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2021-2022

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan
Almora

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1. Introduction

During covid-19 lockdown and after that, USNPSS has been at the forefront providing support to rural people of Uttarakhand to be resilient and respond to the new challenges with a sound physical, mental and emotional response. Besides financial and operational challenges of accessibility to basic amenities in villages, the pandemic highlighted the problems of an abrupt shift in demography in the region. This issue of migrants returning and the host families adjusting/adapting to accommodate them and provide comfort was discussed in last year's annual report. However, with omicron spreading, the impacts of the pandemic continued this year too, though on a lower scale.

Within Uttarakhand, experiences of and responses to the pandemic have been uneven with villages near high population density areas facing more challenges than remote, difficult to access terrains. Accordingly, a system of shared responsibility for prevention from the pandemic was developed. Masks were prepared and distributed, discussions in communities included awareness building measures on risks, prevention measures and cure as offered by the Government. Women's groups, the local authorities and community members joined hands for prevention from the virus and care, if sick. Further, USNPSS developed community-responsive strategies including knowledge building and counselling for women and children who lost their family members during the pandemic. In addition, multiple approaches were developed to ensure access to reading material and involvement of children in creative activities to sustain learning. Since children in remote areas had no access to online learning, and a majority of them had no computers/mobile phones, social interactions were encouraged, wherever possible. However, remote villages were in an advantageous position too, because physical isolation and cooperation among people were part of daily life in communities.

Building ecosystem resilience has meant that communities bring education, environment, health and nutrition from the periphery to center-stage and consider these attributes as preconditions for improved living. Challenges brought about by climate change, reduced agricultural production due to crop depredation by wild animals and changing aspirations of women, increase in social inequality caused by the rich from the metropolis coming to build their second-home in the hills etc. need to be addressed with an innovative and positive outlook to navigate through changing situations.

The question is how do communities tackle complex issues of multi-layered changes occurring at a rapid pace in the mountains. USNPSS has been deliberating and working on the issue of building community resilience for about a decade now. In our view, people are the centre-stage of resilience building efforts. Community perceptions, value-systems and ability to change are important factors but more than that it is an actual experience of threats such as a natural disaster in villages that prompts people to take immediate action. For example, occurrence of a landslide or of floods due to heavy rains/cloudburst would immediately generate collective action to cope with the situation. This may lead to further

discussions and action in the community to change and plan for the future. Multiple times, this observation has become apparent in our work with communities. In 2012, a major landslide in Ukhimath region, particularly in Mangoli village, not only caused human and animal casualties but also homes were either totally or partially damaged. The incident of Kedarnath floods caused havoc in the same valley in 2013. Today, a decade later, the Kedarnath valley is receiving millions of pilgrims, tourists and mountaineers again. Similarly, in Galla-Pata horticultural area, when the orchardists themselves started to experience a change in temperature impacting apple production, they were quick to take action and began to plant new apple saplings in higher zones. Also, they replaced the old apple trees with peach which needs slightly higher temperature than apples. Installation of hundreds of water tanks in Pata- Galla and nearby villages by USNPSS facilitated the process of adaptation and led to more vegetable production in the region. Today, all farmers grow a variety of vegetables and earn an income by selling those in the market.

In practical terms, this would mean households taking conscious decisions to reduce consumption of junk/package food items and eating fresh local varieties of fruits and vegetables, pulses and cereals. Besides having detailed discussions with communities, the process involved several steps to create value to the local diet and to reduce selling their fresh produce in the market to generate cash.

This year, a total of 45 village learning centres, 10 computer literacy centres, 7 sewing and knitting centres and a beautician training centre were functional in villages.

2. Village learning centres (VLC)

Over the last three decades, USNPSS has developed rural education centres for children and shaped processes that fulfill the needs of communities. The balwadi programme (3-6 years old children) was started in 1988 and continued for about two decades till the government covered almost all villages with anganwadi centres. Then, USNPSS reached out to children through setting up evening centres and libraries in villages. In 2014, USNPSS began to consolidate its programmes catering to children, women, youth and adolescents by establishing village learning centres. These centres offered education to children on a daily basis and brought together women, youth and adolescents at the forefront of community activities to promote a holistic vision and transform processes and activities that impact communities. All through this discourse of providing opportunities for good quality education to rural people, USNPSS has focused on creating a progressive attitude and a congenial environment for learning in which children can grow and achieve their full potential.

Drawing on community resources and the local environment, the curriculum offers relevant and learner-centered education which responds to the needs of children representing different age groups. Children in the 6-14 years age bracket are encouraged to attend the VLCs. However, young children also come with their siblings. Strengthening of basic language and numeracy skills constitutes a major portion of learning because the

quality of education in isolated government schools remains an area of concern. Locally relevant concepts of environment, science, general knowledge, health and hygiene are imparted to improve knowledge and skills that subsequently help children and their communities improve their lives at home and outside. In addition, several activities are organized to improve their communication style and instill confidence in children.



Figure 1. Village learning centre.

Each centre offers opportunities to children and all other residents of the village to read books, newspapers and magazines to understand and relate with the world outside. Each centre contains about 400 books on different subjects, fiction and non-fiction. Pre-school children and students in early stages of schooling can see picture books whilst slightly older children read both fiction and non-fiction. The youth and adolescents borrow books of their choices, the preferred trend with this age group has been of taking books that help them in competitive exams. Girls and young women take books on reproductive health and also on leadership and empowerment related issues. The library is rich in offering content on a variety of issues with publications available from almost all top publishers dealing with children's books in Hindi in the country. Hindi translations of children's books published abroad are also available in the library. In addition, the centre contains maps and a globe to learn from. One of the popular activities that children enjoy a lot is the competition on pointing out countries and their capitals, rivers, seas and oceans on the globe/maps. Along with their shikshikas children make a map of their own village too.

Sports is another area which receives a lot of attention in the centres. Cricket, badminton, football, volleyball, skipping ropes, ludo, carom board, chess sets are available for children to play both outdoors and indoors every day. Since accessories like football pump, shuttle cocks are not easily available in villages, these too are provided to the centres.

During the Covid-19 lockdown many migrant families returned home and the number of children also increased in villages. All these children were benefitted by activities carried out

by shikshikas in their own villages. Particularly, children were able to read books available in the VLC and discuss those amongst themselves and with their shikshikas. The number of children that we have reported in Table 1 and Table 2 covers only those who have been enrolled in the centre and attend on a regular basis. Therefore, the number of returnees who were involved in VLCs for a brief period has been excluded.



Figure 2. Children attend village learning centres after school.



Figure 3. Children attending VLCs practice yoga and other exercises.

Owing to covid-19 restrictions last year, USNPSS had created a WhatsApp group of shikshikas, margdarshikas and the heads of the CBOs to promote online education among children enrolled in VLCs. The group shares stories, essays, poems, videos etc. to work with children. For example, videos/photos of the local birds were shared in the group to learn about them. Group members shared their local names, habitat, sound, special calls etc. to learn from one another. Children and shikshikas were also making sketches of birds, insects, rivers, their own village trees etc. to share in the group. However, developing capacity in the group to make the best use of the opportunity has been a challenging task. In many villages infrastructure for online studies was not available. Also, even when the internet facility was accessible, shikshikas as well as CBOs needed training to select and download relevant

content on their mobile phones. In addition, one of the many steps to facilitate the process was that USNPSS would create/download educational content and share it through the app for use in villages.



Figure 4. Understanding soil erosion by doing an activity.



Figure 5. Girls get an opportunity to learn.

VLCs have a reasonable level of influence on government and private schools in villages.

First, VLCs cater towards meeting diverse needs of children that the schools are not able to accomplish. There have been several instances, especially during Bal-melas, when school teachers have spoken about how they have gained from changing the core instructional methods in their classes. For example, activities to understand soil erosion, plant transpiration etc. have been adopted in schools.

Second, improved language and numerical ability of children has been reported by school teachers and some of them ask students to attend the centres on a regular basis. The

government school teachers in Palyun village, for example, have instructed students to go to the centre every evening.

Third, chetana-geet, bhav-geet, prayers, skits that children learn in VLCs are instantaneously repeated in schools.

Fourth, an inclusive approach is maintained in VLCs to bridge the gaps in attitudes towards children's education in schools and communities. Children and shikshikas are encouraged to participate in community activities. Organizing Bal-melas as a regular annual event, for example, offers one such platform where children, communities, panchayat members, school teachers and principals come together, talk and benefit from each other's experiences.

Fifth, VLCs help in building better relationships among children themselves and with the community and the school. Children learn and practice gender and caste equality by engaging in various activities. For example, girls are involved and encouraged to participate in sports and related competitions outside their villages. Badminton, cricket, volleyball, football sets are available in VLCs for all children to play and prepare for competitive events. One of the offshoots of such an encouragement to girls is a growing aspiration for getting selected in the police and the armed forces. While it was unseen before, now many girls run in the morning to practice to enable them to qualify in the physical fitness exam.

Table 1 and 2 exhibit distribution of children enrolled and attending on a regular basis in village learning centres. However, the number of children who have been inconsistent in coming to the centre is not included in the table. Out of 961 children attending regularly, 28% belong to the scheduled caste population and 3.12% are from OBC families. All these children are enrolled in schools, 86% attend government schools and 14% are in private schools. Out of the total children, 81.4% represent 6-14 years old age group. 11% are in pre-primary stages and 7% represent more than 14 years old age bracket. A majority of older children attend the centre to read books and also come to play games, both outdoor and indoor.



Figure 6. Shikshikas are young girls from rural areas.

Table 1. Children attending VLCs.

| S N. | Centre | Started in Year | Place | Children Total | | Caste | | | | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| | | | | B | G | SC | | ST | | OBC | |
| | | | | | | B | G | B | G | B | G |
| Ganaigangoli | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Bhalugara | 2015 | Private house | 11 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Fadiyali | October 2019 | Temple room | 6 | 20 | 6 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Gwari | 2017 | Panchayat ghar | 10 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Kimtola | June 2020 | Private house | 6 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Bhanyani | 2014 | Private house | 10 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 9 |
| Binta | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Bhataura | January 2013 | Panchayat ghar | 5 | 21 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Gorgaon | August 2017 | Private house | 7 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Borkhola | August 2014 | Panchayat ghar | 4 | 11 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Binta | June 2019 | Panchayat ghar | 6 | 9 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Surna | August 2019 | Panchayat ghar | 7 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Gopeswar | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Koteswar | April 2011 | Panchayat ghar | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Gwar | April 2011 | Panchayat ghar | 10 | 18 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Mandal | April 2017 | Panchayat ghar | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Panwaldhar | November 2021 | Panchayat ghar | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Khalla | November 2013 | Panchayat ghar | 16 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Kathoor | April 2017 | Panchayat ghar | 8 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | Siroli | July 2017 | Panchayat ghar | 11 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Bandwara | April 2017 | Panchayat ghar | 10 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Kandai | 2014 | Panchayat ghar | 9 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | Bamiyala | 2013 | Panchayat ghar | 9 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Badhani | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Sundergaon | 2014 | Public building | 14 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Jakh | 2012 | Panchayat ghar | 13 | 14 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 6 |
| 3 | Chaundali | 2011 | Panchayat ghar | 14 | 6 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Pudiyani | 2011 | Panchayat ghar | 6 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Kukrai | 2018 | Panchayat ghar | 12 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 6 | Chaurasen | March 2020 | Panchayat ghar | 13 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 7 | Chaatoli | 2018 | Panchayat ghar | 12 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Badhani | 2015 | Panchayat ghar | 14 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Maalai | 2021 | Panchayat ghar | 10 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 12 |
| 10 | Bainoli | 2014 | Panchayat ghar | 8 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Maichun | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Palyun | February 2018 | Panchayat ghar | 13 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Mouni | April 2014 | Jan milan kendra | 9 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Maniagar | April 2014 | Private house | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Kasoon | June 2019 | Private house | 19 | 13 | 19 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Banthok | April 2013 | Panchayat ghar | 12 | 15 | 7 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Pati | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Koon | November 2020 | Govt. Primary school | 6 | 11 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Kamlekh | April 2016 | Mandir dharmshala | 12 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Jankande | April 2015 | Panchayat ghar | 8 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Sirmoli | November 2020 | Private house | 7 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Goom | November 2020 | Private house | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Shama Gogina | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Malkha Dugarcha | July 2014 | Govt. Primary school | 11 | 14 | 11 | 14 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Dhari Gogina | July 2014 | Panchayat ghar | 9 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 3 | Hinari | July 2014 | Private house | 9 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 4 | Namik malla | July 2014 | Jan milan kendra | 13 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 5 | Namik talla | July 2014 | Panchayat ghar | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 45 | Total | | | 446 | 515 | 127 | 139 | 2 | 2 | 15 | 15 |

B=boys, G=girls

Table 2. Children attending VLCs are enrolled in government and private schools.

| Centre | Children | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------------|-----------|--------------|------------|----------------|-----------|
| | Pre-primary | | Primary | | Middle | | > 8 th | | Govt. school | | Private school | |
| | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G | B | G |
| Bhalugara | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| Fadiyali | 0 | 0 | 4 | 15 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 20 | 0 | 0 |
| Gwari | 0 | 2 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 4 |
| Kimtola | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 10 | 0 | 0 |
| Bhanyani | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Bhataura | 0 | 0 | 4 | 17 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 21 | 1 | 0 |
| Gorgaon | 2 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| Borkhola | 0 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| Binta | 0 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| Surna | 0 | 0 | 7 | 13 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 12 | 3 | 1 |
| Koteswar, | 0 | 0 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Gwar | 1 | 0 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 9 | 18 | 1 | 0 |
| Mandal | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 6 | 5 |
| Panwaldhar | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Khalla | 1 | 1 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 2 |
| Kathoor | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Siroli | 2 | 0 | 6 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 6 |
| Bandwara | 1 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 8 | 11 | 2 | 0 |
| Kandai | 2 | 2 | 3 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 9 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Bamiyala | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 17 | 0 | 0 |
| Sundergaon | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 14 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Jakh | 0 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 4 |
| Chondali | 2 | 1 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Pudiyani | 0 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 14 |
| Kukrai | 0 | 0 | 10 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Chaurasen | 1 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Chaatoli | 0 | 0 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 9 | 3 |
| Badhani | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 3 |
| Maalai | 3 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Bainoli | 2 | 0 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 9 | 0 | 1 |
| Palyun | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Mouni | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Maniagar | 0 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 13 | 13 | 1 | 1 |
| Kasoon | 1 | 2 | 13 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| Banthok | 0 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 15 | 0 | 0 |
| Koon | 3 | 4 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Kamlekh | 1 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 3 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 2 |
| Jankande | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Sirmoli | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Goom | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 9 | 10 | 1 | 0 |
| Malkha Dugarcha | 1 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 11 | 14 | 0 | 0 |
| Gogina | 2 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Hinari | 1 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Namik malla | 0 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Namik Talla | 1 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 48 | 62 | 243 | 279 | 129 | 131 | 24 | 45 | 378 | 448 | 68 | 67 |

B=boys, G=girls

2a. Shikshikas

The shikshikas are selected in village meetings by the community and the CBO. The community also provides a room/place for free to run the centre. However, getting a room/panchayat ghar in the village requires a great deal of efforts. Margdarshikas, shikshikas, the CBOs and sometimes USNPSS; talk with communities and find a suitable place to run the centre.

Shikshikas organize and motivate students to learn by conceptualizing and performing diverse activities, cultivate life skills and assess their performance. Along with their margdarshikas, shikshikas attend meetings of women's groups and adolescent girls' groups which are held regularly in villages. Shikshikas share their experiences with women and also talk about performance of children in the centre. Further, after attending a training in Almora, shikshikas talk about their experiences during women's meeting. With adolescent girls' groups, open ended discussions are held on issues of personal development, gender, caste, education, livelihoods for girls and women, reproductive health and nutrition etc.

2b. Training of shikshikas

A six days training programme for VLC shikshikas was held at Almora during 27 November to 2 December 2021. A total of 26 shikshikas from five districts of the state participated. Table 3 exhibits details of the participants and their special interests.



Figure 7. Training of shikshikas at USNPSS.

Table 3. Training of shikshikas at USNPSS.

| Name | Village | Experience till Dec-21 (years) | Special features in the centre |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Neeta Bisht | Gwar | 4 | Maintained contact with village residents and carried out several activities with children during lockdown and afterwards. |
| Maya Bora | Binta | 1 | Everyone follows covid protocol, personal and community hygiene has improved |
| Prema Rawat | Bandwara | 5 months | Initially children were not listening to me-I had to be tough with them |
| Manisha | Koon | 4 months | She teaches in primary school also. There is just one teacher. She gives her 1000 rupees every month |
| Viswakarma | | | |
| Mamta | Banthok | 3 months | Children do not want to study but prefer to play in the centre |
| Banaula | | | |
| Savitri Arya | Malkha Dugarcha | 4 | She divides children in 3 groups to carry out activities. Further, each group owns a wall of the centre and paints/decorates it. Children take part in sporting activities in neighboring villages. |
| Payal Bisht | Koteswar | 4.5 | School teachers ask children to attend VLC on a regular basis because they know that children will learn a lot there. I worked with children of my own village during the lockdown also. |
| Jyoti Rawat | Surana | 1.2 | Each family contributed 100 rupees to put a door in panchayat ghar. Children come on a regular basis |
| Isha Beri | Kimtola | 1.9 | Lack of open space near the centre-she takes children to a nearby field to play. This year, children enrolled in class 10 th started coming to the centre. She asked her brother to teach them mathematics |
| Rachna Negi | Jakh | 3 | The community is very cooperative. Everyone supports her and the centre. She found that activities sent by USNPSS during lockdown were not suitable for small children but 11-14 years old could understand them. Further, she is also learning tailoring in the centre |
| Urmila Rawat | Bamiyala | 6 years | Women's group asks her to run the centre well. Earlier, she did not have enough time to work but then she changed and started taking interest |
| Mala Arya | Namik | 2.6 | 24 children come on a regular basis. During lockdown, she gave story books to children to read. She is also learning tailoring-has earned, and saved, about 7,000 rupees by stitching clothes in her own village |
| Nera Kandari | Namik | 4 | Women's group and gram Pradhan are very supportive of the centre. At the time of joining the programme, she was shy but after attending trainings, bal-mela and women's congregations she was able to shed her hesitation. She takes help of school teachers to solve mathematical problems |
| Kalpana Pathni | Gwadi | 1 month | When the old shikshika left, children taught her bhavgeet. Then she came to almora for training and began to run the centre well |
| Renu Arya | Kasoon | 9 months | Initially children were not coming to the centre. Renu visited each household and asked the parents to send them. Now, 28 students attend the centre. She has also learnt tailoring in Maniagar centre. |
| Ritu Arya | Maniagar | 9 months | The VLC was turned into a covid care centre during lockdown. So, she began to run the VLC from her own house. Hesitant earlier but now very articulate, Ritu can conduct meetings of women's groups. She has learnt stitching in Maniagar. During summer, absenteeism of children increases because they go to fetch water. Shortage of water is a continuing problem in the region |
| Manisha Arya | Fadiyali | 2.6 | 26 children attend the centre. During Covid-19 lockdown, prepared posters to spread awareness and mobilized communities to clean their houses |
| Sakshi Bisht | Mandal | 6 months | Children pay a lot of respect to me. Earlier they would not pay any attention towards me but the situation has changed now. |
| Pushpa Bisht | Gorgaon | 4.8 | They hold a dance programme every Saturday so that children have some change and do not have to study every day. |
| Manisha Bhatt | Goom | 1.5 | 20 children attend the centre. She knew numbers in Hindi only. In the centre she learnt to write in English. |
| Janaki Bohra | Jankande | 1.4 | Sometime people say even if children do not attend the centre, Janaki would get her pay anyways. She gets annoyed with such comments. She spreads awareness re importance of good education in early stages of schooling |
| Smita Bisht | Siroli | 1 | She has a good connect with children. |

2c. Profile of shikshikas

A local girl from the village is selected and trained by USNPSS to run the VLC. She must be above 18 years of age and should have completed her schooling. Table 4 shows that the average age of shikshikas is 23 years and a majority have been working in the centres for about 3 years.

