



Helping attitude of school going girl children towards family: A study in selected rural areas of Almora, Uttarakhand

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Abstract

The helping and subdued nature of young girls in many cases, has resulted in getting less facilities at home compared to male children. In certain circumstances girl children are compelled to help their mothers at home even if they are attending school resulting in poor performance in studies. Many girls realise and feel the rising workload of mothers, and wilfully help them on family/household work even when attending school. Hence, a study was undertaken, in selected rural areas of Almora district in Uttarakhand, to ascertain the role of school going girl children towards their family (particularly mothers) while continuing their everyday schooling. Further the study assessed the attitudinal change of parents with regards to education, status and income in the family.

The study comprised interviews of 300 school going girl children girl (sampled from four blocks) within the age group 6 to 18 years, categorised into (a) Below 5th: children who study below 5th class, (b) Below 10th: children who study between 6th to 10th class, (c) Below 12th: children who study between 11th to 12th class, and (d) Drop-out: children who have left school after enrolment. Among them, majority (96.15%) favoured higher education, i.e. up to Graduation and above. Majority of the parents, particularly mothers, expressed their willingness to educate their daughters; further, majority parents possessing some level of education reflected a positive attitude towards educating their daughters, and even granted freedom to decide the stream of education and higher education. However, some parents who were not in favour of higher education for girls, indicated economic constraints as reason for their opposition. The study showed that majority (41.00%) of the children's parents were in the lower middle income group, followed by 31.33% in upper middle income group, 16.67% in upper income group and least 11.00% in lower income group. In general, parents of lower middle income group and above (i.e. income Rs 5000 and higher) supported their children towards higher school education.

The survey also assessed the type of work the girl children performed at home. It was found that among the total respondents, only 11.67% help their mother in 'heavy work', 64.33% in 'light work', while 24.00% of them provided 'no help'. In general, maximum respondents under 10th and 12th class category provided help to mothers in 'light work' followed by 'heavy work' and 'no help'. Among the class 5 respondents, maximum of them, i.e. 82.76% did not help at all in domestic work and rest 17.24% were involved in 'light work'; none of them performed 'heavy work'. On the other hand among the drop-out respondents, maximum (64.29%) performed 'heavy work', 21.43% did 'light work', while only 14.28% did not help at all. The results of this study do indicate that girl's education is being given equal weight age with the boys; parents are now concerned about their education. The girl children, in spite of going to school and completing their school home work, do wilfully help their mothers at home, although in 'light work'. The financial background of the parents do appear to influence their children's accessibility to higher school education.

Keywords: education, girl children, helping attitude, Kumaun, school going, rural, Uttarakhand, schooling process

Introduction

India with world's one sixth humanity (1.21 billion; 17.2% of world's population; Census of India, 2011a) ^[7], and currently second most populous country after China, needs to stabilize its population through family planning programmes. The problem of illiteracy is particularly acute in rural areas of India. The lack of education can act as a constraint in rural development. Education is vital to human development. There is a strong link between education and development particularly in developed country. Since women comprise half the world's population, their role in development cannot be overlooked. In India too, women constitute nearly half of the rural population and play a vital role in the rural economy (Census of India, 2001; 2011a) ^[7]; they must be considered

equal partners in the development process. Thus, education and training are crucial for achieving this goal; this would not only help in raising the status of rural women and enable development of their potential but help them to live as independent and equal partners.

It is widely perceived that education acts as a key factor in improving the status of women and as an agent for developing modern attitude and rational outlook. Education influences health and survival chances, mental attitudes and overall outlook on life. It has been suggested that a qualitative reform among the women is possible through their education and training. Therefore, if females particularly those in rural areas, are illiterate it has direct and negative impact on these initiatives. The purpose of providing education to women is

mainly to: (a) enable them to think critically, identify their strength and take conscious, informed decisions, (b) empower women to play a positive role in their own and nation's development, and (c) enhance their self-image.

Several researchers have highlighted the importance of women's education (Kapadia, 1966; Kammeyer and Ginn, 1988; Jejeebhoy, 1995; Sen, 1997; Srivastava, 2005; Nandi and Joshi, 2015; Nandi, 2017a, b) [21, 20, 19, 37, 36, 30, 28]. These workers suggested that education raises the women's status by enhancing their capabilities, economic independence and also their ability to rely on themselves; it also brings them out of the confines of the domestic sphere and put them into contact with the outside modern world. They concluded that investment in women's education brings individual stability and social benefits including increased productivity and also better chances for more educated women's children.

