearby road. Facilities related to education and health is present here. group discussion was done in inter collage mehalchori with 4 girls. girls have some issues related to ignorance of health.

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSION

- The brief study in the hill region has been a learning experience. The interactions with girls and young women gave insights into their mental world. This study can help in understanding the problems of young girls which they cannot express or share with everyone.

The following conclusions could be drawn:

The girls of interior villages are facing greater challenges in comparison to girls of roadside villages.

- The girls and young women spend more time in works related to farming, animals and house so education of girls is suffering because of this.
- Girls are lacking in moral support from their family, especially mothers are unable to give adequate time to their daughters due to heavy work load on them as well.
- Alcoholism and other addictions of adolescent and adult males are badly impacting lives of girls and young women.

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