Table 4. Profile of shikshikas.

| Centre | Name | Age | Education | College | Joining | Married | Knows Compute | Special interest |
|-------------|----------------|-----|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Bhalugara | Purnima Mishra | 22 | MA | Berinag | 2015 | No | No | Story telling |
| | Khushbu Sharma | 21 | BA II | Berinag | Jan. 2022 | no | No | |
| Fadiyali | Manisha Mehra | 20 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Ganai | 2019 | No | No | Storytelling, bhavgeet |
| Gwari | Kalpana Pathni | 20 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Ganai | 2021 | No | No | Reading books |
| Kimtola | Isha Beri | 19 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Ganai | 2020 | No | No | Painting, bhavgeet |
| Bhanyani | Uma Bora | 31 | 8 th | - | 2013 | Yes | No | Games |
| | Anushka Bora | 21 | BA III | Ganai | Jan 2022 | no | Yes | Creative work |
| Bhataura | Meera Kaira | 25 | Intermediate | - | 2021 | No | No | Storytelling, games |
| Gorgaon | Pushpa Bisht | 32 | Intermediate | - | 2017 | No | No | Painting |
| Borkhola | Maya Bora | 32 | BA | - | 2014 | No | Yes | Paper craft |
| Binta | Gayatri Kaira | 24 | Intermediate | BA Dwarahat | 2019 | Yes | Yes | Story telling |
| Surna | Jyoti Rawat | 18 | Intermediate | - | 2021 | Yes | No | Games, Story telling |
| Koteswar, | Payal Bisht | 21 | BA | Pursuing MA Gopeswar | 2017 | Yes | No | Rachnatmak karya |
| Gwar | Neeta Bisht | 23 | BA | Gopeswar | 2018 | Yes | No | Bhavgeet |
| Mandal | Sakshi Bisht | 19 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Gopeswar | 2021 | Yes | No | Bhavgeet games |
| Panwal dhar | Megha | 20 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Gopeswar | 2021 | Yes | No | Bhavgeet games |
| Khalla | Sundari Bisht | 45 | MA | - | 2013 | Yes | Yes | Story books |
| Kathoor | Shivani Bisht | 21 | BSc | MSc Gopeswar | 2021 | Yes | Yes | Teaching |
| Siroli | Smita Bisht | 18 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Gopeswar | 2020 | Yes | No | Games, playing with children |
| Bandwara | Prema Rawat | 19 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Gopeswar | 2021 | Yes | Yes | Story books, games |
| Kandai | Poonam Rawat | 25 | BA | Pokhari | 2018 | No | No | Bhavgeet, story |
| Bamiyala | Urmila Rawat | 27 | BA | Gopeswar | 2015 | No | No | Reading stories, bhavgeet |
| Sunder gaon | Karishma Sagoi | 19 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Karnaprayag | 2021 | yes | Yes | Exposure tours, story telling |
| Jakh | Rachna Negi | 22 | BA | Pursuing BA Karnaprayag | 2018 | yes | Yes | Mathematics |
| Chondali | Rekha Rawat | 28 | MA | Karnaprayag | 2014 | yes | Yes | Creative work, story telling |
| Pudiyani | Pooja Negi | 24 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA | 2017 | No | No | Singing bhavgeet |

| Centre | Name | Age | Education | College | Joining | Married | Knows Compute | Special interest |
|-----------------|--------------------|-----|--------------|---------------------------|------------|---------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| | Anamika Pawar | 18 | BA I | Karnaprayag | March 2022 | no | Yes | Reading and telling stories |
| Kukrai | Kareena Bisht | 21 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Karnaprayag | 2018 | yes | Yes | Bhavgeet, story books |
| Chaurasain | Meeta Negi | 21 | BA | - | 2020 | yes | Yes | Hygiene and cleanliness |
| Chaatoli | Ritu Negi | 20 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Nandasain | 2019 | yes | Yes | Storytelling, bhavgeet |
| Badhani | Shivani Arya | 22 | BCom | Pursuing MCom Karnaprayag | 2021 | yes | Yes | Bhavgeet |
| Maalai | Anjali Bhandari | 22 | BA | Pursuing MA Nandasain | 2021 | yes | No | Activities sent by USNPSS |
| Bainoli | Santoshi Chaudhari | 21 | BA | BA Karnaprayag | 2018 | yes | No | Village tour, games |
| Palyun | Jeevanti Arya | 42 | Intermediate | ASHA | 2018 | No | No | Language, environment |
| | Priyanka Arya | | BA | Almora | 2021 | No | | mathematics |
| Mouni | Girish Joshi | 58 | Intermediate | School teacher | 2012 | No | No | Mathematics storytelling |
| Maniagar | Ritu Arya | 21 | BA | Almora | 2021 | yes | Yes | Storytelling |
| Kasoon | Renu Arya | 20 | Intermediate | - | 2021 | yes | No | Cultural activities |
| Banthok | Mamta Banaula | 21 | Intermediate | - | 2021 | yes | Yes | Stories through skits |
| Koon | Manisha viswakarma | 20 | Intermediate | - | 2021 | yes | No | Games |
| Kamlekh | Kanchan Bora | 18 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Lohaghat | 2021 | yes | No | Teaching, games |
| Jankande | Janaki | 27 | Intermediate | - | 2020 | No | No | Drawing, storytelling |
| Sirmoli | Jyoti Mehra | 21 | BA | Pursuing MA Lohaghat | 2020 | yes | No | Physical activity |
| Goom | Manisha Bhatt | 21 | Intermediate | Pursuing BA Pati | 2020 | yes | No | Teaching, painting |
| Malkha Dugarcha | Savitri Arya | 19 | BA II | Bageswar | 2018 | yes | No | Computer |
| Dhari Gogina | Kaushlya Rautela | 26 | Intermediate | - | 2018 | No | No | Socializing |
| Hinari | Nandita Rautela | 24 | Intermediate | - | 2017 | yes | No | Hindi, playing with children |
| Namik malla | Mala Arya | 21 | High school | - | 2019 | yes | No | Personal and community hygiene |
| Namik Talla | Neera Kandari | 21 | High school | - | 2018 | yes | No | Community hygiene |

2d. Visits to village learning centres by USNPSS staff

Assessments in VLCs are carried out to see performance of children, especially what they have learnt, where the challenges are and how to solve those problems. Further, performance of shikshikas is also monitored so as to facilitate a productive learning environment in the centre.

The result of assessments are used by USNPSS to revise and better design the curriculum and also in framing training programmes for shikshikas and the supervisors. An assessment also serves as a platform for parents to voice their concerns regarding learning outcomes of their children. During assessment parents are asked to talk about their children's knowledge, skills that they have gained in the centre. They are also asked to provide feedback on challenges that their children face and how those could be solved. For example, if a child is facing any problem, shikshika as well as the parents at home work together to solve that.

Members of women's groups also visit the centres as an expression of their support to the programme. Women's groups also make sure that each centre is opened on a regular basis and children are engaged in some learning activity.

During visits to villages USNPSS staff offers hands on guidance to shikshikas and also interact with children to learn from them about the benefits of attending the centre and any challenges they might be facing. Efforts are made to solve problems by talking with women's groups and other community members.



Figure 8. USNPSS staff talks with children attending VLCs during visits to villages.

The following table exhibits details of visits made by the USNPSS staff to the centres and first-hand impressions during the visit.

Table 5. Visits to village learning centres by USNPSS staff.

| Serial number | Centre | Date of visit | Children present | Status of centre (impression of USNPSS staff) | | |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|--|---|-----------|--------------|
| | | | | Good | Very good | Satisfactory |
| 1 | Chaurasain | 7.4.2021 | 36 | - | - | 1 |
| 2 | Bainoli | 7.4.2021 | 15 | 1 | - | - |
| 3 | Maalai | 7.4.2021 | 19 | - | - | 1 |
| 4 | Chaatoli | 8.4.2021 | 16 | - | - | 1 |
| 5 | Badhani | 8.4.2021 | 22 | - | 1 | - |
| 6 | Chaundali | 8.4.2021 | 15 | 1 | - | - |
| 7 | Jakh | 8.4.2021 | 19 | - | 1 | - |
| 8 | Kukrai | 8.4.2021 | 16 | - | 1 | - |
| 9 | Pudiyani | 8.4.2021 | 14 | - | 1 | - |
| 10 | Kandei | 9.4.2021 | 17 | 1 | - | - |
| 11 | Bamiyala | 9.4.2021 | 20 | - | 1 | - |
| 12 | Kathoor | 9.4.2021 | 14 | - | - | 1 |
| 13 | Koteswar | 10.4.2021 | 13 | 1 | - | - |
| 14 | Bandwara | 10.4.2021 | 16 | - | 1 | - |
| 15 | Siroli | 10.4.2021 | 18 | 1 | - | - |
| 16 | Sundergaon | 11.4.2021 | 8 | - | - | 1 |
| 17 | Badhani | 11.4.2021 | 12 | Shikshika meeting | | |
| 18 | Fadiyali | 9.7.2021 | 22 | 1 | - | - |
| 19 | Bhalugara | 9.7.2021 | 12 | 1 | - | - |
| 20 | Gwadi | 9.7.2021 | 19 | - | - | 1 |
| 21 | Bhanyani | 10.7.2021 | 22 | 1 | - | - |
| 22 | Kimtola | 10.7.2021 | 18 | - | - | 1 |
| 23 | Banthok | 14.7.2021 | 12 | 1 | - | - |
| 24 | Kasoon | 14.7.2021 | 17 | - | - | 1 |
| 25 | Moni | 17.7.2021 | 18 | 1 | - | - |
| 26 | Binta | 14.8.2021 | 9 | - | - | 1 |
| 27 | Gorgaon | 14.8.2021 | 10 | - | - | 1 |
| 28 | Bhataura | 14.8.2021 | 16 | - | 1 | - |
| 29 | Borkhola | 14.8.2021 | 8 | 1 | - | - |
| 30 | Sirmoli | 18.8.2021 | 18 | - | - | 1 |
| 31 | Jankande | 18.8.2021 | 13 | 1 | - | - |
| 32 | Goom | 19.8.2021 | 6 | 1 | - | - |
| 33 | Koon | 19.8.2021 | 22 | - | - | 1 |
| 34 | Maichun | 4.9.2021 | Material distribution | | | |
| 35 | Ganai | 8.9.2021 | Material distribution | | | |
| 36 | Badhani | 22.9.2021 | Material distribution | | | |
| 37 | Gopeswar | 23.9.2021 | Material distribution | | | |
| 38 | Moni | 9.10.2021 | 18 | 1 | - | - |
| 39 | Binta | 15.2.2022 | 7 | Shikshika meeting | | |
| 40 | Goom | 26.2.2022 | 8 | - | 1 | - |
| 41 | Pati | 27.2.2022 | Shikshika meeting to introduce activity book | | | |
| 42 | Sundergaon | 9.3.2022 | 9 | - | - | 1 |
| 43 | Badhani | 9.3.2022 | 16 | 1 | - | - |
| 44 | Jakh | 9.3.2022 | 20 | - | 1 | - |
| 45 | Kukrai | 9.3.2022 | 20 | - | 1 | - |
| 46 | Badhani | 9.3.2022 | Shikshika meeting to introduce activity book | | | |
| 47 | Binta | 19.3.2022 | Shikshika meeting to introduce activity book | | | |
| 48 | Malka Dugarcha | 23.3.2022 | 27 | 1 | - | - |
| 49 | Gogina | 23.3.2022 | 9 | - | 1 | - |
| 50 | Namik | 24.3.2022 | 41 | 1 | - | - |

2e. Evaluation

USNPSS staff has further developed the method of evaluation in VLCs by designing a performance-focused format which combines the summative and the formative approach to get a complete picture of the centres. The formative approach relates to ongoing assessment of children all through the year. The summative method deals with assessing understanding of each child in subjects such as mathematics, language, environment and life skills.

Table 6. Results of evaluation carried out in randomly selected village learning centres.

| VLC | Date | Centre display and maintenance | Children cleanliness | Centre planning | Children expressions | General knowledge | Numerical ability | Language reading & writing | Environmental and creative work | Maintenance of material | Attendance | Total Score/100 |
|-------------|------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| Mouni | 09-10-2021 | 7 | 8.8 | 4 | 7.6 | 2 | 6 | 6.5 | 8 | 3 | 6.6 | 59.5 |
| Goom | 26-02-2022 | 9 | 8.8 | 3 | 7.5 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 5.2 | 77.5 |
| Jakh | 09-03-2022 | 9 | 9.6 | 9 | 9.4 | 6 | 9.5 | 8.5 | 7.5 | 10 | 5.9 | 84.4 |
| Badhani | 09-03-2022 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 8.5 | 7 | 8.5 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 6.9 | 86.9 |
| Sundargaon | 09-03-2022 | 7 | 8.6 | 8 | 9.3 | 7 | 8.5 | 6.5 | 9.5 | 10 | 6.2 | 80.6 |
| Kukdai | 09-03-2022 | 7 | 8.4 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 9.5 | 8 | 9 | 7.6 | 83.5 |
| Ratir-kethi | 23-03-2022 | 9 | 9.8 | 5.5 | 8.4 | 5.5 | 6 | 6 | 6.5 | 8 | 8.3 | 73.0 |
| Gogina | 23-03-2022 | 8 | 10 | 4.5 | 10 | 7 | 8.5 | 8 | 7.5 | 9 | 7 | 79.5 |
| Namilk | 25-03-2022 | 8 | 9.2 | 10 | 5 | 5.5 | 7 | 6 | 6.6 | 10 | 8.5 | 75.8 |

2f. Computer literacy centres

A total of 10 computer centres were functional in villages of Almora, Bageswar, Chamoli and Champawat districts. 292 children learnt computers during the year (Table 7). The basic course makes children familiar with the machine, its accessories and offers structured classes to learn computer terminology and various skills such as creating, saving, removing files, use of keyboard commands such as save, copy, paste, moving the mouse, printing a document etc. Efficiency (speed and precision) in typing in Hindi and English, using word, Excel, paint-brush programmes and google/internet (if available) is taught to children.

Three computer centres were functional in Badhani, Chaundali and Chaatoli villages in Karnaprayag area. A total of 16 boys and 6 girls were attending in Chaundali village. In Chaatoli village 18 boys and 18 girls learnt computers whilst Badhani centre facilitated learning of 13 boys and 12 girls.



Figure 9. A computer centre.

Table 7. Computer centres in villages.

| Serial number | Centre | Shikshikas | | | | Children | | |
|---------------|-----------|------------------|-----|-----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | | Name | Age | Education | Experience | Total | Girls | Boys |
| 1 | Gogina | Sita Rautela | 20 | B. Com | December 2020 | 21 | 7 | 14 |
| 2 | Namik | Luxman Arya | 21 | B. Com 2 nd year | February 2021 | 15 | 9 | 6 |
| 3 | Badhani | Shivani | 22 | 12 th | Mach 2021 | 25 | 12 | 13 |
| 4 | Chaundali | Rekha Rawat | 28 | M.Com 2 nd year | April 2017 | 22 | 6 | 16 |
| 5 | Chaatoli | Ritu Negi | 20 | MA | November 2020 | 36 | 18 | 18 |
| 6 | Bacher | Chandra Rawat | 23 | BA final | August 2021 | 60 | 26 | 34 |
| 7 | Bamiyala | Anuj Singh Bisht | 21 | BA final | July 2018 | 30 | 17 | 13 |
| 8 | Bhanyani | Manisha Bora | 20 | BA final | March 2021 | 41 | 21 | 20 |
| 9 | Jankande | Riya Rawat | 20 | BA | | 18 | 10 | 8 |
| 10 | Pati | Pooja Goswami | 20 | BA | February 2022 | 24 | 13 | 11 |
| Total | | | | | | 292 | 139 | 153 |

The USNPSS staff made visits to all computer centres during the year. Since shikshikas training was delayed due to restrictions imposed by covid-19 pandemic and later by omicron virus, the computer course was facing some challenges. Therefore, a shikshikas training was held in May 2022. Before organizing this training, during FY 2021-2022, the USNPSS staff consulted all the partner organizations to take their feedback and then redesigned the structure of the course. Instead of running a two-months course, children now complete it in three months. A system of evaluation and certification was introduced this year.

कम्प्यूटर स्वच्छता केंद्रों को ऐसे प्रथम कम्प्यूटर के बारे में लगना व कम्प्यूटर खोलना व बंद करना सिखाना और उसके बाद हिन्दी, इंग्लिश टाइपिंग और फोल्डर बनाना फाइल बनाना कर, कॉपी पेस्ट करना, पेंटिंग और एक्सेल और प्रिंट प्रिन्टर।

गांव में कम्प्यूटर आने से पहले बहुत सारे बच्चों ने कम्प्यूटर देखा भी नहीं था, और कम्प्यूटर आने से उन्हें सीखने का जैसा कोशिश सीखने के लिए बगैर जानकर पढ़ता गांव में कम्प्यूटर आने से लोगों की बहुत दूरी, और ऐसे की भी भेजें की संस्था में ही कम्प्यूटर सीखना उन्हें पहले मुझे कम्प्यूटर की कोई जानकारी नहीं थी, उस बुद्ध भी आगम्य है। और बच्चों की भी सीखनी है और कुछ बड़े लोगों ने भी सीखना निम्न आता है व पर अपनी इच्छाओं के आदी करने के लिए कम्प्यूटर केंद्र में आते हैं।

Figure 10. Computer centres in villages meet a felt need of communities-response of a girl learner.

नीमा सगौई 'सुन्दरगांव रोप'

गतिविधि: मिट्टी का अनुसन्धान - यह गतिविधि गरीबों के बच्चों के बारे में जानने तथा सभ जगहों के बारे में जानने, जिस प्रकार यह उपलब्ध होता है, जिस प्रकार यह उपलब्ध होता है, जैसा ही श्रम में मिट्टी का कटाव होता है, यदि वे बड़े से जाना,

इस गतिविधि में मुख्य रूप से श-श्रम के बारे में बताना जिसमें पौधों से मिट्टी, कंकड़ पत्थर, मिट्टी है, इनको उपयोग करके मिट्टी के बारे में बताया तथा पौधों के जैसा ही जाना, तथा जिस भूमि से मिट्टी का कटाव होता है, (पौधों से श्रम (मिट्टी), जिसमें भी श्रम है, आशा है इस तरह की गतिविधि (उत्प्रेरण) पर विषय में केंद्र में

Figure 11. Shikshikas appreciated sharing of activities via WhatsApp during the pandemic.



Figure 12. During visits to the centres USNPSS staff provides assistance and clarifies doubts of shikshikas.