Other studies have also indicated the role of education in the amelioration of women's status. These studies reveal that education led not only to economic independence of women but also gave them self-confidence and sense of dignity. Further they concluded that education of women has brought about radical changes in their conjugal role of performance, decision making, and behavioural patterns (Ross, 1961; Geinzbeg *et al.* 1966; Hate, 1969; Kapoor, 1970; 1986; Murickan, 1975; Leonard, 1976; Mehta, 1979; Ramanamma, 1979; Khan and Ayesha, 1982; Agrawal, 1986; Dutta, 1987; Indira Devi, 1987; Jain, 1988) [33, 10, 11, 22, 23, 27, 25, 26, 32, 24, 1, 9, 17, 18]. Although status of women has changed a lot, yet they continue to keep a low social profile. Thus, much attention needs to be given to their education if they are to be liberated and their status to be substantially improved. Earlier, Schultz has used the empirical findings to argue that developing countries should invest heavily in women's education (Schultz, 1993) [34].

Rural societies are characterized by widespread inequalities in the distribution of income and assets. Furthermore, lack of education creates a situation in which this problem is perpetuated. Thus the spread of education can enable the rural poor to ensure the distributive justice and also help them in actively participating in rural development programmes. Still rural women face difficulties and improvements did not commensurate with the actual efforts made by the Government due to several problems including financial and social. In order emphasize on women's education, a pre-requisite would be to properly groom and educate the girl child. With this aim, over the years, the Government had taken several steps in this direction.

One of the important indicators of development in a country is the status of literacy in that country. Table 1 depicts the changes in literacy rate of Uttarakhand from 1951 to 2011 indicating a considerable increase from 18.93% to 78.82% ([www.indiabudget.nic.in/budget 2013-2014/tab2012/tab94.xls](http://www.indiabudget.nic.in/budget%202013-2014/tab2012/tab94.xls) Retrieved on 6th Dec, 2014). The hill state of Uttarakhand, carved out of Uttar Pradesh in the year 2000, had a literacy rate of 71.62% in the year 2001 ([www.indiabudget.nic.in /budget 2013-2014/tab 2012/tab94.xls](http://www.indiabudget.nic.in/budget%202013-2014/tab%202012/tab94.xls). Retrieved on 6th Dec, 2014), higher than the national average of 64.84% ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Literacy _in_ India-Wikipedia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy_in_India). Retrieved on 17th October, 2013). The female literacy rate in the state during the same year was, however, as low as

58.73% compared to 85.74% for male. Though Uttarakhand has a relatively high literacy rate, it may not totally reflect the overall education status, let alone for women. Therefore, one of the important aspects to be considered for women's education is to ensure proper schooling of girl children. Although in general the enrolment in school going children for both boys and girls has increased over the last couple of decades yet there are school drop-outs due to several social and other domestic reasons.

Immediately following formation of Uttarakhand, the state Government took serious steps to improve the low literacy level in schools and out-of-school children by ensuring continuation of the Central Government Sponsored Schemes, namely Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-Day Meal Scheme and National Literacy Mission Programmes. Subsequently The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), an Act of the Parliament of India, was enacted on 4th August 2009 for free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years in Indian Article 21A of the Constitution ([http://www.education.nic.in/constitutional. asp](http://www.education.nic.in/constitutional.asp). Provision of the Constitution of India having a bearing on Education. Department of Higher Education, Government of India. Retrieved on 1st April 2010). All these above Centrally Sponsored Schemes were crucial for the state. The Government of Uttarakhand has spent considerable amount for the development of education (Basic and Secondary schools) in the state. The amount spent were Rs 17.03 billion in 2008-09, Rs 29.00 billion in 2010-11 which further increased to Rs 36.24 billion in 2012-13 ([http://www.schooleducation. uk.gov.in/pages/view/36-uttarakhand-diet](http://www.schooleducation.uk.gov.in/pages/view/36-uttarakhand-diet). Retrieved on 10th April, 2015). It would be important to mention that the literacy rate in the state has improved significantly from 71.62% (in 2001) to 78.82% (in 2011), which is once again higher than the national average of 74.04%. The female literacy rate in the state during these ten years has also improved markedly from a low 58.73% to 70.70% (Census of India, 2011b) [8]. Thus over the last few decades there has been considerable change in status of girl's education in hilly areas of Uttarakhand.

Life in hill region is extremely tough. The regions are characterised by thin population, undulating terrain, distantly located small villages with difficult approach, terraced cultivation, small and scattered land holdings, scanty irrigation facility, use of primitive methods of ploughing, little use of modern technology, low productivity and several difficulties (Anonymous, 1992) [4]. Most of the areas are rural and people live in small and scattered settlements; quite a few of these settlements are difficult to access, with poor transportation and communication facilities (Singh and Singh, 1992). Scope of work or job is limited and as a consequence there is out migration, particularly of males. Women are involved in most of the household activities, including farm activities. Due to low education level and weak economic status the people are unaware of the advancements in agriculture and/or new technologies suitable for their region and potential supplementary resources for income generation. Therefore, various suggestions have been provided to initiate development activities in an integrated manner simultaneously improving the economic status of the people (Anonymous,

1992, 2000; Papola, 2014)^[4, 5].

Table 1: Variation in Literacy rate in Uttarakhand from 1951-2011

Years	1951	1961	1971	1981	1991	2001	2011
Literacy rates (%)	18.93	18.05	33.26	46.06	57.75	71.62	78.82%

Source: www.indiabudget.nic.in/budget 2013-2014/ tab2012/ tab94. xis. Retrieved on 6th Dec, 2014.

Problem

Girl's education has been given less emphasis as far as the priorities of parents are concerned. Further, their helping and subdued nature has resulted in getting less facilities at home. In general, male children are sent to school even if located in remote places; they are not supposed to do domestic work. On the other hand girls are compelled to drop out from schools early on in order to help mothers in their domestic work including baby care. In many circumstances the girls are compelled to help their mothers at home even if they are attending school resulting in poor performance in studies. Recent studies have indicated that in the last decade the situation has changed and girl's education is being given equal importance with the boys (Nandi and Joshi, 2015; Nandi, 2017b)^[29, 30]. The parents are now concerned about their education and have understood that education only can provide all the required facilities to uplift their status. In a preliminary study, it has been observed that many girls realise and feel the rising workload of mothers, and wilfully help them on family/household work even when attending school. Keeping this in mind, a study was undertaken, in selected rural areas of Almora district in Uttarakhand, to ascertain the role of school going girl children towards their family (particularly mothers) while continuing their everyday schooling.

Objectives of the study

With this background and low literacy rate of women in the state, it was thought necessary to undertake an investigation with the following objectives: (i) to assess attitudinal change with regards to education, status and income in the family, (ii) to find out the views of parents on the necessity of girl's education, (iii) to examine the girl child's support towards family chores, and (iv) provide recommendations on further enhancing the educational status of girl children in rural Almora.

Methodology

A study of every day schooling process was conducted to collect information from parents of various socio-economic categories using in-depth interviews about their contribution to their girl's every day schooling process and vice-versa in four development blocks in rural Almora. The aim was to find the situation of girl's educational strata of different categories such as age category, attitude of parents towards education, income of fathers and girl's support to family chores.

The study was conducted in the state of Uttarakhand where the literacy rate is 78.82%, higher than the national rate of 74.04% (Census of India, 2011a)^[7]. Field survey was carried out during September 2013 to May 2014 in Almora district, Uttarakhand which comprises of 11 blocks (Bhasyia-chhana, Bhikyasen, Chaukhutiya, Dhaula Devi, Dwarahat, Hawalbagh,

Lamgarah, Saalt, Syalde, Takula and Tarikhet) and the corresponding forest area. Based on the female literacy rate, the blocks were arranged into two categories, i.e. high and low (source: Vikas Bhawan, Almora, Govt. of Uttarakhand; based on Census of India, 2011b)^[8]. Since the female literacy rate in rural areas of Almora district is 67.88%, blocks with literacy rate up to 67.88% were categorised under 'low level' while the blocks with literacy rate of above 67.88% were placed under 'high level' of literacy. Thus from each of these categories, two blocks each, i.e. with lowest and highest literacy rates, comprising a total four blocks, namely, Dhaula Devi (60.67% literacy rate; 35 km from Almora), Lamgarah (64.09%; 33 km from Almora), Hawalbagh (73.69%; 14 km from Almora), and Tarikhet (74.04%; 56 km from Almora) were chosen. The location of sites (in map), their geographical position, area, population, literacy rate, etc. of these four blocks selected for the study have been reported earlier (see Nandi, 2017a)^[28].