Table 8. Visits to computer centres by USNPSS staff.

| Serial number | Centre | Date of visit | Impression of the centre |
|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------|
| 1 | Chaatoli | 7.4. 2021 | Satisfactory |
| 2 | Chaundali | 8.4. 2021 | Satisfactory |
| 3 | Badhani | 8.4. 2021 | Satisfactory |
| 4 | Bacher | 9.4. 2021 | Satisfactory |
| 5 | Bamiyala | 9.4. 2021 | Satisfactory |
| 6 | Bhanyani | 10.7.2021 | Satisfactory |
| 7 | Jankande | 18.8.2021 | Satisfactory |
| 8 | Bhanyani | 8.9.2021 | Satisfactory |
| 9 | Maniagar | 4.1.2022 | Material distribution |
| 10 | Maniagar | 7.1.2022 | Satisfactory |
| 11 | Maniagar | 24.2.2022 | Satisfactory |
| 12 | Pati | 26.2.2022 | Satisfactory |
| 13 | Maniagar | 30.3.2022 | Satisfactory |
| 14 | Sundergaon | 9.3.2022 | Computer maintenance |
| 15 | Gogina | 23.3.2022 | Satisfactory |
| 16 | Namik | 24.3.2022 | Satisfactory |

2g. Educational material

Books given earlier by A and A publishers which included a seven stories set was distributed this year after lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. In addition, stationery, other educational materials and sporting gear were provided to VLCs (Table 9). In order to prevent children from any infection, especially from covid -19, a bucket was put in every centre. A mug and soap were also kept with it. Before entering the room, each child and shikshika would wash their hands.

Table 9. Material provided to VLCs and computer centres.

| Serial number | Item | Items per centre | Total number of items purchased this year | Old stock used this year |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | Registers | 1 | 45 | 4 |
| 2 | Diaries | 1 | 70 | - |
| 3 | Pens | 1 | 70 | - |
| 4 | Pencils | 2 | 90 | 4 |
| 5 | Erasers | 5 | 225 | 5 |
| 6 | Sharpeners | 5 | 225 | 10 |
| 7 | Water colors | 2 | 50 | 46 |
| 8 | Color pencils | 1 | 45 | 4 |
| 9 | Crayons | 2 | 50 | 40 |
| 10 | Adhesive tubes | 1 | 30 | 16 |
| 11 | Steel scale | 1 | 45 | - |
| 12 | Plastic scale | 1 | 45 | - |
| 13 | Charts | 10 | 450 | 130 |
| 14 | Color chalks | 5 | 200 | 3 |
| 15 | Staplers | 1 | 45 | - |
| 16 | Stapler pins | 1 | 45 | 2 |
| 17 | Scissors | 1 | 45 | 4 |
| 18 | Inch tape 1.5m | 1 | 45 | - |

| Serial number | Item | Items per centre | Total number of items purchased this year | Old stock used this year |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 19 | Inch tape 15 m | @ | 10 | - |
| 20 | Paper reem | 1 | 45 | 14 |
| 21 | Cello tape | 1 | 35 | 9 |
| 22 | Gloves | @ | 15 | 3 |
| 23 | Wall clock | @ | 35 | - |
| 24 | Green board | @ | 15 | - |
| 25 | Duster | @ | 15 | - |
| 26 | Whiteboard marker | @ | 15 | - |
| 27 | Map of India | 1 | 45 | - |
| 28 | Uttarakhand map | 1 | 45 | - |
| 29 | Alphabet chart | 1 | 45 | - |
| 30 | Old files | 5 | 225 | - |
| 31 | File tags | 5 | 225 | - |
| 32 | Plastic buckets | 1 | 55 | - |
| 33 | Plastic mugs | 1 | 55 | - |
| 34 | Soap cases | 1 | 55 | - |
| 35 | Soaps | 1 | 55 | - |
| 36 | Towels | 1 | 55 | - |
| 37 | Footballs | 1 | 35 | 13 |
| 38 | Chess | @ | 10 | 4 |
| 39 | Badminton set | 1 | 45 | 6 |
| 40 | Shuttle cock | 4 | 150 | 45 |
| 41 | Carom board | @ | 12 | - |
| 42 | Cricket bat | 1 | 45 | - |
| 43 | Cricket ball | 1 | 45 | - |
| 44 | Football pump | @ | 10 | 6 |
| 45 | Skipping rope | @ | - | 26 |
| 43 | Masks elephant | 1 | 50 | - |
| 44 | Masks tiger | 1 | 50 | - |
| 45 | Masks cat | 1 | 50 | - |
| 46 | Masks rabbit | 1 | 50 | - |
| 47 | Masks monkey | 1 | 50 | - |
| 48 | Masks horse | 1 | 50 | - |
| 49 | Locks | @ | 5 | - |
| 50 | Plastic mats | @ | - | 23 |

Note: @ on condition that a demand from the centre has come

Masks of animals were made by USNPSS staff.

2h. Bal mela and congregations of women

The idea of organizing bal melas and congregations of women was received with much enthusiasm in villages especially because such events could not be held for the last two years due to Covid-19 pandemic. However, as a precautionary step to prevent any further spread of Omicron virus, relatively small functions were held.

During the lockdown schools were closed. However, cases were very low in remote villages. Parents were keen to send their children to VLCs because the facilitator was from their own community and it was unlikely that she and the children would have caught the infection. The number of children, therefore, was higher in many centres. However, as soon as some cases begin to emerge during April-May 2021, the centres were closed. Since, VLCs

could fulfill immediate need of the community, village residents came to attend the event and expressed their gratitude to the organizers.

Many children and some young women had written songs, poems on Covid 19. In some places, skits and role plays were focused on the reasons and effects of the lockdown last year. Children took part in essay-writing, debates, general knowledge and painting competitions. In Chaurasen village, district Chamoli, children participated in a painting competition, debate and poetry focused on spread, impact of Covid-19 and prevention measures. In addition, sporting activities were held. In Surna village, a skit on abortion of girl child was held to raise awareness regarding the issue.

In some villages, comedy dramas were performed to bring in cheer among people post lockdown. Further, in some villages, an exhibition of children's creations was organized for parents and other village residents to see their work during the year. Charts, small artefacts from clay, origami craft attracted attention of the guests because children and shikshikas had used several innovative ideas to make displays lively and colorful.

The women's congregation at Pudiyani village, district Chamoli, was held on international women's day. Members of women's groups from surrounding 12 villages attended. An all women team, standing on the main entrance, was sanitizing the visitors who too were keen to follow the covid-19 norms. Another team was shouldering the responsibility of seating arrangements. One more team was responsible for refreshments whilst another group of women looked after mike and sound arrangements. Members of the local panchayat also attended. Yuvak mangal dal of the village was very cooperative and took part in making arrangements for guests, much before the event was held.



Figure 13. Women's congregations were held in villages.

One of the issues that emerged during discussions in many villages was regarding farming that attracted a lot of attention when people came home during Covid-19 lockdown. Since the younger generation migrates to the cities, older people are left in villages. Earlier, young daughters-in law used to live in villages and take care of older people at home. Now, the whole family migrates to the cities leaving behind older people who prefer a rural lifestyle.

However, the older people cannot cultivate their land and often give it out to their neighbors or relatives as an informal arrangement among them. During covid lockdown, people from the cities began to come home and a majority of them thought of farming as a livelihood option in the village was a surprise for them to know that their parents have given the land to cultivate to people who lived in the village and earned their livelihoods from farming. The returnees were upset but parents had their own reasons. In particular, older people did not want to keep their land fallow as it was considered a bad omen not to sow seeds in the fields. In many families, the returnees had to ask for their fields back from people cultivating it for years.



Figure 14. Women's congregations and bal mela were held together in some villages.



Figure 15. Organizing events through VLCs brings in much enthusiasm in remote villages. This photo shows a bal-mela near India-China border in Namik village, district Pithoragarh.

Waiting for others to come, members of women's groups sang *Chetna geet* which filled the atmosphere with enthusiasm and optimism. In all villages, women talked about their experiences and expectations from collective activities. Further, women's groups had prepared skits on their own, mostly focusing on issues of covid-19 pandemic and its impact, role of VLCs and of women's groups in development, alcoholism among men, human-wild-life conflict etc.

Table 10. Bal melas and women's congregations in villages.

| Serial number | Date | Location | Place | Participants | | |
|---------------|------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|-------|-------|
| | | | | Children | Women | Total |
| 1 | 27.02.2022 | Pati | Sanstha bhavan Pati | 60 | 250 | 310 |
| 2 | 06.03.2022 | Binta | Government Primary School Surna | 250 | 150 | 400 |
| 3 | 07.03.2022 | Badhani | Government Primary School Chaurasen | - | 320 | 320 |
| 4 | 08.03.2022 | Badhani | Village Pudiyan | | | |
| 5 | 24.03.2022 | Gogina | Government Primary School, Gogina | 50 | 50 | 100 |
| 6 | 25.03.2022 | Namik | Government Primary School, Namik | 70 | 50 | 120 |
| 7 | 30.03.2022 | Palyun | Baraat ghar, Palyun | 65 | 55 | 120 |
| 8 | 03.04.2022 | Ganai gangoli | Government Junior high School, Gwadi | 75 | 35 | 110 |

3. Uttarakhand Mahila Parishad

Work with women's groups continued, though restrained by Covid-19 lockdown and its impacts in villages. Data collected by partner organizations in 2021 revealed that women's groups of 51 villages were very active during the lockdown and afterwards. A majority of them were 26-40 years old, followed by 41-60 years age bracket. The average age of women in 26-60 years range is 38.49 years.

Table 11. Distribution of women's groups.

| Serial number | Location | District | Number of villages | Average age of women (years) | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| | | | | 18-25 | 26-40 | 41-60 | >60 |
| 1 | Pati | Champawat | 10 | 22.14 | 40.76 | 25.95 | 11.14 |
| 2 | Ganai gangoli | Pithoragarh | 8 | 20.19 | 38.23 | 32.15 | 9.41 |
| 3 | Maichun | Almora | 7 | 12.46 | 50.15 | 34.04 | 3.34 |
| 4 | Badhani | Chamoli | 10 | 16.09 | 39.24 | 36.49 | 8.16 |
| 5 | Gopeswar | Chamoli | 11 | 28.73 | 38.51 | 29.7 | 3.05 |
| 6 | Shama | Bageswar | 7 | 19.69 | 44.24 | 31.63 | 4.42 |
| 7 | Binta | Almora | 7 | 12.37 | 42.17 | 31.83 | 13.61 |
| Total | | | 51 | 18.81 | 45.29 | 31.68 | 7.65 |

Caste wise distribution of women's groups shows that 20.58% members represent the scheduled caste population and 2.07% belong to OBC.

Table 12. Caste-wise distribution of members of women's groups.

| Serial number | location | District | Number of villages | Caste-wise distribution (percentage) | | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------------|--------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------|----------|-------------|
| | | | | General | SC | ST | OBC |
| 1 | Pati | Champawat | 10 | 84.4 | 15.59 | - | - |
| 2 | Ganai gangoli | Pithoragarh | 8 | 61.56 | 16.07 | - | 22.35 |
| 3 | Maichun | Almora | 7 | 41.94 | 58.05 | - | - |
| 4 | Badhani | Chamoli | 10 | 82.16 | 16.62 | - | 1.21 |
| 5 | Gopeswar | Chamoli | 11 | 89.65 | 10.34 | - | - |
| 6 | Shama | Bageswar | 7 | 46.9 | 53.09 | - | - |
| 7 | Binta | Almora | 7 | 77.63 | 22.36 | - | - |
| Total | | | 51 | 77.34 | 20.58 | - | 2.07 |

Several young people, both boys and girls, associated with mahila parishad attained the age of 18 and became first-time voters this time. The members of women's groups took a decision to spread awareness among them to ensure that their names are registered and to motivate them to cast their votes. Discussions were held around issues of voter's rights and the first-time voters were asked to exercise their right to vote. Elections to the state legislature were held in February 2022.

**Figure 16.** Women and adolescents spread awareness re age of voting.

3a. Workshops at Almora

This year, two workshops were organized for women's groups at Almora. Due to covid-19 restrictions, workshops could not be held in the first half of the year. A total of 70 women representing 24 villages of Kumaon and Garhwal regions participated.

During the workshops, women from Pata-Galla area said that the network of water tanks installed under the NMHS project during 2017-2018 is working well. Building on the concept of village ecosystem the project addressed and worked towards strengthening resilience of communities in general and in relation to climate change problems in particular. The community at Pata village has dug water tanks and all of those are functional today. The community at Pata has been able to use spring water that used to go waste in the village. With cooperation of women's group, the community has devised a system of saving and sharing water throughout the village. Once the tank of a family is filled, water goes to the next household until all village residents get their share. As a result, all village residents have been able to grow peas during spring season and sell that in the market. Since this is an off-season harvest and peas from the hills are considered tastier than those grown in the plains, the farmers have been able to fetch good price from the market. In addition, the residents have been reporting better flowering and apple harvest in Pata which they say is due to availability of humidity in the air during the flowering season. Seeing the success of this initiative at Pata, many more people from surrounding villages are demanding the same. The women's group of Pata is extending their support to other communities by sharing their experiences in meetings and also asking them to visit their village to see the tanks and to learn about the method of distribution of water. In view of this growing demand in the region, USNPSS has provided tank sheets and related material to Mr. Mahesh Galia of Galla village who worked and gained experience during the execution of NMHS project in the region.

Table 13. Workshops for women's groups at Almora.

| Duration | District | Location | Number of women | Number of villages represented |
|---------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 19-20 December 2021 | Champawat | Pati | 5 | 3 |
| | Chamoli | Gopeswar | 8 | 2 |
| | Nainital | Galla | 12 | 2 |
| | Chamoli | Badhani | 9 | 3 |
| 23-24 December 2021 | Pithoragarh | Ganaigangoli | 10 | 5 |
| | Almora | Palyun | 5 | 1 |
| | | Maichun | 5 | 2 |
| | | Binta | 11 | 4 |
| | Bageswar | Shama | 5 | 2 |
| Total | | | 70 | 24 |



Figure 17. Women participants were requested to put on their masks during meetings at Almora.



Figure 18. Use of mobile phones is increasing among rural women.



Figure 19. Rural women talk with the director, USNPSS.



Figure 20. Travel and on-journey food expenses are paid at the end of the workshop.

3b. Income generation for women (Sewing, knitting and beautician)

In current times, income generation activities are viewed as a necessary condition for women's development and empowerment programmes. One of the underlying assumptions of such income and employment focused programmes is that integration of women in production activities will take care of gender equality concerns.

Over time, USNPSS has started and nurtured several income generation activities in villages. However, the organization has been interpreting this trend as a step towards meeting aspirations of young women and girls who want to engage in some economic activity, mostly off-farm. Experience as well as research in the same villages has made it evident to us that women's engagement in income generation activities is in itself not sufficient because additional matters need attention, both at personal and community fronts, to promote gender equality.

While gender equality in income generation must address issues of equal access to resources, opportunities and outcomes for men, women and others, in reality, almost all production work in tailoring, knitting, food processing, herbal-cosmetic production related projects is done by women. Men hardly work at production level but seem to be more involved in marketing and logistics related activities. Accordingly, women working at production level receive the lowest share of returns generated from income generation projects. They are, therefore, not only disadvantaged in terms of economic gains but also share unequal economic decision-making opportunities. This operational peculiarity of income generation projects has a wider implication for rural women's empowerment issues because it biases distribution of profits to them despite the fact that they work in labor-intensive business segments and cater to national as well as global markets by producing high-end niche products.

Engagement in a livelihood generation project is not empowering if it solely focuses on income and does not make extra efforts to address social, cultural, legal and political power

of women engaged in such programmes. Field reality also makes it evident that rural income generation projects hardly ever comply with labour laws and human rights which production units are entitled to have at least in terms of safe and planned working conditions, child-care facilities etc.

This year, a total of 7 tailoring and knitting training centres were functional in 5 districts of the state (Table 14). A total of 237 women from 42 villages have been trained. Each centre functions for about 4-5 hours a day, six days a week, except on Sundays.

One of the important aspects of the programme run by USNPSS on livelihoods generation is a due recognition of the fact that economic gain is a step towards gender equality but on its own it is not sufficient to bring in parity. Therefore, USNPSS has adopted a holistic approach to address socio-cultural, environmental and other issues that affect women's lives on a daily basis. For example, the following strategies are used to improve women's status at home and in public sphere:

- Girls who come to the centres are encouraged to continue their studies, both in school and college
- Discussions are held in the centre to raise awareness about women's development issues. Women are encouraged to take decisions on their own, both at personal level and for collective affairs in villages
- Women receive guidance and encouragement to open accounts in the bank or the post office to save their earnings
- To expand business options women are encouraged to visit and take orders from neighbouring villages/schools, besides stitching clothes of their own families and neighbours
- Sewing machines have been provided to very poor women who open their shops
- Trainees participate in meetings organized at USNPSS office and talk about their work
- Trainees and instructors participate in annual women's congregations, share experiences and exhibit/sell their products
- Tailoring centre at Loharkuda hamlet of Gogina village, Shama-Bageswar was started on 15 November 2019. Loharkuda is inhabited by scheduled caste population, a majority work as blacksmiths and create agricultural tools of various kinds. Carpentry and masonry are other main occupations of families in Loharkuda. Since most families are low-income households, one of the demands that came up during meetings of women's group was provision of a tailoring centre in the village. In particular, young women and girls were of the view that they can save cash by stitching their own clothes and of their families. USNPSS had trained a girl from Namik village in Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Delhi. Since Loharkuda was her mother's village, she agreed to shift there from Namik to run a tailoring centre. In addition to the host village, women from four neighbouring villages also came to learn sewing.

Table 14. Tailoring and knitting training centre in 2021-2022.

| Serial number | Cluster | Village | District | Number of trainees (March 2022) | | Number of villages from where women come to learn |
|---------------|---------|----------|-------------|---------------------------------|----------|---|
| | | | | Sewing | Knitting | |
| 1 | Maichun | Maniagar | Almora | 52 | 9 | 16 |
| | | Palyun | | 17 | - | 2 |
| 2 | Shama | Gogina | Bageswar | 15 | - | 4 |
| | | Namik | Pithoragarh | 58 | - | 2 |
| 3 | Badhani | Jakh | Chamoli | 32 | - | 5 |
| 4 | Pati | Pati | Champawat | 25 | 4 | 10 |
| | | Jankande | | 18 | 7 | 03 |
| Total | | | | 217 | 20 | 42 |

The centre was shifted from Loharkuda to Namik village in June 2021. However, women from Hinari and Gogina village kept on pressing for a centre in their own village too. This was a genuine concern because Namik is about 6 km away from Gogina and one has to walk on foot. Subsequently, Pushpa Rautela started a training centre in Gogina in December 2021. The centre at Namik village is run by Sunita Arya.

In December 2021, Pushpa Rautela from Gogina village had come to attend a workshop at USNPSS. While talking with women, she realized that there could be unused sewing machines in her own village. Women from Banthok village told her that they were able to start a centre by collecting machines at one place and using them. Back in the village, Pushpa called a meeting of the women's group and asked them to collect sewing machines. A total of 7 machines were collected from different homes. Though about 15-20 years old, all machines were functional because nobody had used them at home.

Training classes began with Pushpa telling the trainees about different parts of a sewing machine, operational details and maintenance. The trainees start by practicing on old cloth pieces and newspapers.

In March 2021, USNPSS equipped the centre with more machines and accessories. A total of 15 women attended on a regular basis. In some cases, both mother and daughter were coming to learn sewing in the centre. Jaya Rautela's grandfather used to rear a herd of sheep and goats whilst her father would work in a low-paid job in the city. He lost his job during Covid-19 lockdown and came home. At the same time her grandfather also passed away. Now, Jaya's parents take care of the herd and she has started to earn some money from stitching clothes in the village. Her parents go to high altitude Himalayan pastures with sheep and she takes care of her grandmother and brother at home. Jaya says, "we have a gharaat (water run flour grinding mill) at home but now people prefer diesel machines. Otherwise, I would have earned money from that business. Now, that it was gone, I learnt tailoring. After sometime I will open a shop of my own." Women from Loharkuda, Dhari, Siloti and Gogina attend the centre.

Tailoring centre at Namik village was started in June 2021. A total of 38 women and girls learnt tailoring for 6 months in the first batch. Women from Malla and Talla Namik attend the centre located in a panchayat ghar. The second batch started in January 2022 involves 20 women. From the first batch, 8 women have started stitching clothes of others to earn money. Other women stitch their own clothes and of their families and save money. The USNPSS staff visited the village on 25.3.2022 and discussions were held with women's group and men in the village.

In Pati, district Champawat, Rita Bohra, was chosen as the instructor in the centre. She earns about 4000 rupees per month by stitching clothes of women, her own and surrounding villages. This year, the following accessories were purchased and distributed in villages.

Table 15. Material provided to tailoring and knitting centres.

| Serial number | Item | Numbers | Date of purchase | Distribution date | Numbers |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------|------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Bobbin | 100 | 13.1.2022 | 24.2.2022 | 20 Maniagar |
| 2 | Buckram | 50m | 12.1.2022 | 28.2.2022 | 25m Maniagar, Palyun, Pati |
| 3 | Handle-knitting machine | 4 pieces | 13.1.2022 | 28.2.2022 | 1 Pati |

3c. Village descriptions

Maniagar centre

During winters a total of 31 women came on a regular basis to learn tailoring and knitting. A majority of them (26) were 20-22 years old women interested in stitching while the remaining 5 learnt knitting. The next room in the building serves as a computer training centre. This centre offers training to 10 students in 2 batches. Nearby, in the beautician training centre 12 girls, 6 in each batch, are being trained.

Neha Chamiyal learnt knitting in Maniagar centre during 2018-2019. She completed her BCom degree in 2021 and got herself enrolled in the beauty parlor training programme at Maniagar. Her father is a teacher in shishu mandir at Panuanaula and brother runs a small catering/tent house business. Neha says that during the last 3 years she could knit and sell about 40 sweaters. She could have done more work but time was an issue because she had to go to college also. She prefers to take wool from people who give orders to her and sell sweaters for 400 rupees each. Woolen caps for children are sold at about 50 rupees each. Neha says that people delay in paying her. "This is understandable, I know them. Often, they do not have money at home... but they pay me off. It is not that they will cheat me out of my money, says Neha.

Neha has spent her earnings in paying her college fees and in travelling to Almora to attend classes in the university. She is sitting for competitive exams and says "I do not ask

my father to give me money to fill forms for competitive exams. Also, when I go to Almora, I buy clothes and other accessories for myself with my own money.”

In her village, one more girl, Pushpa Chamiyal, has bought a machine. She also learnt knitting in Maniagar centre and now makes sweaters on receiving orders from her acquaintances and relatives.

Chandani Joshi lives in Toli village, district Almora. She is 20 years old and pursuing her BA from Uttarakhand Open University. She was enrolled in the tailoring centre in 2019. Chandani stitches salwar kameez, blouses and petticoats and earns about 2000 rupees per month. She gets more work during wedding seasons and earns about 3000-4000 rupees. Chandani says that people in her village make payments immediately and she does not have to wait.



Figure 22. The centre at Maniagar village hosts a tailoring and knitting unit, a computer centre and a beautician training unit at one place. The village residents from and around Maniagar come to learn.

Nandi Banaula learnt knitting when she joined the centre. Soon, she became a trainer and started providing training to women and girls at Maniagar centre. After training girls on knitting for about three years, she began to learn stitching. She now makes, salwar kameez, blouses of different styles, petticoats, many varieties of salwar and pants for girls. Nandi says that there is more money in tailoring than in knitting. She receives orders from neighboring villages of Kasoon, Girchola, Sela, Chanoli etc. During wedding seasons, she gets so much work that it has to be outsourced. Nandi contracts out work to Vidya, Garima, Chandani, Soni etc. who attend the centre at Maniagar. She has developed a good understanding of mechanics of sewing and knitting machines. Often, she receives calls from nearby villages and visits those houses to mend machines.

Chandra Arya

Chandra Arya learnt tailoring in Maniagar centre. She opened a shop in her village and was earning about 5000 rupees per month by stitching women's clothing until she got married in 2019. One of the conditions that she put before her father-in-law was to allow her to open a shop in the village. She got married in Dasaula village, Dhaula devi block, district Almora. The remote village faces challenges of connectivity and low education of girls. Today, only two girls have completed their high school whilst others dropped out after completing 8th class. Chandra is the most educated woman in the village.

Chandra says, "I passed my board exams and BA with good marks but did not know what to do next. I would have not thought of earning any income if the tailoring centre was not there. When I went there to learn sewing, I realized that women can also do some work at home. It was only through discussions and exposure at the centre and in USNPSS Almora that I gained confidence to start a shop of my own. After marriage, I came to Dasaula and realized that not a single person knew tailoring. I started my shop from home. It came as a surprise to village residents. They would gather near my shop and ask me questions. People were surprised to see that a girl was operating machines and stitching clothes. Slowly people accepted it and started to give me orders. Now, I am training one more girl in the village. During this wedding season, I earned six thousand rupees by stitching women's clothes".

Table 16. Trained in Maniagar centre, women have opened their own shops.

| Serial number | Name | Occupation | Place |
|---------------|------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | Neetu Banaula | Stitching | Dhaulta Devi market |
| 2 | Smt Chandra Arya | Stitching | Bhanauli |
| 3 | Soni Bisht | Stitching | Nagarkhan |
| 4 | Maya Bisht | Stitching | Hawalbagh |
| 5 | Basanti Arya | Stitching | Maniagar |
| 6 | Uma Gaira | Stitching | Banthok |
| 7 | Neetu Arya | Stitching | Barecheena |
| 8 | Asha Bhatt | Knitting | Panuanaula |
| 9 | Bhagwati Bisht | Knitting | Panuanaula |
| 10 | Janaki Suyal | Knitting | Panuanaula |
| 11 | Reena | Knitting | Girchola-working from home |



Figure 23. A tailoring centre.



Figure 24. Mostly young women attend tailoring and knitting centres.



Figure 25. Knitting sweaters is a popular activity in the centres.

Badhani Karnaprayag

In Badhani cluster (district Chamoli), a tailoring centre was started in Diyarkot village. Later, the centre was shifted to Bainoli village. A total of 87 women and girls learnt stitching women's apparel for a period of 6 months each. Out of these 16 trainees (9 married and 7 unmarried women) continued stitching clothes to earn income. The average income is about 3000 rupees per month. The centre was then shifted to Dungari village. Women from Dungari and Gwad villages attended.

In February 2020, the centre was shifted to Jakh village. Women from Chaundali, Sundergaon, Jakh, Koli and neighboring hamlets attended. Currently, 16 women attend on a regular basis. 12 women have started working from home. On an average a woman earns 1500-2500 rupees per month from stitching clothes of women and children in her own and neighboring villages. Some of them also stitch clothes of their relatives located outside.

In Jakh village, district Chamoli, a total of 48 women, 35 young and 13 adults, from four villages have learnt sewing. 27 women are from Jakh, 4 from Sundargaon, 13 from Chaundali and 4 from Shilangi village attended. Out of 35 young women, 2 have started

their own shops at Pokhari market and earn 10,000-12,000 rupees each per month. 12 women work from their own villages and earn about 3000-4000 rupees per month. Others stitch their own clothes and of families.



Figure 26. Tailoring centre at Jakh village.

Table 17. Tailoring training centres in villages of Badhani area.

| S No. | Village | District | Number of women trained | Women who earn money |
|-------|----------|----------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Diyarkot | Chamoli | 87 | 16 |
| 2 | Bainoli | Chamoli | 29 | 2 |
| 3 | Jakh | Chamoli | 101 | 35 |
| 4 | Jakh | Chamoli | 21 | 15 |
| 5 | Dungari | Chamoli | 26 women came from Chaundali | 2 |
| Total | | | 264 | 70 |

Chaurasain village

Nestled on a mountain slope in Karnaprayag block of Chamoli district, village Chaurasain shares a long association with USNPSS. Earlier, a balwadi was functional in the village and a women's group was also formed about 20 years ago. Women have maintained the tradition of conducting a meeting every month to discuss their concerns. Problems that appear any time in the community are solved in such meetings. Further each woman saves ten rupees every month in the collective fund. This amount is used for collective wellbeing of the people in the village. Sometime women take loans from this fund.

Chaurasain village is inhabited by 85 households representing general and scheduled caste families. Currently, representatives of SHAPE hold two meetings every month with women's group to discuss education of children in VLC and income generating activities for women. Pushkar Singh, a popular tailor, has been interacting with the organization re opening of a training centre in the village.

During meetings with women, USNPSS has raised the issue of finding a woman tailoring trainer for the centre. A young daughter-in-law was interested but her family did not allow her to work. She is trying to persuade them. The gram Pradhan is very cooperative and always asks for ideas that could be used for wellbeing of the community. Anita who worked as a balwadi teacher when young is now married but lives with her parents. She has three sisters. Anita's parents got her married in her own village and have registered the house and fields in her name. Anita continues to be an active member of the women's group and wants to do something "useful" for the village.

Maichun Village

Association of USNPSS with residents of Maichun village goes back to about two decades now. In 1997, the community took an initiative to build a bal-bhavan to run balwadi (pre-primary education centre) in the village. Further, a stone wall was constructed to protect a part of the land from grazing animals that used to destroy oak and other fodder tree saplings that the women's groups had planted there. Trenches were dug on the land to collect rainwater to facilitate irrigation of saplings and also to enable spring water recharge in the region. In addition, the community took a decision to ban open grazing in the protected area. Following all these protection measures, production of grass increased. Oak and other fodder species also began to grow.

Distribution of grass that grew in abundance in the protected area was an issue that attracted a lot of attention in the community. After several meetings, it was decided that each household would get an equal amount of grass from the protected region. In case, any household had more cattle, they would buy grass from families who owned fewer cattle. All village residents agreed to this method of distribution and utilization of fodder.

Each household would get 12-15 headloads of grass every year in October. This was stored for consumption during winter when production is negligible. The system has survived over the last two decades. Every year, all village residents get their share of grass from the protected area. Meanwhile, a few families have migrated out from the village. Some families no longer keep cattle at home. Nonetheless, the system of equal distribution of produce continues in the village. People who do not need grass anymore, sell it to others in the village itself and in neighboring hamlets. On an average, each household cuts grass worth rupees 3000 every year.

From Maichun village, women keep coming to tailoring centre at Maniagar. Currently USNPSS has no project in Maichun village but women like to keep in touch. During this year, they requested USNPSS to hold some village meetings so that all women can meet and talk. Subsequently, USNPSS staff visited the village twice to sit and talk with them.

The community is troubled by increasing occurrences of human-wildlife conflicts in the region. Women said that they are forced to leave fields situated near the jungle and the rivulet which flows through the region. Wild boars, monkeys, langurs and many other animals cause crop depredation and the farmers are not able to harvest any crops from the fields. In addition, people fear for their lives as leopards frequent the rivulet to drink water and sometimes enter the habitation too.

During village meetings, women said that earlier we were troubled by alcoholism in the village but we organized ourselves and made considerable success in controlling it. Today, domestic violence is not as prevalent in the region as it was earlier. However, women feel that talking and imposing rules re alcoholism was relatively easier than dealing with wildlife. Monkeys damage crops in daytime while wild boars and other nocturnal animals dig fields at night. One of the issues that needs to be researched in this regard is whether nutritional status and health of communities has been affected from increasing crop raiding in villages.

Palyun village

The women's group of Palyun village is functional for the last four years now. One of the most positive outcomes of forming a women's group in the village is a significant improvement in personal and community hygiene. Earlier, people used to defecate along the paths and near the ravine. Besides being a source of discomforting odor, this would cause diarrhea, dysentery, jaundice and typhoid in the village. Further, parents were hardly bothered about education of their children. All children were enrolled in schools but lack of guidance would lead children unattended and wandering in the village.

Alcoholism among men was a major problem. Men used to go for daily wages but they would spend their earnings in buying alcohol every evening. Further, a few used to get alcohol from nearby towns and sell from home/shop. A few used to brew alcohol at home and sell locally. Under the influence of alcohol, men would abuse their wives and children.

The village learning centre at Palyun was opened with the aim of providing education to all in the community. Children began to attend the centre in the evening. A women's group was formed. Women began to sit together and talk about their problems. Adolescent girls were invited to attend workshops organized by USNPSS in the village as well as at Almora.

The women's group took several steps to prevent the practice of selling alcohol in Palyun. In village meetings, rules were made to prevent domestic violence and any one not abiding with the rules was fined. In addition, women took several measures to stop the practice of drinking during festivals like Holi and in social events in the village.

The women's group of Palyun has been successful in putting a ban on the practice of sand mining in the region. For long, people from neighboring villages and beyond were digging sand from the river bed near the area where residents of Palyun used to cultivate their fields. This has been banned by a strong will for collective good shown by the women's group of Palyun.

This year, the women's group decided to repair the village irrigation canal. All women got together and some progress was made. However, during the monsoons, a landslide occurred. On their own, women find it difficult to remove debris of landslide. However, they have requested the gram Pradhan to take some action on this issue.

The community is facing a lot of damage caused to their fields and crops by wild animals. After attending several meetings at Almora, women took a decision to guard their fields in rotation. This step proved very successful and each family could harvest at least one quintal wheat from the fields. Families that have relatively more land harvested about four quintals wheat and additional cereals from their fields. This was an eye-opener and since then the community guards their fields from monkeys and wild boars.

Members of women's groups and adolescent girls have gained confidence to talk in public domain. Women say that earlier if somebody would visit the village, they used to hide at home or in the fields. They were scared of talking with strangers but not anymore.

There is plenty of water available in the village. USNPSS has been persuading the community to grow vegetables for its own consumption and for sale in nearby markets. However, the community is hardly taking any steps in this direction. They say that there is no shortage of food now. People are getting regular supply from the government and hence no need to work in the fields where monkeys and wild boars would destroy vegetables in no time. Nonetheless, USNPSS continues to persuade them to cultivate green vegetables because anemia and tuberculosis are common among ailments in the community.

Surna village

The village learning centre at Surna, district Almora, operates in a panchayat ghar. Owing to a convenient location, the panchayat ghar is easily accessible to all children but its door was broken. The facilitator asked the panchayat representatives to repair/ change the door but they refused saying that budget was not available. After several meetings, the women's group took a decision to collect donations from the village to repair it. Over time, rupees 2900 were collected. Women ordered a door in a nearby town. The blacksmith took his own time but prepared a door for them. Another problem emerged when he came to deliver it to the village. He said that it would cost 3700 rupees. Raising 800 rupees more was a challenge for women.

A meeting was called but a few women objected to the proposal of contributing more money. In the next meeting, the president of the women's group and the shikshika said that anyone who does not attend the monthly meeting must pay fine. All members of the women's group agreed to this proposal and said that a fine of 100 rupees must be imposed. A sum of 800 rupees was collected in the next six months. This amount was used to get the door installed in panchayat ghar. This effort brought in a lot of goodwill and excitement in the village. Even the panchayat representatives were surprised to observe a sense of community and cooperation among women.

The women's group took a decision to organize bal mela and women's annual congregation at Surna this year. During the congregation, women raised the issue of increasing levels of conflicts between the village residents and wildlife. In particular, women were concerned about crop depredation caused by monkeys and wild boars in the village. A few of them were of the opinion that kaala bansha, an unwanted shrub, has grown in the region. Wild boars find it easy to hide there during daytime. The congregation ended by women agreeing to uproot these shrubs from the village. In March, women gathered to remove it from their fields and along the paths to the village.

Subsequently, the ASHA worker said that an amount of 15,000 rupees has been received from the government for annual health promotion activities in the village. Women said that she must transfer this amount to the account of women's group and it can be used for collective good in the village. The ASHA worker reported this request to the health department officials who said that the money should be deposited in the account of the self-help group (SHG) which is registered in the block office. Accordingly, only those women who were members of the self-help group worked and cleared the paths. However, an unexpressed fissure was created between women who were members of the self-help group and others. Had the WVG worked, women would have finished the job voluntarily. The SHG members worked for the portion money was paid and this was not enough because the shrubs will revive during the monsoon, a few months from now.

3d. Visits to centres by USNPSS staff

USNPSS staff made visits to tailoring and knitting centres on a regular basis to offer hands on assistance to the trainers and to talk with the trainees. Table 18 shows the details of visits made by USNPSS staff to tailoring and knitting centres during 2021-2022. All centres were visited during the year.

Table 18. Visits made by USNPSS staff to tailoring and knitting centres.

| S No. | Location | Date of visit | Centre | Trainees in the centre | | |
|-------|----------|---------------|----------------------|---|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | Tailoring | Knitting | Beauty parlor training |
| 1 | Badhani | 07.04.2021 | Jakh | 15 | - | Na |
| 2 | Badhani | 08.04.2021 | Jakh | 15 | - | Na |
| 3 | Badhani | 11.04.2021 | Jakh | 14 | - | Na |
| 4 | Maichun | 03.05.2021 | Maniagar | 16 | 2 | Na |
| 5 | Maichun | 06.07.2021 | Maniagar | 07 | 1 | Na |
| 6 | Maichun | 04.08.2021 | Palyun | 15 | - | Na |
| 7 | Maichun | 09.08.2021 | Maniagar | 06 | 2 | Na |
| 8 | Pati | 18.08.2021 | Jankande | 07 | - | Na |
| 9 | Pati | 25.08.2021 | Maniagar | 08 | 2 | Na |
| 10 | Pati | 15.09.2021 | Jankande | 07 | - | Na |
| 11 | Pati | 16.09.2021 | Jankande | 07 | - | Na |
| 12 | Pati | 16.09.2021 | Toli | 05 | 5 | Na |
| 13 | Maichun | 25.09.2021 | Maniagar | 07 | 2 | Na |
| 14 | Ramgarh | 28.09.2021 | Sri Aurobindo Ashram | Meeting with the head of the organization | | |
| 15 | Maichun | 09.10.2021 | Maniagar | Selection of a room for beauty parlour | | |
| 16 | Maichun | 10.11.2021 | Maniagar | 7 | | |
| 17 | Maichun | 17.11.2021 | Maniagar | 10 | 2 | Na |
| 18 | Maichun | 04.12.2021 | Maniagar | 19 | 1 | Na |
| 19 | Maichun | 07.12.2021 | Maniagar | 22 | Inauguration of beauty parlor | |
| 20 | Maichun | 14.12.2021 | Maniagar | 23 | 2 | 11 |
| 21 | Maichun | 30.12.2021 | Maniagar | 31 | 3 | 11 |
| 22 | Maichun | 04.01.2022 | Maniagar | 31 | 3 | 12 |
| 23 | Maichun | 10.01.2022 | Maniagar | Meeting with instructors of tailoring, knitting, parlor and computer centre | | |
| 24 | Maichun | 12.01.2022 | Palyun | 8 | 4 | |
| 25 | Maichun | 17.01.2022 | Maniagar | 32 | 4 | 12 |
| 26 | Maichun | 31.01.2022 | Maniagar | 32 | 5 | 12 |
| 27 | Maichun | 01.02.2022 | Maniagar | 32 | 5 | 12 |
| 28 | Maichun | 07.02.2022 | Maniagar | 32 | 4 | 12 |
| 29 | Maichun | 07.02.2022 | Panuanaula | To buy cloth for Maniagar centre | | |
| 30 | Maichun | 18.02.2022 | Maniagar | 25 | 4 | 12 |
| 31 | Maichun | 24.02.2022 | Maniagar | 32 | 4 | 12 |
| 32 | Pati | 26.02.2022 | Pati | 23 | 3 | Na |
| 33 | Pati | 28.02.2022 | Pati | 18 | 3 | Na |
| 34 | Badhani | 09.03.2022 | Jakh | 15 | - | Na |
| 35 | Maichun | 14.03.2022 | Maniagar | 30 | 2 | 11 |
| 36 | Shama | 23.03.2022 | Gogina | 11 | | Na |
| 37 | Shama | 25.03.2022 | Namik | 12 | | Na |

Chandani lives in Toli village, district Almora. She learnt sewing in Maniagar centre. Currently, she receives regular orders from Bartoli and Sond villages. This year, she was hired by the local bank to give training on tailoring to rural women under a skill development programme during October to mid-November 2021. Chandani says, this was the time of harvesting in the fields. As a result, women hardly came to learn but a few girls

joined. All of them received certificates. The positive aspect for me was that the village residents began to view my work from a different perspective. They thought that she must be an expert otherwise the bank would not have approached her. So, they began to respect my work and I received additional orders. This is how my business is likely to grow. The other effect is that people are asking their daughters to go to Maniagar centre to learn tailoring and knitting.