The study comprised interviews of 300 girl children (75 students sampled from each block) within the age group 6 to 18 years (excluding married, widow and divorce) with their parents (without any caste, race or creed) in order to get a complete range of information; among them 286 were school going children while 14 were not (for some reasons). The sample is thus representative of various variables like age, standard or class, drop-out, family, financial condition, parental education, and parental attitude of the respondents. The sample consisted of school going and drop-out students of various types of school (Government, Private and Under schemes). Based on the levels of education of these respondents (students) they have been classified in to four categories- (a) Below 5th: children who study below 5th class, (b) Below 10th: children who study between 6th to 10th class, (c) Below 12th: children who study between 11th to 12th class, and (d) Dropout: children who have left school after enrolment.

In another part of the study, the respondents consisted of same lot of school going girls but only those who were attending school; such students consisted of 286 and also categorised in to three groups: (i) Below 5th: children who study below 5th class, (ii) Below 10th: children who study between 6th to 10th class, and (iii) Below 12th: children who study between 11th to 12th class.

In this study, parents (fathers and/or mothers) of girl children were also interviewed in order to determine their attitude towards education in general, the necessity of girl's education, and their monthly income.

Results and Discussion

Based on the class category, out of the total 300 respondents chosen, 58 (19.33%) were girls below 5th class, 102 (34.00%) have education level below 10th class, 126 (42.00%) were below 12th class, and the remaining 14 (4.67%) were drop-out students. Placing all the respondents into different age categories based on their education levels, the age structure of the respondents indicate that 18.67% were in age group of 6-10 years, 33.67% in 11-15 years and 47.66% of them between 16-18 years (See Table 2 in Nandi 2017a)^[28].

Age has always remained an important factor influencing the education of an individual. Data on the respondents' education

under different age categories indicate that in case of drop-out students only 3.57% (due to some illness) belong to 6-10 yrs group, 6.93% (help provided to mother in domestic work and care of siblings) in 11-15 yrs group and 3.50% (due to domestic work, distance of school, and waiting for good marriage proposal) in 16-18 yrs group. The percentage of drop-out students was maximum (6.93%) in the age group of 11-15 yrs (See Table 2 in Nandi 2017a) [28]. Thus, in general the percentage of drop-out students is very less.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents in different variables.

Variable	Category	Number	Percentage
Education	Below 5 th class	58	19.33
	Below 10 th	102	34.00
	Below 12 th	126	42.00
	Drop out	14	4.67
	Total	300	100.00
Age	6-10 years	56	18.67
	11-15 years	101	33.67
	16-18 years	143	47.66
	Total	300	100.00
Educational Status	School going	286	95.33
	School not going	14	4.67
	Total	300	100.00
Family Income	Lower Income Group (≤ 5000)	33	11.00
	Lower Middle Income Group (5000-7500)	123	41.00
	Upper Middle Income Group (7500-10000)	94	31.33
	Upper Income Group (≥ 10000)	50	16.67
	Total	300	100.00

Source: Based on Primary Field work.

Attitude of parents towards education

On interviewing the parents, they mentioned that education would help develop confidence in their children and they can earn a better living. They indicated that educating girls would bring about economic independence and their ability to rely on themselves and put them into contact with the external modern world. Moreover, they can face situation or any kind of eventuality such as death of earning member, separation or divorce. Further, they added that education makes good house-wives and helps in proper upbringing of children. The respondents stated that educated women assist their husbands in making decisions logically.

In the past education of women in rural area of Uttarakhand thought to be a wasteful expenditure but at present a lot of change has taken place in the educational status of girl children in Almora district. When the parents were asked about the level of education they wanted for their girl children then most people said they favoured education up to 12th standard and above. Against this backdrop, it was important to examine the attitude of parents (mostly mothers) towards their daughter’s education. When asked why their daughters were dropping school after 10th standard, the response of some parents, particularly non-educated ones indicated sheer ignorance about the need for education. It is interesting to note that majority of the parents, particularly mothers, expressed their willingness to educate their daughters. The parents who were not in favour of higher education for girls have given

economic constraints as reason for their opposition. But the majority of parents having some level of education has reflection on their attitude towards the education of their daughters, is appreciable. According to the parents education is extremely important and necessary now a day for every girl for their overall development. Thus, mothers no longer consider the role of women as “house wives and mother” instead their aim is to empower their daughters in the field of education. Hence, in other words it can be concluded that most of the parents granted freedom to their daughters to decide the stream of education and higher education.

Further it was noticed during interview that in majority cases parents send their sons and daughters to the same school reflecting an unbiased attitude towards their daughters and value education equally for their children of both sexes. In a few cases, however, some parents were found to send their sons to the Public School and girls to the local Government Primary School in view of the thought that “what will they (girls) do after becoming educated?” This was found to be extremely unfair, and instead parents should give proper encouragement and equal opportunity to both girls and boys. A recent study conducted in rural areas of Almora suggested that there has been a trend in sending daughters to Public schools and equal importance of education for boys and girls is being given by the parents (Nandi and Joshi, 2015) [30].

Attitude towards level of education

When some parents were asked about the level their daughters be educated, most parents were in favour of above Higher secondary level. When the same question was asked to school going students, the same response was obtained and majority of them wanted to be educated up to Graduation and above. In this investigation it was found that only 3.85% of the respondents favoured education up to Higher Secondary level while the rest 96.15% favoured up to Graduation and above level (Table not shown). The school going respondents' education and attitude towards level of education is depicted in Figure 1. Among the younger respondents (class 5), all (100%) favoured up to Graduation and above. On similar thoughts, over 95.00% students of both class 10 and 12 favoured education up to Graduation and above. Therefore, it is clear that majority of the respondents, irrespective of their age, expressed their willingness to get educated at least up to Graduate level and above.

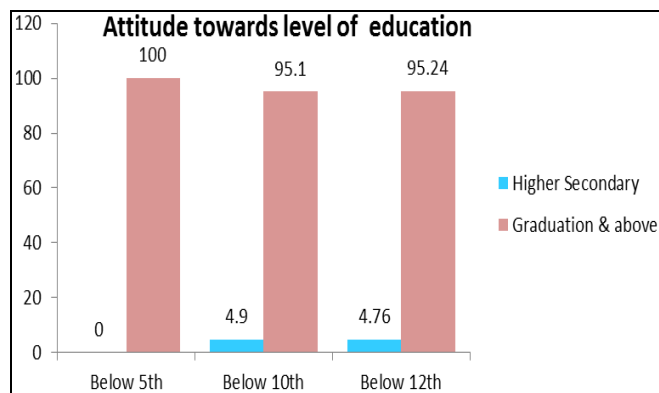


Fig 1: Graph showing respondents’ education and attitude towards level of education.

Co-education

When the parents were asked about their opinion of co-education for their girl children, most of them favoured co-education, having no objection for boys and girls studying in the same school. However, a few parents showed preference towards separate schooling for their daughters, but very less in number. The reason given by them was of the fear that girls would go ‘stray’.

Income of parents and respondents’ education

Based on the monthly income of respondents' parents, four groups were broadly made, i.e., lower income, lower middle, upper middle and upper income groups (Table 2). Those who earned below or equal to Rs 5000 were placed in the lower income group, who earned Rs 5000-7500 were placed in the lower middle income group, who earned Rs 7500-10000 in upper middle income group, and those who earned Rs 10000 and above per month, were categorized under upper income group.

Table 2 summarizes the respondents’ education level and the corresponding income of their parents. It can be observed that majority (41.00%) of the children’s parents were in the lower middle income group, followed by 31.33% in upper middle income group, 16.67% in upper income group and least 11.00% in lower income group. Graph showing respondents’ education and income of parents is shown in Figure 2. Among the lower income group parents, maximum children (36.37%) were drop-out but 18.18% of them studied under 12th standard. In the lower middle income group, only 1.63% was drop-out while maximum children (40.65%) was studying under 12th standard. In the upper middle income group maximum (51.06%) were in the 12th class category while there was no student in the drop-out section. In the upper income group maximum students (44.00%) were in class 12 category, 32.00% were in class 10 category, and 24.00% were in class 5 category; there were no drop-out in this income group (Figure 2). It was observed that parents of lower middle income group and above (i.e. income Rs 5000 and higher) supported their children towards higher education. Thus it is clear that financial background of the parents influences their children’s accessibility to education. Better income of the parents is likely to place the children in a higher educational position.