Figure 26. Transparency re money is an important factor ensuring ownership and accountability.



Figure 27. Visits to tailoring centres by USNPSS.

The neighboring village of Kasoon is dominated by scheduled caste population. USNPSS has started a village learning centre there. In addition, women have been trained in tailoring and knitting in Maniagar centre. The women's group is yet to become active in the village. During a meeting held on 17.02.2022, women of the village have expressed their desire to form a women's group. Another important issue that was discussed during the meeting was repair of panchayat ghar to facilitate smooth functioning of village learning centre. Community health, personal hygiene are issues that require a lot of work in the village. In

addition, children need training in etiquette and decent language both at home and in public places.

3e. Enhancing community nutrition and income

This year a total of 21 new polyhouses were installed, 17 in Banthok village and one each in Bhanyani, Jageswar, Chausali, Satyon-Ralokat villages to enhance community nutrition and income. The beneficiaries received a sheet each, wire, nails and black paint to treat bamboo poles. Related work of arranging for the poles, digging and installing a framework for the green house was done by the beneficiaries themselves for free. Out of 17, 4 large (10x30 feet) and 13 small size (10x20 feet) polyhouses were installed in Banthok. Three farmers who had made small size polyhouses earlier requested for the larger ones this year. Polyhouses are being used for cultivation of tomato, pea, radish, amaranths, brinjal, capsicum, potato, coriander, cabbage, cucumber and seasonal green leafy vegetables.

Mamata Banaula who runs the village learning centre and also offers training to local girls to become beauticians took up the responsibility of distribution of sheets in her village. The idea that only those families who have installed the basic framework for a polyhouse would receive the cover sheet was followed. Mamata set an example in her village by providing a cover sheet to her father only when he had finished installing the framework.

Earlier, USNPSS supported installation of nine polyhouses in Banthok. Five of those polyhouses are still functional. Currently, 20 farmers own 22 polyhouses in the village. This year, a total of 7 rolls of green-house sheets were purchased. Out of which 174 m and 71 cm of the sheets were distributed. In addition, 9 rolls of shade nets (50%) of size 50mx3m were purchased. A total of 182m and 50cm of this roll was distributed. Further, accessories such as nails, GI wire, black paint for bamboo poles etc. were purchased to install polyhouses.

Table 19. Polyhouses in Banthok village.

| Details | Old | New | Total |
|----------------------------|-----|-----|-------|
| Total Polyhouses installed | 9 | 17 | 26 |
| Functional today | 5 | 17 | 22 |
| 10x20 feet functional | 5 | 13 | 18 |
| 10x30 feet functional | - | 4 | 4 |

The beneficiaries are able to produce about three times more vegetables compared to their neighbors who continue to practice traditional farming in the fields. Since the green house provides some protection from damage caused by wild animals (monkeys, langurs, wild boars, barking deer etc.), it is possible to grow and sell some surplus produce in the local market and beyond.

Members of women's groups have been using agricultural tools and related material that USNPSS had provided earlier in Banthok cluster. It helped them improve crop production, both inside the green houses and in open fields, and reduced their drudgery of daily life as they had to spend less time and energy in farming related activities. For example, use of rice and millet threshers given to communities in Lamudiyar, Badhani, Ganaigangoli and

Nayarghati reduce women workload. In addition, women's groups in the region were provided with seedlings of fruit trees in 2013-2014. At present trees of guava, lemon, Malta, lime etc. dot the fields and the farmers are able to harvest fruits on a regular basis.

Women farmers feel that growing local green vegetables such as spinach, fenugreek, a variety of mustards is easy and requires less labor inside the greenhouse. In addition, cucumber, bottle gourd, tomatoes, capsicum grow well inside the green houses. In high altitude regions, the farmers are able to grow off season vegetables which can be sold at higher prices in the market.

Some farmers have installed a plastic-lined water tank near the green houses to facilitate irrigation inside the green house as well as outside in open fields. Such a facility ensures that seedlings transplanted from the green house into the open fields receive a regular supply of water to grow. This mechanism improves survival rate of vegetables and other crops in the fields. This year, 12 rolls of tank sheets of 250 GSM (size 50mx18ft.) were bought. Out of this, 11 rolls (for 99 tanks of size 18'x18') were provided to communities in Pata- Galla region. The village residents of Gajaar and Sunakiya had shown a keen interest in installing water tanks in their fields. Since water tanks need to be covered to avoid accidents and to keep water safe and clean, shade nets 50% (size 50mx4m) were provided to the people. Out of a total purchase of 10 rolls, 8 rolls have been distributed in villages.

Table 20. List of beneficiaries in Banthok village.

| SI | Beneficiary | Village | Status | | | |
|----|----------------------|---------|--------|-----------------|-----|------------|
| | | | Old | Current status | New | Size |
| 1 | Smt Hema Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 2 | Smt Prema Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 3 | Smt Ganguli Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 4 | Smt Bhawana Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 5 | Smt Mamta Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 6 | Smt Leela Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 7 | Smt Preeti Gailakoti | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 8 | Sh Bishan Ram | Banthok | 1 | Old Uninstalled | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 9 | Smt Heera Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 10 | Smt Nandi Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 11 | Smt Neema Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 12 | Smt Rama Gaira | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 13 | Km. Mamta Banaula | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x20 feet |
| 14 | Smt Shanti Devi | Banthok | 1 | Functional | 1 | 10x30 feet |
| 15 | Smt Hema Devi | Banthok | 1 | Old Uninstalled | 1 | 10x30 feet |
| 16 | Smt Madhavi Devi | Banthok | 1 | Functional | 1 | 10x30 feet |
| 17 | Smt Padma Devi | Banthok | - | Functional | 1 | 10x30 feet |
| 18 | Smt Digari Devi | Banthok | 1 | Uninstalled | - | 10x20 feet |
| 19 | Smt Bhagwati Devi | Banthok | 1 | Functional | - | 10x20 feet |
| 20 | Nandan Singh | Banthok | 1 | Functional | - | 10x20 feet |
| 21 | Jeewan Singh | Banthok | 1 | Functional | - | 10x20 feet |
| 22 | Neema Devi | Banthok | 1 | Uninstalled | - | 10x20 feet |

Table 21. New polyhouses installed in villages, except Banthok village.

| Serial number | Beneficiary | Village | Numbers | Date | Size of the sheet |
|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------|------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Dilip Singh Bora | Bhanyani | 1 | 08.09.2021 | 8m and 33cm |
| 2 | Mr. Bhatt | Jageswar | 1 | 27.10.2021 | 8m and 22cm |
| 3 | D. S. Latwal | Chausali | 1 | 04.01.2022 | 5m and 17cm |
| 4 | Balwant Singh | Satyon Ralokaat | 1 | 07.02.2022 | 8m and 23 cm |
| 5 | Kishan Singh Kanwal | Pahal, Khatyari | 1 | 17.02.2022 | 8m and 23 cm |



Figure 28. Polyhouse in Bhanyani village, district Pithoragarh.





Figure 29 and 30. Polyhouses in Banthok village.

3f. Grinding, processing and sale of local produce at Badhani

The processing and marketing centre was started in 2019 to add value to local grains and to help farmers sell their extra produce directly without involving any middle man. During 2021-2022 a total of 1560 kg ragi, 282 kg. local rice (Jhangora), different types of pulses were collected, processed and sold locally. In addition, 170 kg rajma was sourced from Urgam valley, Joshimath, and sold from the shop at Badhani. The centre procures surplus produce from nearby villages of Badhani, Diyarkot, Chaundali, Jakh, Pudiyani, Chaatoli, Raikholi etc. and sell it to tourists, local school teachers and other commuters from nearby towns. Table 21 exhibits details.

Table 21. The local produce centre at Badhani, district Chamoli.

| Item | Purchase form village rupee | Transport charges | | Processing price | | | Total expenditure per kg | Selling price Rs. | Total purchase expenses Rs. | Total selling price Rs. | Profit Rs. |
|--------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | | Up to road head | To the centre | cleaning | grinding | packing | | | | | |
| Ragi | 17 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 25 | 35 | 1560x225 = 39000 | 1560x35 = 54600 | 15600 |
| Jhangora | 17 | 1 | 1 | 282/3 = 94 kg wastage | 3.33 per kg | 1 | 70 | 100 | 94x70=6580 | 94xrs100 = 9400 | 2820 |
| Rajma | - | - | - | - | - | - | 170 | 200 | Rs.170x180 kg=30600 | Rs 200x180 = 36000 | 5400 |
| Total | | | | | | | | | | | 23820 |

In addition, during the year, an average of 2800 rupees per month are received from grinding of grains in the electric grinder kept in the centre.

3g. Beautician training centre

A beautician training programme was started in December 2021 in Maniagar village, district Almora. The trainer is a local girl from Banthok village who was trained in Him Jyoti Foundation vocational training institute in Dehradun. She was selected and sent by USNPSS for a yearlong course to the institute in 2018.

A three-month course focuses on skin and hair care, hair styling, personal grooming, regular and bridal makeup, mehndi, nail art etc. In addition, the trainees learn business management and customer care skills. The course has a repeated thrust on encouraging trainees to open their own shops after training and to generate income. 12 girls from different villages attend the centre in two batches. During village meetings and informal talks in the centre role of nutrition for a healthy body is emphasized.

Shobha Suyal attended the centre and gained confidence to open her own beauty parlor. She opened a parlor on 6th February 2022 and also plans to combine this work with stitching women's clothes in near future. She has got cosmetic material from Delhi and serves a wide

range of clients from the town of Panuanaula and nearby villages. She has been charging rupees 7000 for a bridal makeup.

Neha Chamiyal, Priya Banaula, Mahima Banaula, Pushpa Chamiyal, Disha Chamiyal, Renu Banula, Sakshi Chamiyal, Deepa Chamiyal, Divya, Tanuja Banaula, Kanchan Banaula are some of the girls who have learnt either knitting or sewing in Maniagar centre and continue to upgrade their skills by doing a course on beautician.



Figure 31. Beautician training centre.



Figure 32. Young women and girls attend beautician training centre.

3h. Meetings with facilitators

A meeting with the shikshikas was held at Badhani village, district Chamoli, on 9.3.2022. Activities regarding bal-mela and women's congregation were reviewed. In addition, discussions were held on the structure and methods of carrying out activities incorporated in the recently prepared activity-book for VLCs.

During the visit to Binta cluster of villages, district Almora, on 15.02.2022, shikshikas and the USNPSS staff got together to discuss activities given in the VLC activity book. Similar meeting was also held at Pati, district Champawat, on 27.02.2022.

3i. Meetings with women's groups in villages

The USNPSS staff made visits to villages to attend meetings of women's groups (Table 22). Covid-19 pandemic had brought in sharp focus issues of health, cleanliness and nutrition in villages. USNPSS staff took up the responsibility of spreading knowledge to prevent communities from Covid-19 and later the omicron virus. Issues of crop-depredation by wild animals and community-based methods to prevent damage were discussed during meetings.

Women's groups take a keen interest in functioning of village learning centres. Importance of centres increased many folds when during the lockdown, schools and colleges were closed and children were at home. Members of women's groups asked children to borrow books from the centre and read those at home. Further, women's groups did a lot of work to accommodate migrants who returned from the cities.

During meetings, issues of creating new opportunities for women to generate income were discussed. By providing skill development training to women and girls, and then supporting them to start work either from home or through shops, USNPSS has created a positive environment in villages so that people accept and support women's role in non-farm activities.

Table 22. Meetings of USNPSS staff with women's groups in villages.

| S No. | Location | Date of visit | Village | Number of participants | | | Discussion |
|-------|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------------------|----|---|--|
| | | | | W | G | M | |
| 1 | Badhani | 7.4.2021 | Chaura sain | 13 | 0 | 2 | Strength and sustainability of WVG, Covid-19 lockdown, VLC, income generation for women |
| 2 | | 8.4.2021 | Jakh | 17 | 4 | 0 | Covid-19 pandemic, VLC, income generation for women, sewing centre |
| 3 | Gopeswar | 9.4.2021 | Bamiyala | 12 | 0 | 0 | Education of children and VLC, farm produce and sale |
| 4 | | 9.4.2021 | Kandai | 30 | 7 | 3 | Nutritious food and Covid-19, suitable place for VLC |
| 5 | | 10.4.2021 | Khalla | 22 | 2 | 0 | Human-wildlife conflict, migration, Covid-19, VLC, income generation for women |
| 6 | | 10.4.2021 | Koteswar | 13 | 9 | 4 | Importance of storytelling to children, income generation for women |
| 7 | Ganai | 9.7.2021 | Bhalugara | 18. | 1 | 1 | Room for a VLC, income generation for women |
| 8 | | 10.7.2021 | Bhanyani | 22 | 1 | 0 | Mining, Covid-19, VLC |
| 9 | Maichun | 14.7.2021 | Banthok | 24 | 2 | 1 | Vegetable production, cleanliness, nutrition, Covid-19, VLC |
| 10 | | 14.7.2021 | Kasoon | 12 | 2 | 0 | Repair of baraat ghar to run VLC from there, Covid-19, need for WVG and meetings in the village |
| 11 | | 4.8.2021 | Palyun | 20 | 2 | 0 | Community hygiene, money from stitching clothes, alcoholism among men, VLC |
| 12 | Binta | 14.8.2021 | Borkhola | 15 | 0 | 0 | Repair of panchayat ghar, VLC, possibilities of income generation for women, strength of WVG |
| 13 | | 14.8.2021 | Bhataura | 2 | 22 | 0 | Surna, Bhataura, Borkhola kishori meeting-challenges of skill development projects |
| 14 | Pati | 18.8.2021 | Jankande | 4 | 18 | | Women's health, caste, gender inequality, VLC |
| 15 | | 19.8.2021 | Goom | 0 | 9 | 0 | Why income generation for women, gender and caste inequality, Covid-19 |
| 16 | | 19.8.2021 | Kamlekh | 5 | 17 | 0 | Gender inequality, why women feel afraid in public places |
| 17 | Maichun | 25.8.2021 | Sela | 25 | 0 | 0 | Human-wildlife conflict, polyhouse |
| 18 | | 4.9.2021 | Banthok | 20 | 4 | 7 | Planning distribution of sheets for polyhouses |
| 19 | Ganaigang oli | 8.9.2021 | Fadiyali | 11 | 0 | 0 | Community hygiene, nutrition, VLC, Covid-19 |
| 20 | Binta | 11.9.2021 | Surna | 6 | 0 | 0 | Putting a new door in panchayat ghar through village contribution |
| 21 | Maichun | 12.1.2022 | Palyun | 17 | 3 | 0 | Community hygiene, nutrition, methods to save crops from monkey invasion, VLC, Covid-19, chowkidars for fields |
| 22 | | 1.2.2022 | Maichun | 15 | 2 | 0 | Possibility of work with women and children |
| 23 | | 7.2.2022 | Maichun | 9 | 0 | 0 | Possibility of work with women and children |
| 24 | Binta | 15.2.2022 | Bhataura | 10 | 0 | 0 | Regular meetings of women, health, VLC |
| 25 | Maichun | 17.2.2022 | Banthok | 18 | 2 | 0 | VLC, participation in Bal mela, sammelan, polyhouse and vegetables, health and nutrition |
| 26 | | 17.2.2022 | Kasoon | 8 | 0 | 0 | Community hygiene, shram daan to repair baraat ghar, VLC |

3j. Medical aid

This year, all expenses of cataract surgery of Mr. Kedar Singh Koranga, Shama, district Bageswar, were taken care of. He had his surgery at Almora because no such medical care facility is available in Shama area. Rama Joshi received support for treatment of her ear and a hearing aid.

4. Adolescent girls and young women

The idea of working with college-going students originated during discussions on life skills, capacity building programmes conducted by USNPSS for rural adolescent girls. With the educational levels in villages increasing, the aspirations of youth, girls in particular, are changing. USNPSS has been reporting this change for about a decade now. Since the majority of educated girls despise working in the cultivated fields and forests and aspire for jobs in the cities, this shift provides the background for the discussions on gender, environment and lifeskills for livelihoods with rural girls who come for workshops and trainings to USNPSS. The organization has also made several efforts to align its work to meet changing demands of communities. How this is going to unfold in the near future remains to be seen.

It is evident from studies carried out by USNPSS on intergenerational changes among rural women that education and growing non-farm work related possibilities are challenging the traditional ways of being in communities and redefining their aspirations. The elderly women still continue to cultivate their fields but seem to be quite uncertain about their daughters opting for farming in the future and even committing to live in villages after marriage. This change in the social and environmental landscape in current times has a strong bearing on gender relations at home, in communities and beyond. At the very least, this transformation invites a complex set of challenges to young women who will have to navigate their way through gender discriminatory norms and practices, which are still valued by their elders at home and in communities.

As young women aspire for a journey from a space of remoteness to urban pathways (physical landscape as well as a growing desire for consumer items), it seems inevitable that they will have to deal with uncertainties about their imagined future. This facet of their life, foregrounds the discussions in workshops with girls, and boys, and also constitutes a major part of this report.

Transformation of communities is a complex issue. Despite all efforts that communities make towards realigning their lives to adapt to the mainstream, the new system makes the traditional obsolete. For example, construction of concrete cement houses in the mountains is now replacing the old-style housing, though it requires a new set of skills and techniques that the locals are unfamiliar with and hence masons have to be hired from outside the region. Television and mobile phones are all pervasive.

The other problem that everyone talks about in the mountains, especially in villages, is damage to the fields, crop depredation and loss of human life caused by wild animals such as leopards, wild boars, monkeys, langurs, barking deer and many more. As traditional agriculture that survived on sunlight, rain and human labor encounters challenges of sustainability, the older generation reverberates a sense of helplessness and confusion. Earlier, the younger generation, particularly daughters-in law, would take up farming from the older generation and carry it forward, safeguarding sustainability. Today, the idea of being a part of the mainstream is so powerful that the youth perceive this as the only way to be. Further strengthening this view are huge infrastructure development projects in the mountains that the government is executing to integrate the rural people into the mainstream of the country.

With the expansion of roads and other basic facilities in the mountains, new colonies of rich urbanites who want all the comforts of a consumer life style in natural settings has emerged. They bring to the mountain landscape an urban culture of constructing clusters of multistory buildings using modern materials and techniques, and support services that the native population has never seen before. The covid-19 pandemic has propelled more and more rich people to buy land from the farmers, construct houses and spend time in the serene environment of the hills. There are many instances where the builders/real estate agents are expanding their properties by taking hold of village lands and water sources. In many cases, the native farmers have limited money and very few choices. They take a simple way out and either migrate or become caretakers of the new buildings on the land that they once owned.

In such a scenario, USNPSS is trying to carefully prepare a network of rural aspirants, older women, adolescents and children to face the challenges of the aforesaid transition in society, a blueprint of which does not exist. We flag this as an important issue because not doing so will obscure a nuanced reality of mountain people who we feel should not be taken for granted either by land developers or by policy makers.

Currently, USNPSS is holding workshops, meetings, face-to-face interactions, congregation of women's groups, children's work display days and executing village/cluster-based projects of various kinds with the following groups in villages:

- Community-based organizations
- Women's groups
- Adolescent girls and young women
- Children (attending village learning centres)
- Women receiving training for income generation and starting their own enterprise
- Intra-village and inter-village events to promote solidarity and awareness

4a. University students

A survey of college-going students in Almora carried out last year, and our own experiences of working with young people in villages, has made it clear to us that young people enroll themselves in colleges in the expectation that they will be hired for some job in the cities. However, after passing out from college, a majority are either unemployed or get employment in occupations that do not require a degree. One of the reasons, as cited by students for their underperformance, is the lack of opportunities available on campus to seek guidance re career choices and work.

Since, life skill competencies do not attract adequate attention in the university, students pass out from college with a degree but lack training on communication skills, critical thinking, problem-solving, self-care, management of time and money, stress management skills etc. Students coming from rural areas to the university find it difficult to mix and connect with their urban cohorts who seem to have relatively more exposure to the outside world. Life skills can help students achieve better performance outcomes not only in their academic journey but also in everyday life. Since students continuously exercise choices and negotiate their way by building social capital, both in college and in off-campus settings, life skills education can go a long way in developing their capabilities to face the challenges of everyday situations around them.

Following up with the survey in the university, USNPSS took cognizance of these issues and embraced a self-imposed goal to do something about it. The following section offers a brief description of thoughts and activities that the organization has initiated and continues to pursue with students:

4ai.Preliminary discussions

Initial meetings at USNPSS were followed by several phone calls and a visit to the University to meet the vice chancellor. Subsequently, during his visit to USNPSS on 9.11.2021, the vice chancellor took some time out to discuss the issue. Later, he asked a professor couple from the education department in the university to make a visit to USNPSS and explore possibilities for collaboration.



Figure 33. Exploratory meeting with the professors at USNPSS office.

The first meeting with the two professors was held on 15.12.2021 and the second on 18.12.2021. The aim was to brainstorm and understand themes that could be worked upon to conduct workshops with college going students, both boys and girls. Friendly, open-ended discussions brought in clarification on specific nitty-gritties of the programme. For example, selection of students, dates and time for interactions with them, topics, structure of various sessions and methodology for conducting exercises were planned during the meeting held on 18.12.2021. These discussions also helped USNPSS and the professors to learn about and from each other. Moreover, this was an important exercise to break the ice between an NGO and the university in the town.

The initial idea of incorporating issues of environment, gender, life skills and migration was narrowed down to focus on the following three topics of mutual interest to the organizers. This decision was taken in view of the fact that a majority of students who volunteered for the programme were living in Almora from their childhood. The issue of students migrating from rural areas to the town to pursue their studies was not of much relevance to the group. Topics to be covered during the workshop are listed below:

- Competency building, life skills
- Environment
- Gender

Topic 1. Competency building, life skills

- a. What are our (students) own competencies/skills and what can we do in future?
- b. Life skills- cognitive, social (inter-personal), emotional (personal)

Topic 2. Environment

- a. Developing an understanding of the local environmental issues

- b. Interlinkages between forests and wildlife conservation/protection policies and their impact in villages- developing a critical view
- c. Possibilities of farm-based income generation activities and their feasibility in current times

Topic 3. Gender-what, why, how

- a. Intergenerational changes among women themselves
- b. How gender narratives of mountain women were formed and promoted - implications for rural women and girls
- c. Gender issues in educational settings-schools and colleges
- d. Career choices and gender

4a.ii. Designing and structuring workshops for students

In designing workshops on life skills education, USNPSS thought of providing plenty of time for discussions and experience-sharing, allowing students to reflect on what they had learnt in the group and beyond. The professors also agreed on the issue of the whole programme adopting a participatory approach; and advocated for a “no lecture” style of learning. It was thought that one-to-one interactions, small group discussions, presentations, individual writing assignments would be the core methodologies. These will be supplemented by other methods of learning such as singing songs of social change, tea-breaks for informal discussions etc.

From the beginning we had recognized the fact that adopting a participatory approach does not necessarily mean that each topic has to be constructed from an empty slate. Experience of working with adolescent girls and young women had also made us realize that just telling students about issues does not necessarily translate into advancement of knowledge and skills. A mid-way path was to be envisaged. Therefore, a tentative structure of the future sessions was formalized beforehand. Also, it was thought that students would require some guidance and handholding from their professors and USNPSS to move in a direction that would lead to a maximum possible outcome from the programme.

4a.iii. Meeting with PhD scholars

A meeting with PhD scholars in September 2021 focused on understanding their views and experiences in the university. The aim was to build upon perceptions and ideas that students already have while studying in college. The PhD scholars were of the view that the landscape of professional work is changing very rapidly and the local students lack the required skills and aptitude for jobs in the cities. Since competition for professional jobs is overwhelming for a majority of students in the town, they are advised, both by parents and their friends, to start some business/enterprise of their own. However, challenges of becoming an entrepreneur also deter a majority who subsequently opt for some underpaid jobs or remain unemployed.

Discussions also focused on issues of gender roles and responsibilities, particularly in the context of women performing all farm and home related work. Intergenerational changes around gender-based roles and responsibilities are apparent as young women aspire to migrate to cities or a peri-urban area in the vicinity of their village. The participants said that such discussions are not held in college as everyone seems to be “busy” in her/his own work.

USNPSS proposed a strategy for providing a platform to fill this lacuna and stressed that the organization can help in building knowledge and skills by developing a programme for students coming on a voluntary basis.

4aiv. Competency building, life skills

Our earlier discussions with PhD scholars and the professors had made it evident that students enrolled in college are not actively involved in community life, either at home or on campus. Failing academic performance is an issue that worries them the most but it seems that in the absence of a highly competitive environment, a majority lack motivation to improve their academic performance. While use of mobile phones and of internet has increased many folds from what it was a few years ago, the major usage has been downloading songs and movies which students enjoy during the free time available to them. Locating their role in communities, in their families and among friends is an issue that needs attention from the perspective of life skills and competency building measures.



Figure 34. Introductory session with students.

Further, a majority of students want some guidance and supervision in understanding and working towards their career goals. Availability of vocational training courses can help in this direction but students need to be motivated to choose courses which interests them the most. Here too, breaking of gender barriers is not easy especially when female students opt for studying unconventional subjects such as mathematics and physics and aspire for a career around it.

It was evident in discussions that issues of career planning, gender equality, conflict management among peers have gained attention of students and there seems to be a demand emerging in favor of more sessions to build knowledge and develop skills and build the capacity to deal with issues that may arise. Figure 1 illustrates the main components of life skill development programme, as envisaged currently by us.



Figure 35. Components of life skill development for college going students.

4av.Workshops for students attending college

The first workshop focused on introduction and life skill development activities carried out through group work and team building exercises. 18 students (11 women, 7 men), 2 professors and USNPSS staff attended the introductory meeting held on 27.12.2021. Although the participants had varied interests and competencies, all of them shared similar educational and socio-economic background. A majority had completed their schooling from Almora and joined the university with the hope of getting a degree that could help them get some employment in the cities. None wanted to go to a village to live there. Table 1 exhibits a brief profile of students who took part in various workshops at USNPSS.

4avi. Building a team spirit for future sessions

In order to facilitate a reasonable and sustainable participatory process of learning, efforts were made to build relationships and instill co-operation and teamwork among students from the beginning of the first workshop. Sitting in a circle had meant that everyone would participate as all faces were seen and all voices were heard equally. The

facilitators of the workshop were aware of the fact that a good team can only be built when an enabling environment is created and the participants interact freely with each other without any hesitation and prejudices. Figure 4 illustrates the structure of the introductory workshop with students.

An interactive, participatory process of dialogue and activities was used to facilitate learning both at individual and collective levels. The session on introduction was focused on a collaborative activity which allowed students to divide the group into pairs of two and interview each other. Students preferred to sit out under the sun to delve deep into each other’s memories, experiences and ideals. Back in the classroom, each member introduced his/her partner to the group and revealed their personal qualities, aspirations and challenges that they faced in joining the university at Almora. The following table offers a brief summary of career choices and interests which students had presented in the workshop.

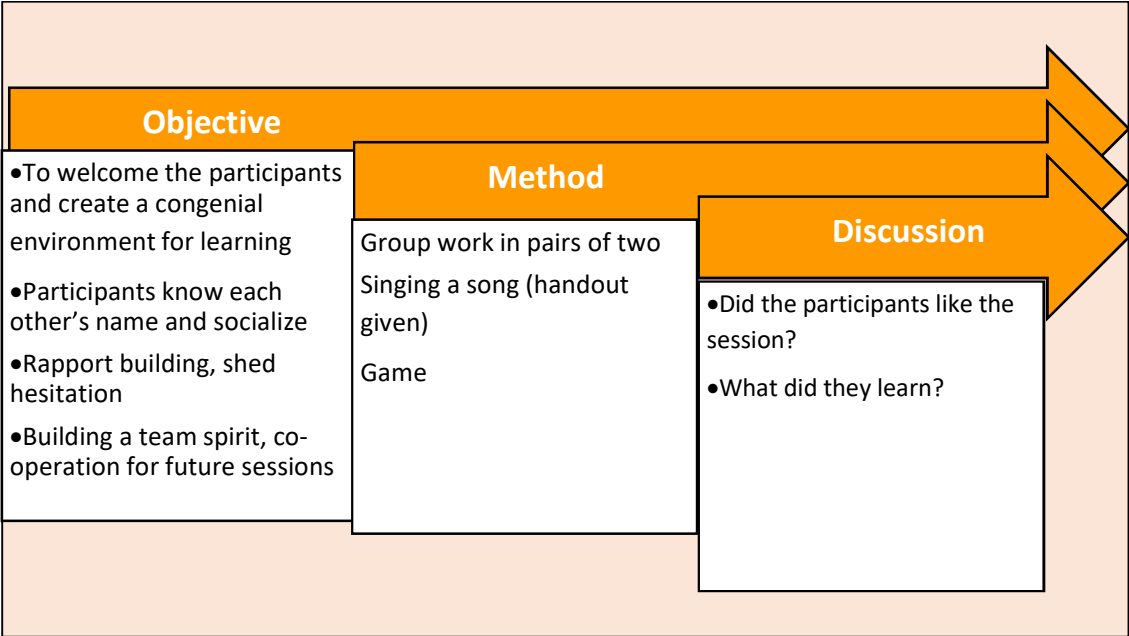


Figure 36. The first session with students focused on building a sense of cooperation and team spirit for upcoming workshops.

Students were exposed to a form of group singing to bring in harmony and strengthen the feeling of togetherness and collective well-being. Songs with messages of social change were chosen carefully by USNPSS much before the session started. The group saw this as a positive resource and since all students admired this initiative, we thought of using it again with a different set of motivational songs in future sessions.

Table 23. A summary of workshops/meetings with Almora University students.

| Date | Participants from the university | | Educational course | Age | | | | Schooling |
|------------|----------------------------------|----|---|-----|-------|-------|-----|--|
| | M | F | | <20 | 20-22 | 23-25 | >25 | |
| 14.09.2021 | 3 | 2 | PhD | - | - | - | 5 | All from within the state |
| 27.12.2021 | 7 | 11 | BA-5 BSc- 4 Bcom-1 B Ed/MEd-6 LLB-1 MA-1 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 3 | Uttarakhand Punjab Uttar Pradesh |
| 09.01.2022 | 6 | 5 | M Ed.-4 B Ed-1 BSc. -2 BA-2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 4 | Uttarakhand Punjab Uttar Pradesh |
| 13.03.2022 | 4 | 5 | M Ed-2 B Ed-2 MA-1 BA-5 B Com-1 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | Uttarakhand Punjab Uttar Pradesh |

Table 24. Career choices that emerged from a small group exercise with 18 students during the first workshop.

| Did you try to enroll yourself in some other college | Career choice | Who chose your career path | Does the university guide you in making career choices? | Reasons for focusing on a career of your own choice |
|--|---|----------------------------|---|--|
| Yes-7 (Delhi, Tamil Nādu, Ranichauri, Pant Nagar) No-11 | Teaching-11 Government job-1 Theatre-1 Media- 1 Administrative services-1 Lawyer-1 Army-1 Social service-1 | Own choice-all 18 | Yes-6 No-12 | Self-interest-9 Pride and fame-3 Better future-2 Service to nation/society-9 Family advice-1 (More than one reasons were cited by students) |

This session was very engaging as the focus continued to be on sharing knowledge about each other in a congenial atmosphere. Further, two female and a male student said that they find it difficult to socialize and share their views with others. The lesson, therefore, was to address both the signs and the causes of hesitancy in future sessions as inability to communicate well disempowers young people, especially women. Almost all students needed guidance on adopting socially appropriate behaviour in the university and beyond. In addition, all of them said that they had heard the term gender inequality but need to

develop an understanding of the issue. Overall, this session prioritized on meeting the felt needs of students and laid a foundation for future work.

Table 25. What the group of 18 students talked about themselves.

| Any interests in doing work that is different from the mainstream | | Other interests, areas for improvement |
|---|--|--|
| Yes -16 students | Social work-2 Technical work-3 Agriculture-3 Mushroom farming-1 Cattle rearing-1 Tailoring, knitting-1 Candle, incense making-1 Art-2 Music-1 Local herbs-1 Online marketing-1 Anything that provide income-1 | Can work for women/society development Adventure Hesitant to express myself Want to learn communication skills Want to keep myself busy Curious and like to travel Dance, street food Meeting new people Sports Am hard working and curious Want to learn new things |
| No- 2 students | - | - |



Figure 37. Students working in pairs of two.

4avii. Autobiographical descriptions as means of building empathy among students

All students were requested to write about first-person accounts of their own life in as many words as they wished. This exercise aimed at developing cognitive competencies of reflection and command in writing among students. Inspired by seminal work of P. B. Corcoran (1999) in building environmental knowledge and skills among undergraduate students using autobiographies as basic themes to illustrate issues, this approach laid the foundation for further work in the programme. A total of 3 students wrote autobiographic sketches of their lives.

4aviii. Workshop 2

The workshop on environment and gender was held on 9.1.2022. A brief introduction by new comers was followed by students forming small groups to work on issues of environment and gender. Table 4 summarizes the main findings of presentations made by three groups of students on environmental concerns.

Environment has a direct bearing on wellbeing of people in any locality. Deliberations in this workshop relied on an assumption that the local environment of a place establishes a context specific distinctiveness which has a bearing on critical thinking and behavioral patterns of students. In recent years, Almora is experiencing a very rapid growth of population as migration from rural areas to the cities and towns has increased many folds and infrastructure development has acquired attention of the state as well as various businesses.

As new, multistory concrete buildings take on the old stone-based architecture, the physical landscape too transforms from being green-brown to give a cement-grey appearance. Malls, marts and cafes replace small, often shambled, tea-snack shops where earlier young minds would spend hours discussing the state of affairs in the world and also gossip about various developments in town. Dwindling of such common places has led to a trend of students not engaging in discussions with each other but rather opting for and enjoying content available in mobile phones/internet on a variety of issues. The result is a growing trend of students having limited learning and reflection opportunities amongst themselves. On the other hand, access to digital media and availability of new facilities in the town has narrowed down learning opportunities to sharing of information amongst peers and verbal contact through mobile phones.

The aim of USNPSS is to add a more rational layer of understanding to this discourse of learning which students absorb from their own surroundings in mundane life situations. Environmental issues can be used to offer opportunities to students to observe, discuss, reflect and analyze changes and to find solutions to problems that they face on campus and outside. For example, some students reported lack of proper sanitation facilities in the town, especially a problem when many tenants have to use a common facility in rented homes. Supply of drinking water was another issue that tenants have to struggle with in rented accommodation.

The challenge here is to develop critical thinking abilities among students by inculcating ideas of individual growth in community settings. Since, this was an initial workshop with students, the element of critical thinking with personal and group experience was explored in detail.



Figure 38. Students discussing amongst themselves and preparing for group presentations.



Figure 39. Covid-19 protocols were followed.



Figure 40. Presentations were made by students on environment and gender issues.

Even though initiatives of the university to mobilize students for environmental action are limited, the act is perceived as a praiseworthy effort by students. During discussions on environmental issues, the professor raised concerns regarding survival of trees that various

institutions in the town plant each year during afforestation campaigns during earth day, environment day etc.

Table 26. Students' understanding of environmental concerns.

| Understanding of environment | | |
|--|---|---|
| Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
| Increase in population causes destruction Forest means water Water means life Forest destruction means destruction of the universe No future without environment Humanity must save environment | Problems: Deforestation People do not take care of trees after plantation Waste disposal Solutions: Plantation during religious, cultural occasions Sorting out organic and inorganic garbage | Our surroundings Save earth Ozone layer depletion Two types: natural and man made Factors effecting environment: Disasters, human being, population increase, mining, industrialization, bio-diversity Benefits: oxygen, water recharge, herbs, scenic beauty, fuelwood, tourism, prevents soil erosion |

4aix. Gender

As elsewhere in the country, contemporary transition in the social order is reflected in values and assertiveness among college going students, especially girls, indicating a new sense of identity. Embedded in the discussions of rational thinking and equality, these assertive expressions challenge the ideas of homogeneity among women themselves and can lead to a deeper understanding of theoretical and practical issues in the university as well as in society. An example of such a change emerged during discussions when students said that they are able to take the goal of gender equality to the next level as girls are challenging social norms and breaking cultural boundaries by taking part in various events organized by the university. Examples of girls participating in NCC, afforestation programmes and save the river Ganga campaign were cited to illustrate the issue.

The session on gender was carried out to nurture both ideas and experiences of students. Not doing so would keep the field entangled in complexities of its own nature. During discussions, a recurring argument was made by the Director, USNPSS, regarding the need for scholarship on gender issues which must be informed by lived-experiences of students themselves. Such an understanding will lead to an emergence of an informed space for students and strength to exercise choices and take decisions with responsibility for their own self. In this context, the subject of gender equality is envisioned as a matter of dynamic and ever-evolving nature which must lead towards social change.

In principle, gender must be interpreted as a matter of social relations and attitudes in society that position and direct people in different strata described now as the sites of inequality and discrimination. Current global changes institute an important impetus for such a change in mountain society but equally central to the issue is the ability to think and

develop an analytical axis of our own to understand issues in relation to local specificities. This might require a form of resistance to global as not doing so would facilitate the advancement of an enquiry which relies fully on externalities and develops a disconnect with local traditions. This, overtly and covertly influences our understanding of gender relations at home and in communities.

Table 27. Summary of presentations made by different groups on gender.

| Understanding of gender issues | | |
|---|---|---|
| Group 1 | Group 2 | Group 3 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender inequality causes violence, cruelty and arrogance. Example: female feticide Boys are pride of the family, girls are modesty of the family Boys are grandeur whilst girls are dignity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More education to boys in view of future responsibilities Boys are considered more capable in performing outdoor jobs Women are viewed as home makers only Women's clothes are linked to traditional values Women are not as equipped to participate in sports as boys are Differentiation in toys No value given to household work Men are the bread winners Positive aspects: Legal age of marriage for girls is now 21 years, girls are encouraged to attend college, more visibility in social domain: these are positive developments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difference in terminology: gender does not mean biological differences/sex Men's role is determined by: education, family perspectives, society, freedom, economic status Women's role is determined by; education, behaviour of family members Activism to bring in gender equality: custom of widow immolating herself in the funeral pyre of husband, widow remarriage, triple talaq and custom of hijab in Islamic communities Factors tradition, education, patriarchy, women do not sympathize with women, dowery |

Discussions with students also made us realize that while contemporary discourse of gender is heavily informed by digital media and television shows, ironically it is also an area for rising conflicts. The presentations made by students highlighted the dilemma of an inherent incongruity, at least in its own theoretical space, between the desire for gender equality and their own circumstances. For example, discussions repeatedly revolved around the axis of a contesting intermix of issues which nurture a two-pronged approach towards decision making in everyday life. Issues like marriage, employment outside the region, movement to any other location, pocket-money etc. are left for parents to decide while

students, it seems, are free to take decisions re their clothes, career, mobility within the town and the university etc. The locus of change, it appears, is not limited to “from within” but entwined in externalities of a hegemonic order at large.

4b. Workshop with rural girls

The workshop with rural girls was held during 3-5 March 2022. A total of 35 girls came from 17 villages spread over 5 districts of the state to participate in a residential programme at USNPSS. Owing to the restrictions caused by spread of omicron virus and also due to frequent snowfall during winters, the workshop could not be held in January-February. It was only in March when the weather improved and Covid-19 restriction were lifted, girls were invited to Almora.

The structure of the workshop was kept the same as with university students (Figure 9 and Figure 10). The only difference was that this was a residential programme and the participants had more time to engage in formal as well as informal discussions with each other.

4bi. Environment

Issues that emerged from presentations made by rural girls on environmental issues are summarized in Table 6.

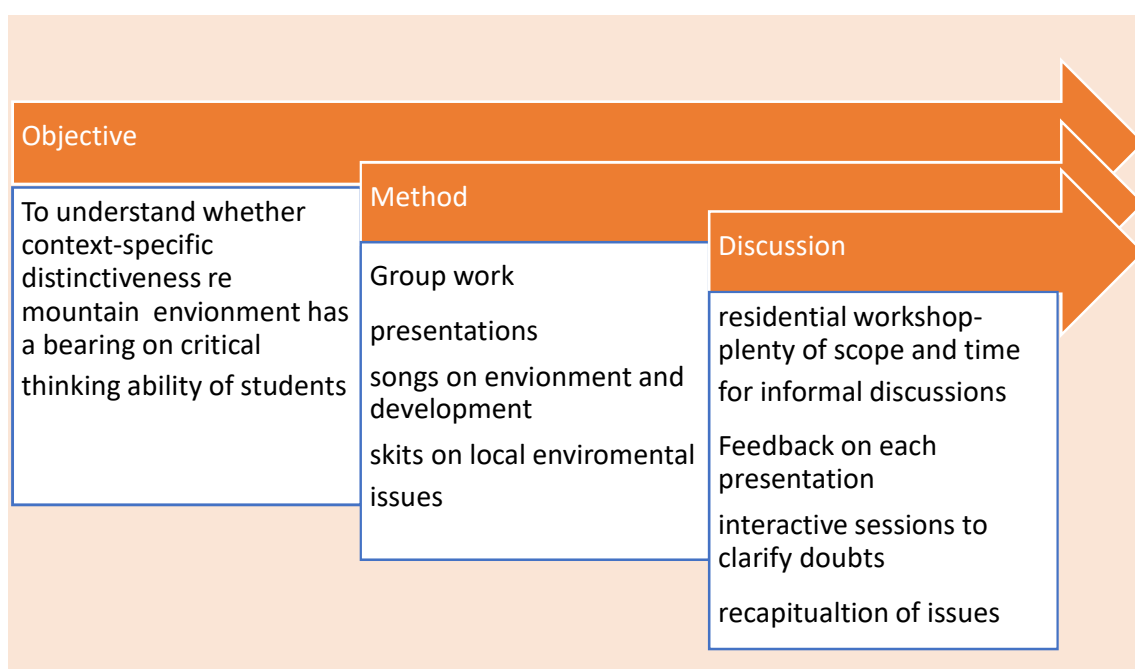


Figure 41. Structure of the session on environment.

Understanding of local environmental issues revolved around issues of pollution of different kinds which the participants admitted was taught to them in high school. A deeper probe into the issue however revealed that the perceptions of the participants were biased as they wanted to give the “right answer” (as taught in classrooms). A discussion followed

on the issue and the girls came up with many more elements of the local environment that they could relate with in rural settings.

Table 28. Summary of presentations made by different groups on environment

| Group | Theme | Local environmental issues | Issues for group discussions effects of forest and wild life protection, conservation policies in villages | |
|-------|--|---|--|--|
| | What is environment | | Positive | Negative |
| 1 | Provides for daily needs, Well-being of people | Increase in temperature Threat on food chain Climate change | Increase in numbers of endangered animals Improved balance in food chain | Threat of wild animals Crop depredation |
| 2 | Our surroundings | Water pollution Air pollution Sound pollution | We must stop cutting trees Fencing can prevent wild animals coming into villages | - |
| 3 | Our surroundings | Landslides Intensive rain floods, soil erosion Invasion of wild animals | Need for strong laws to save wild animals | Crop depredation |
| 4 | Our surroundings | Climate change Landslides disasters | Healthy forests mean wild animals will not come to villages-lead to improved crop yields We must conserve wild animals in protected areas Cattle must be saved | - |
| 5 | Our surroundings | Climate change Water pollution Sound pollution | Forest conservation laws, environment protection laws, project tiger are there | - |



Figure 42. Rural girls working in groups to discuss environmental issues.

Discussions on looking at a village as an ecosystem were very interesting as all participants could relate to its components and understood linkages between them. Further, many girls wanted to know the concepts of climate change and how it contributes to global warming. An interactive session on this issue was held during the workshop.

An interesting feature that differentiates perceptions of urban and rural students re environment relates to the issue of crop depredation and damage to human life by wild animals. The issue was repeatedly articulated by rural girls as a threat to communities whilst students in Almora university talked more about global environmental problems such as ozone gas depletion, garbage disposal, saving the earth etc.

4bii. Gender

Figure 10 illustrates structure of the session on gender issues with rural girls. The participants were divided in five groups to discuss among themselves and prepare charts to present their understandings re gender at home, in the community and beyond.

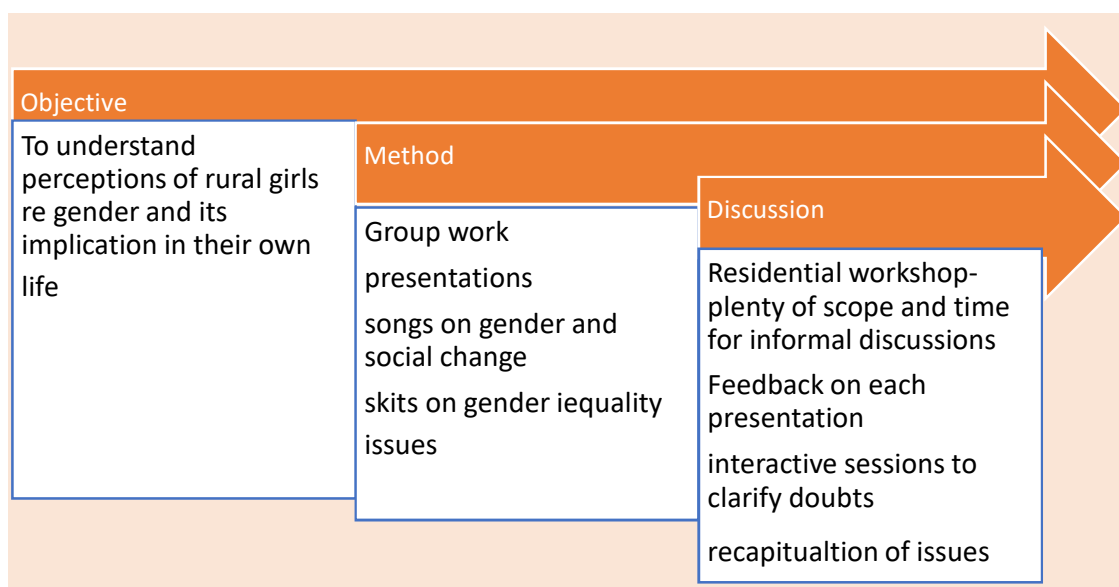


Figure 43. Structure of the session on gender.

Barring challenges of qualitative information provided by participants; it could be analyzed to understand their views regarding gender issues. Restricted mobility, gender division of roles and responsibilities, unequal access to education and to mobile phones/internet emerged as sites of inequality at home. In communities (public domain), girls experience more restrictions re their mobility, choices of clothes and conversation. Decisions at home are influenced by community norms and practices as parents tend to follow those as matters of their stature in society. A few girls reported teasing by boys in co-educational schools as a problem. A majority, however, felt that location of schools is a major determinant of whether girls will attend or not. For fear of their safety, parents do not want to send girls to distantly located schools.

Almost all girls were of the view that the older generation of women is pressed for time. They work in the fields, go to the forests, take care of family members and cattle at home. Girls are relatively free and enjoy more mobility than the older generation. In addition, girls have more exposure and relatively better access to information which is available on mobile phones, television etc.



Figure 44. Rural adolescent girls working in groups on gender issues.

Table 29. Summary of presentations made by rural girls' groups on gender.

| Group number | Theme for group discussion | | | |
|--------------|--|--|---|---|
| | Is there discrimination because you are a girl | | | Does life of women must revolve around kitchen and farm related work (<i>Jal, jungle, jameen</i>) (water, forests and land) |
| | At home | Public domain | School, College | |
| 1 | - | - | Teasing | Yes. Women aspire to do more but problems exist |
| 2 | Mobility Gender roles | Boys are valued more than girls | - | No |
| 3 | Education Work Pocket money | Clothes Mobility Barred from talking in public places | Difference in rural and urban schools | - |
| 4 | Higher education Work roles Aspirations | Life style Clothes Girls are always blamed for anything that goes wrong Restricted mobility | - | Yes, older women revolve around household chores. Girls have more mobility, can watch TV and have mobile phones, also we can keep a record of expenditure at home |
| 5 | Restricted access to usage of phone and internet | Parents are afraid of society, do not allow us to move alone, we receive limited money, nobody listens to us | Prohibited from attending distantly located schools | Yes. Even if women aspire to do some other work to earn income, they are pressed of time |



Figure 45. Presenting the findings of group work.

4biii. Life skills: building confidence and income generation activities

All participants were more than 18 years old and had completed their schooling. Some of them were enrolled in colleges. All of them wanted to do “something” in future to earn money. However, a majority of them were clueless on the type of work they could do in future. Limited mobility outside the village is another hurdle that women and girls face in daily life situations.

For almost a decade now, USNPSS has been mobilizing and training women on vegetable production in green houses, horticulture, tailoring, knitting, computer education, beautician etc. to prepare them to earn income in village settings where material as well as human skills are limited. Barring these challenges, these activities serve as an important lever to bring about change in women’s lives, particularly those who cannot move out of the village for various reasons but want some non-farm activity at home to generate income. Women’s involvement in income generation activities has also been seen as a pedestal for their improved confidence, increase in social networks, financial independence and mobility.

During the workshop, two female entrepreneurs representing distinct professions were invited to interact with rural girls. In addition, a physically challenged woman shared firsthand experiences of her struggles in accessing education, health care services, highlighting the problems that she encountered and how she found solutions to them. The aim of such interactions was not only to expose the participants to various possibilities of income generation activities in villages but to emphasize that ordinary women can cross socio-economic barriers and become successful.

Mohini Koranga (Bageswar), has shown tremendous courage in overcoming her own challenges of physical disability that she suffered from her childhood. She got associated with USNPSS as a balwadi shikshika in the late 1990s. she left when the balwadi programme was closed and started working in her own district. A role model for many in the state, she continues to inspire people by her contribution in empowering differently-abled people and

more recently of her achievements in the para-Olympics and other athletic games in the country.

Mamata Banaula (village Banthok) and Asha Bhatt (Panuanaula) talked about their journey of becoming entrepreneurs in their respective villages. Mamata runs a beauty-parlor and earns income by providing service to routine clients as well as visiting homes during weddings and other occasions in her own village and in neighborhood. Asha learnt to knit woolen apparel in a training centre run by USNPSS for rural women in Maniagar village. Later, she opened a shop of her own in Panuanaula. To enhance her business, she has also made contacts with other shopkeepers in the market and knits woolens on demand. During her talks with the girls, she emphasized that last year during Covid-19 lockdown she ran the entire household from her own earnings.



Figure 46. Young women from villages were invited to the workshop to share their experiences with girls.

Discussions with the resource persons were very inspiring and the participants said that they enjoyed talking and learning from one another. All of them said that socio-cultural norms make women and girls vulnerable but with some guidance and support from USNPSS, they have been able to pursue their interests in different fields. Another common feature which appeared during talks of all three women was the value of freedom. They said that they could have taken up some petty job, for example work in somebody else's shop in the market, but they chose to break that barrier and started something new of their own. It was emphasized that life skill education must be integrated with income generation activities to address changing social and economic needs of adolescent girls and young women. The approach of USNPSS to hold meetings in villages, especially with women's groups, to create a support system for such entrepreneurial activities to succeed was recognized as an important impetus to the programme.

Back in their villages, adolescent girls share their learning and experiences with other girls by holding meetings. Further, they participate in village events organized by USNPSS and its partner organization such as women's congregations and bal-mela etc. In Lakhtoli village event, adolescent girls shared their experiences of the workshop at USNPSS.



Figure 47. Adolescent girls shared their experiences of the workshop during women's congregations.

5. Publications

5a. Khel khel main

An activity book, “Khel Khel Mein”-developed, designed and printed at USNPSS in January 2022, was distributed in all centres. The book offers a well thought of collection of activities on themes of language development, numerical ability, environment and science, general knowledge, hands-on actions and games. The key focus of this work lies in its capacity to present different topics in a structured way and weaving those with issues of local relevance. The book offers an alternative method of learning language, mathematics, science by engaging children in activities that enhance creative thinking and develop skills.

5b. Gram shikshan kendra

Gram Shikshan Kendra describes the key elements, concepts and practical insights generating from running the village learning centres in cognizance with rural people, especially women's groups and community-based organizations. It is an innovative approach to connect all people in the village and align their learning and practice towards a common shared goal of collective well-being. The book outlines the curriculum and describes the approach of how village learning centres offer a platform for people to gather on a regular basis, discuss issues in the village and find solutions.



Figure 48. Two books on village learning centres were developed during the year.

5c. Nanda

1500 copies of Nanda (Issue : November 2021) were printed and distributed in villages covered by the programme. Articles focused on Covid-19 lockdown and its impact in villages.

5d. Muskaan

150 copies of Muskaan were printed and distributed in the centres during September-October 2021.



Figure 49. Members of women's groups receive and read Nanda.

6. Scholarships

Late Mrs. Alka Dhawan Chatrath Scholarship was granted to Ms. Sakshi Kimothi, d/o Shiv Narayan Kimothi, village Badhani, district Chamoli. The scholarship offered an amount of Rs. 30,000 to pursue B. Sc. Agriculture, 2nd semester in Shri Guru Ram Rai University, Dehradun. So far, the scholarship has been given to 10 girls (total 14 scholarships) during 2012-13 to 2021-22.

7. USN Fellowship

A new initiative of the organization, "Sevanidhi Fellowship" started this year with two women joining for a period of one year, April 2021-March 2022. They were to review literature, conduct research in villages and work with USNPSS staff on on-going projects, wherever required. They were granted fellowships after advertising and a virtual interview followed by a physical visit to Almora before joining. However, both of them left after some time for personal reasons. Also, they found living in Almora and making visits to villages difficult.

8. Woolens for women

Mrs. Ira Mishra sent a package of woolens to be distributed among poor people living in the mountains.

9. Meeting with partner organizations

A meeting with partner organizations was held on 15.11.2021. Besides USNPSS staff, 12 representatives attended the meeting. The participants shared their experiences of working with people during covid-19 pandemic and how they could facilitate learning of children in VLCs and others in villages. Further, a decision was taken to restart all the programmes in full scale as cases of covid had been almost none in villages.



Figure 50. Meeting with the heads of partner organizations.

10. Meeting of the Governing Body

Meeting of the Governing body was held on 28-10-2021. Some of the members were present physically whilst others joined virtually.

11. Visitors

Raju Bisht, Ganai gangoli in Pithoragarh district, visited USNPSS on 02.04.2021

Asmita Singh, Noida, came on 04.04.2021

Dr. Madhav Bahadur, Base Hospital Almora, came on 08.04.2021

Salvi Sinha, Varanasi, came on 09.04.2021

Mr. Dobhal, RISE, visited on 13.04.2021, 12.07.2021

Ajay Singh came from Karnaprayag district Chamoli and stayed for a night on 14.04. 2021

Kedar Singh Koranga, district Bageswar, visited on 25.06.2021

Mahesh Galiya, district Nainital, visited on 09.07.2021

Manasi Joshi, almora, visited the library on 15.07.2021

Vinod Agarwal, Noida, came on 21.07.2021

Shashank, Himshaku organization, visited on 26.07.2021 to see the old Sanskrit documents preserved earlier in the library

Manish Pant from Advista Nainital came on 02.08.2021

Mayur and Sandeep, Delhi, visited during 07.08.2021-08.08.2021

Ashok Bhatt, Bhowali, came on 07.08.2021

Gobind Gopal, Jageswar, came on 25.08.2021

Kedar Singh Koranga, district Bageswar visited during 16.08.2021-18.08.2021 and came again on 23.8.2021 for cataract operation

Jyoti Bidur, Mumbai, came from Pyura on 04.09.2021

Col Pande, Prem kutir Almora, came on 10.09.2021 to talk about restoration of old roof in office

Mala came from Almora University to use the library, 10.09.2021

Kedar Singh Koranga, district Bageswar, visited during 13.09.2021-15.09.2021 to have post-op checkup of his eyes

Mr. Manish Khanna came from Nainital on 14.09.2021

Savitri Joshi, research scholar Almora, and her four friends visited on 14.09.2021 to use the library

Geeta Pande, Nainital, visited on 23.09.2021

The Dayal Trust members came on 1.10.2021 to review progress of work

Mr. Niranjana Pant visited during 11.10.2021-12.10.2021

8 persons came to attend a meeting on 28.10.2021

Sangosthi programme was held on 9.11.2021. 30 participants attended

Mr. K. Mankoti hold a workshop on 13.11.2021. 30 participants attended

Meeting with the partner organizations was held on 14.11.2021

Rohit Gupta, Room to Read, Dehradun visited on 17.11.2021

Amita Sharma and Sumit visited during 22.11.2021-23.11.2021

25 shikshikas and supervisors stayed for a training during 26.11.2021-3.12.2021

Raju Bisht, Ganaigangoli visited during 13.12.2021-14.12.2021

Arun bhai, Chamoli visited during 14.12.2021-15.12.2021

Dr. Mamta Aswal, Dr. Bhaskar C came on 15.12.2021 to discuss modalities of working with the university students

The sangoshti programme, held on 16.12.2021 was attended by 40 participants

Mr. Pankaj Vadhva and Anjali Nabiyal visited on 18.12.2021

Dr. Mamta Aswal, SSJ University, came on 18.12.2021

A meeting of the women's group was attended by 37 participants, 18-21.12.2021

A meeting of the women's group was attended by 36 participants, 22.12-21-25.12.2021

Dr. Bhaskar C, Dr. Mamta Aswal and 15 students came for a workshop on 27.12.2021

Dr. Mamta Aswal and 13 students came for a workshop on 09.01.2022

Ms. Mala and Pooja Bisht SSJ campus almora came to use the library, 18.01.2022

Mohan Kandpal, Dwarahat visited on 17.01.2022

Mahesh Galia, Galla, came on 19.02.2022

The sangoshti programme, held on 20.2.2022 was attended by 35 participants

Workshop for adolescent girls was attended by girls, 02.03.2022-5.03.2022

Kamlesh Pandey, Pithoragarh, visited the library, 07.03.2022, 12. 03.2022

Workshop for university students was attended by 15 participants, 13.03.2022

Mr. Sudhir Tewari visited to discuss governance issues in Uttarakhand, 21.03.2022

Mr. Prakash Upadhyaya, Director, Swachh Adhikar India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi Came on 22.03.2022 to discuss viability of biogas Chula in the hills

The sangoshti programme held on 26.03.2022 was attended by 30 participants

Ms. Neelakshi came with her mother to meet us on 30.03 2022

Mahesh Galia, Galla-district Nainital, came to collect sheets for water tanks on 30.03.2022

12. Members of the Governing Body

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora

List of the Governing Body members for year 2021-22

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

Special Invitees:

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 6 | Shri Arun Singh | Former M.P. and Union Minister | MA 1/3-2D Garden Estate, MG Road, Gurgaon. |
| 7 | Ms. Manini Chatterjee | Editor | B-27, Press Enclave, New Delhi - 110017 |
| 8 | Sri Suman Dubey | Former Editor | N-125, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110017 |
| 9 | Dr. M.G. Jackson | Former Professor | Haldwani, Uttarakhand |
| 10 | Shri K.S. Mallick | Retd Civil Servant | Ganga Niwas, Kasar Devi, Almora 263601 |
| 11 | Smt. Anuradha Pande | Social worker | USNPSS, Almora |
| 12 | Shri Vikram Mehta | Brookings, Delhi | Binsar, Almora |
| 13 | Col C.S. Pant (Retd) | Consultant Radiologist | Green Park, New Delhi |
| 14 | Shri Deb Mukharji | IFS Retd, former Ambassador | C-71 IFS Apartments, Mayur Vihar-1, Delhi -91 |
| 15 | Dr O.P. Yadava | CEO, National Heart Institute | Kasar Devi, Almora |
| 16 | Sri Kiran Joshi | Retd. Bank Manager | Tilakpur, Link Road, Almora |

13. Staff Profile

Staff 2021-22 USNPSS Almora

| Sl. | Name | Sex | Qualifications | Work experience in USNPSS |
|-----|----------------------------|-----|--|---------------------------|
| 1 | Dr Lalit Pande Director | M | Ph.D.in Mechanical Engineering, Purdue University S.M.in Mechanical Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Mass. USA B. Tech (with distinction) Indian Institute of Technology Delhi Awarded <i>Padma Shri</i> by the President of India IIT Delhi Distinguished Alumni Award 2014 Outstanding Mechanical Engineer OME Award Purdue University (2017) | 36 years |
| 2 | Ms Anuradha Pande | F | M. Sc. (Geology), Kumaun University Nainital, Post Graduate Diploma in Environmental Management, Lucknow | 30 |
| 3 | Dr G. P. Pande | M | M. Sc., Ph. D. (Botany), Kumaun University Nainital | 22 |
| 4 | Ms. Rama Joshi | F | Intermediate, U. P. Board | 29 |
| 5 | Sri Kamal K. Joshi | M | M. A. (History), Kumaon University, Almora campus | 29 |
| 6 | Sri Jeevan C Joshi | M | Inter science | 34 |
| 7 | Sri Suresh Bisht | M | Intermediate | 29 |
| 8 | Sri Kailash Papanai | M | MA (Education), MA (Political Science) Kumaun University | 15 |
| 9 | Sri D. S. Latwal | M | B.A. Kumaun University | 18 |
| 10 | Sri Divan Matiyani | M | Class 11 | 23 |
| 11 | Sri Mohan Singh | M | Class 8 | 14 |

14. Accounts

An audited statement of accounts is attached.

मनीष खन्ना एण्ड क.
समदी लेखाकार

Manish Khanna & Co
Chartered Accountants
30, 1st Floor, Pichari Bazaar, Mallital, Nainital 263001, Uttarakhand
Telefax: +91 5942 238757
email: manish@mkca.net
website: www.mkca.net

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To Members,

Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan

REPORT ON THE AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Opinion

We have audited the Balance sheet Income and Expenditure Account, and Receipts and Payments Accounts of Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan for the period ended 31 March 2022.

In our opinion, and according to the information and explanations given to us, the accompanying said financial statement, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information, give a true and fair view of the financial position and the financial performance for the year then ended in accordance with the Accounting Standards issued by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with the Standards on Auditing (SAs) issued by ICAI. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the entity in accordance with the Code of Ethics issued by ICAI and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code of Ethics. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Key Audit Matter

We have determined there are no Key Audit Matters to communicate in our report

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of these financial statements that give a true and fair view of the financial position, financial performance and cash flows of the entity in accordance with the accounting principles generally accepted in India. This responsibility includes the design, implementation and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and presentation of the financial statements that give a true and fair view and are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error. In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so. Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the entity's financial reporting process.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about the entity's presentation and fair representation of the financial statements and that the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with SAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to



Influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements the entity's presentation and fair representation of the financial statements

As part of an audit in accordance with SAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances.

- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.

- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion.

Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the entity to cease to continue as a going concern.

- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit. We also provide those charged with governance with a statement that we have complied with relevant ethical requirements regarding independence, and to communicate with them all relationships and other matters that may reasonably be thought to bear on our independence, and where applicable, related safeguards.

For Manish Khanna & Co.
Chartered Accountants
Firm Registration Number : 008584C

Manish Khanna

Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICAI)
Partner

Membership Nos- 077858

Place: Almora

Dated: August 23, 2022

UDIN -20077858AQRCIS7329



Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora
Balance sheet as at 31 March 2022

Sources of funds

| Corpus Fund | Current Year | Previous Year |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Opening balance | 2,00,60,151.47 | 1,98,10,151.47 |
| Current year's appropriation of surplus | - | 2,40,000.00 |
| Add: Corpus donations | 10,000.00 | 10,000.00 |
| Total corpus fund | 2,00,70,151.47 | 2,00,60,151.47 |

Reserves

General Reserves

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Opening Balance | 47,58,313.10 | 42,84,246.83 |
| Add: Current year's appropriation | 4,60,470.74 | 4,74,086.27 |
| Total general reserves (i) | 52,18,783.84 | 47,58,313.10 |

Specific Reserves

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Opening Balance | 93,73,169.95 | 87,38,253.86 |
| Less: Expenditure met from reserves | -12,60,258.34 | -16,13,996.48 |
| Add: Current year's appropriation | 26,09,334.18 | 22,48,912.77 |
| Total Specific reserves (ii) | 1,07,22,245.79 | 93,73,169.95 |

Total Reserves (i+ii) **1,59,41,029.63** **1,41,31,483.05**

Current liabilities

| | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Sundry creditor | | 6,750.00 |
| Unspent grants in aid (Annexure A) | 83,21,797.22 | 1,11,62,599.70 |
| Total current liabilities | 83,21,797.22 | 1,11,69,349.70 |

Total sources of funds **4,43,32,978.32** **4,53,60,984.22**

Utilization of funds

Current assets

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Cash in hand | | |
| Cash in bank | 35,47,473.89 | 1,28,89,718.56 |
| Balance in bank in fixed deposits | 3,89,86,748.00 | 3,08,39,349.00 |
| Accrued Interest | 9,13,670.62 | 8,35,044.15 |
| Income tax deducted at source | 8,85,085.81 | 7,96,872.51 |

Total Current assets **4,43,32,978.32** **4,53,60,984.22**

Total utilization of funds **4,43,32,978.32** **4,53,60,984.22**

Notes to accounts and significant accounting policies - Annexure - "B"

For Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan

Jeevan C. Joshi *Dr. Lalit Pande*

Jeevan C. Joshi
Accountant

Dr. Lalit Pande
Chairman

This is the balance sheet referred to in our report of even date

For Manish Khanna & Co.
ICAI FRN 008584C
Chartered Accountants

Manish Khanna, FCA, LL.B, DISA (ICAI)
Partner

Membership Nos 077858

Dated: August 23, 2022

Camp Almora

UDIN: 22077858AQRGIS7329



Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora
Income and Expenditure Account
for year ended 31 March 2022

| Income | Current Year Amount [Rs] | Previous Year Amount [Rs] |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Administrative charges | 2,45,000.00 | 7,18,888.65 |
| Taining workshops | 1,42,500.00 | - |
| Donations | 6,12,500.00 | 6,10,533.00 |
| Interest on bank deposits | 21,62,236.58 | 18,28,820.15 |
| Miscellaneous income | 1,066.00 | 2,200.00 |
| Excess grant written back | 16,010.00 | - |
| Income tax Refund- Sansthan | 20,492.00 | - |

Total Income 31,99,804.58 31,60,441.80

| Expenditure | Current Year Amount [Rs] | Previous Year Amount [Rs] |
|---|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| Bank Charges | 1,734.64 | 3,447.76 |
| Books | 6,324.00 | 3,950.00 |
| Covid prevention expenditure | - | 32,805.00 |
| Electricity and water and municipal taxes | 29,229.00 | 47,446.00 |
| Insurance | 19,541.00 | 17,089.00 |
| Legal expenses | - | 21,280.00 |
| Miscellaneous expenses | 2,350.00 | 6,602.00 |
| Postage and telephone | 12,864.00 | 35,704.00 |
| Society renewal fee | 5,000.00 | - |
| Scholarship | 30,000.00 | 20,000.00 |
| Stationery | 252.00 | 9,139.00 |
| Travel | 22,705.00 | - |

Total expenditure 1,29,999.64 1,97,462.76

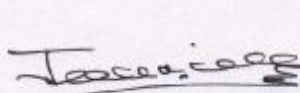
Current year's surplus appropriated 30,69,804.92 29,62,979.04

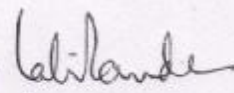
| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| a) Towards corpus funds | 2,40,000.00 |
| b) General Reserves | 4,60,470.74 |
| c) Specific Reserves | 4,74,066.27 |
| | <u>26,09,334.18</u> |
| | <u>30,69,804.92</u> <u>29,62,979.04</u> |

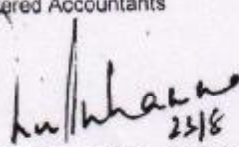
This is the income and expenditure account referred to in our report of even date

For Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shiksha Sansthan

For Manish Khanna & Co.
FRN : 008584C
Chartered Accountants


Jeewan C. Joshi
Accountant


Dr. Lalit Pande
Chairman


Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICAI)
Partner
Membership Number 077858
Dated: August 23, 2022
Camp Almora
UDIN: 22077858AQRGIS7329



Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryayaran Shiksha Sansthan, Almora
Receipts and Payments Account
for the year ended 31 March 2022

| Receipts | Current Year | Previous Year | Payments | Current Year | Previous Year |
|---|----------------|----------------|--|----------------|----------------|
| | Amounts (Rs.) | Amounts (Rs.) | | Amounts (Rs.) | Amounts (Rs.) |
| Opening balances | | | Utilization of grants | | |
| Cash in hand | | 19.00 | Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust | 25,87,842.24 | 27,38,340.48 |
| Cash in bank | 1,28,89,718.46 | 22,81,341.80 | Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust | 8,63,446.76 | 8,12,499.92 |
| Fixed Deposits | 3,08,39,349.00 | 2,94,56,674.00 | National Philanthropic Trust | 37,80,755.48 | 5,92,273.00 |
| Sub total | 4,37,29,087.46 | 3,17,37,034.80 | Association for India's Development | 68,210.00 | 3,41,640.65 |
| Grants received | | | NMHS | 73,00,258.48 | 44,84,754.06 |
| Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust | 24,18,100.00 | 24,35,987.00 | Total utilization of grant | | |
| Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust | 7,72,353.00 | 9,07,897.00 | | | |
| National Philanthropic Trust | 99,461.00 | 1,10,85,880.00 | Revenue Payments related to Sansthan | | |
| Association for India's Development | 11,78,800.00 | 4,74,093.00 | Bank Charges | 1,734.54 | 3,447.76 |
| NMHS | | | Books | 6,324.00 | 3,950.00 |
| Total grants received | 44,68,714.00 | 1,49,03,857.00 | Covid prevention expenditure | - | 32,805.00 |
| Revenue Receipts | | | Electricity and water and municipal taxes | 29,229.00 | 47,446.00 |
| Administrative charges | 2,45,000.00 | 7,16,888.65 | Insurance | 19,541.00 | 17,088.00 |
| Training workshops | 1,42,500.00 | - | Legal expenses | - | 21,260.00 |
| Donations | 6,12,500.00 | 6,10,533.00 | Miscellaneous expenses | 2,350.00 | 6,602.00 |
| Interest on bank deposits | 20,83,610.09 | 21,91,700.11 | Postage and telephone | 12,884.00 | 35,704.00 |
| Miscellaneous income | 1,066.00 | 2,200.00 | Society renewal fee | 6,000.00 | - |
| Income tax refund | 20,492.00 | - | Scholarship | 30,000.00 | 20,000.00 |
| Total revenue receipts | 31,05,168.09 | 35,23,321.76 | Stationery | 252.00 | 9,139.00 |
| Corpus donations | 10,000.00 | 10,000.00 | Travel | 22,705.00 | - |
| Excess Grant Received | 0 | 6,750.00 | | 1,29,969.54 | 1,97,462.76 |
| | | | Payment from reserves | | |
| | | | Fellowships | 3,30,000.00 | - |
| | | | Salary | 4,55,300.00 | - |
| | | | Rural Development Expenditure | - | 63,055.00 |
| | | | Excess Grant Spent | - | 1,17,248.00 |
| | | | Boarding & Lodging | 90,329.34 | 35,779.48 |
| | | | Maintenance | 1,27,979.00 | 14,677.00 |
| | | | Donation to publish book on birds of Uttarakhand | 1,00,000.00 | - |
| | | | Village Learning Center Program | 1,09,450.00 | 12,72,000.00 |
| | | | Auditor's remuneration | 47,200.00 | 47,200.00 |
| | | | Travel | - | 23,327.00 |
| | | | Assets Purchased | - | 40,710.00 |
| | | | Total payments from reserves | 12,60,258.34 | 18,13,996.48 |
| | | | Income tax payments | | |
| | | | Tax deducted at source (net of) | 86,213.30 | 1,56,882.51 |
| | | | Closing balances | | |
| | | | Cash in hand | - | - |
| | | | Cash in bank | 35,47,473.89 | 1,28,89,718.56 |
| | | | Fixed Deposit receipts | 3,89,66,743.00 | 3,08,39,349.00 |
| | | | | 4,25,14,216.89 | 4,37,29,067.56 |
| | 5,13,12,949.55 | 5,01,80,963.36 | | 5,13,12,949.55 | 5,01,80,963.36 |

For Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryayaran Shiksha Sansthan

Jeewan C. Joshi

Jeewan C. Joshi

Accountant

Dr. Lalit Pande

Dr. Lalit Pande

Chairman

This is the balance sheet referred to in our report of even date
 For Manish Khanna & Co.
 Chartered Accountants
 (FRN 008584C)

Manish Khanna
 Manish Khanna, FCA, DISA(ICA)
 [Membership Nos 077858]
 Partner
 Dated: August 23, 2022
 Camp Almora
 UDIN: 22077858AQRGIS7329



Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Parvathan Shiksha Samsthan, Almora
Financial Year ended 31 March 2022

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

| Name of the grant | Balance as at 1.4.2021 | Receipt Current Year | | | Total grant funds available | Amount spent/ Adjusted | Balance as on 31.3.2022 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Amount received during the year | Interest credited to grant | Interest credited to grant | | | |
| Rajeshwar Sushela Dayal Charitable Trust | 5,47,114.81 | 24,00,000.00 | 24,850.00 | 24,850.00 | 29,71,964.81 | 25,87,842.24 | 3,84,122.57 |
| Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust | 1,05,867.89 | 7,64,250.00 | 8,103.00 | 8,103.00 | 8,78,220.89 | 8,63,448.76 | 14,772.13 |
| National Philanthropic Trust ONGC | 1,04,93,607.00 | - | 99,461.00 | 99,461.00 | 1,05,93,068.00 | 37,80,755.48 | 68,12,312.52 |
| Association for India's Development | 16,010.00 | 11,78,800.00 | - | - | 16,010.00 | 16,010.00 | - |
| Total | 1,11,62,599.70 | 43,43,050.00 | 1,32,414.00 | 1,32,414.00 | 1,56,38,053.70 | 73,16,206.48 | 11,10,590.00 |

| Name of the grant | Balance as at 1.4.2020 | Receipts during previous the year | | | Total grant funds available | Amount spent/ Adjusted | Balance as on 31.3.2021 |
|---|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | Amount received during the year | Interest credited to grant | Interest credited to grant | | | |
| Rajeshwar Sushela Dayal Charitable Trust | 8,49,468.29 | 24,00,000.00 | 35,987.00 | 35,987.00 | 32,85,455.29 | 27,38,340.48 | 5,47,114.81 |
| Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust | 10,470.81 | 9,00,000.00 | 7,897.00 | 7,897.00 | 9,18,367.81 | 8,12,499.92 | 1,05,867.89 |
| National Philanthropic Trust | - | 1,10,11,578.00 | 74,302.00 | 74,302.00 | 1,10,85,880.00 | 5,92,273.00 | 1,04,93,607.00 |
| ONGC | 16,010.00 | - | - | - | 16,010.00 | - | 16,010.00 |
| NMHS | -1,32,452.35 | 4,74,093.00 | - | - | 3,41,640.65 | 3,41,640.65 | - |
| Total | 7,43,496.75 | 1,47,85,671.00 | 1,18,186.00 | 1,18,186.00 | 1,56,47,353.75 | 44,84,754.05 | 1,11,62,599.70 |

Note : (1) Grant received in the case of Hari Krishna Kamla Trivedi Memorial Trust includes TDS amounting to Rs 14250



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SCHEDULE NO. "B"

Financial year 2021-22

(a) SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

1. Assets acquired by Sansthan out of surplus accumulated in earlier years for the purpose of purchase of capital assets are treated as utilization of reserves. Assets acquired out of current year surplus are treated as application of income for charitable purpose and charged to revenue in the year of acquisition. Assets acquired out of grant funds are treated as application of grant monies
2. Amounts received by way of Grants that are to be spent strictly in accordance with the directions of the donor are reflected in the Balance Sheet until utilized and upon utilization, the balance if any, is transferred to the Income and Expenditure Account. Unutilized grant is considered as income if not refundable and conversely, excess expenditure on grant if not recoverable is treated as expenditure.
3. Investments, if any, are stated at lower of cost or realizable value.
4. Interest on deposits with bank – Interest earned in deposits made out of non grant funds is considered as income to the extent credited by bank whether by accrual or otherwise by actual payment. Interest on deposits made out of grant funds is treated as income in the manner aforesaid if the terms of grant permit to so, and if terms require interest to be treated as part of grant funds, then the interest is treated as part of grant and accounted in the same way as grants received
5. Cash basis of accounting is followed in preparing the statements except interest on time deposits which is accounted in terms of paragraph 4 above

(b) NOTES TO ACCOUNTS

- (i) Assets acquired by Sansthan and in use as at 31 March 2022 out of grant funds and own funds are :

| Description of asset | Amount |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Office Equipment | 6,46,174.96 |
| Vehicle (net of disposals) | 9,20,481.00 |
| Furniture and Furnishing | 1,05,505.00 |
| Library | 4,37,178.50 |
| Solar Water Heating System | 23,938.00 |
| Multifunction system | 88,200.00 |
| Portable hard drive | 5,600.00 |
| Inverter with battery | 29,900.00 |
| Computer, printer, scanner, projector | 2,20,923.00 |
| Total assets | 24,77,900.46 |

- (ii) During the current year, refund of income tax amounting to Rs 151249 was received. Income tax deducted at source stated in the receipts and payments accounts is net of refund of income tax

Teeravijay *Chilande*

23/8