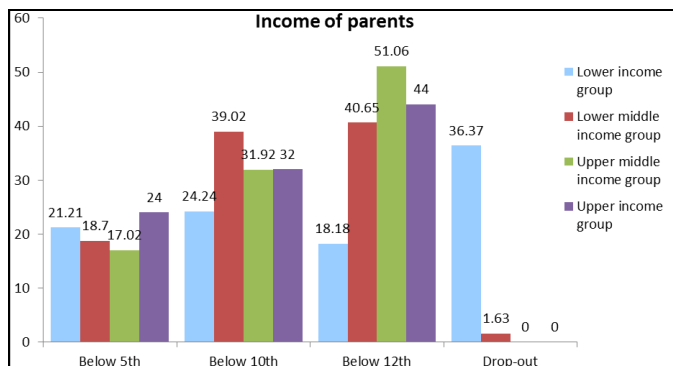


Fig 2: Graph showing respondents’ education and income of parents

Helping mother in domestic work

The respondents were enquired about the type of work they

performed at home to help their mothers; in general, they answered that whenever necessary they help their mother. It was found that among the total respondents, only 11.67% of them help their mother in ‘heavy work’, 64.33% were involved in ‘light work’, while 24.00% respondents provided ‘no help’ (Table not shown). Respondents’ education and helping mother in domestic work is shown in Figure 3. Among the drop-out respondents 64.29% did ‘heavy work’, 21.43% did ‘light work’, while only 14.28% respondents did not help at all. Respondent girls of 12th class provided maximum (82.54%) help to mothers in ‘light work’, and 9.52% in ‘heavy work’, while 7.94% provided ‘no help’. Among the class 10th respondents, 13.73% were involved in ‘heavy work’, a maximum of 74.51% helped in ‘light work’ while 11.76% of them did not provide any help at all. Among the class 5 respondents, maximum of them i.e. 82.76% did not help at all in domestic work and rest 17.24% were involved in ‘light work’; none of them performed ‘heavy work’ (Figure 3). When the school going children were asked about their willingness and involvement in ‘heavy work’ at home, they clarified that they helped their mother because they lived in a nuclear family and mother single handed cannot complete the entire house hold work; so they try to help their mother on their own, even if mother doesn’t ask. Most the girl students of class 10 and 12 mentioned that their mothers rarely asked them to help in ‘heavy work’.

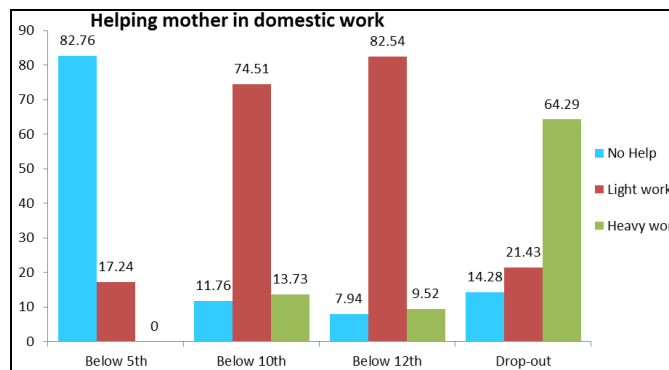


Fig 3: Graph depicting respondents’ education and helping mother in domestic work.

Helping mother in light work

As summarized in Table 2, in the survey of 300 respondents, 14 girls (4.67%) are drop-out, 58 girls (19.33%) are under class 5, 102 girls (34.00%) are below class 10 and 126 girls (42.00%) are below class 12. When asked about helping their mother in domestic work, some girls (64.33%) helped in ‘light work’, few (11.67%) in ‘heavy work’ while the rest (24.00%) did not help at all. The type of ‘light work’ they performed to help their mothers complete house hold chores, is summarized in Figure 4. The data reveals help related to chopping vegetables (21.76% girls), washing utensils (35.23%), washing food grains (23.32%), placing wet clothes for drying (11.40%), and collecting dried washed clothes (8.29%).

Therefore, as mentioned above, majority (64.33%) of the respondents helped their mother in 'light work' which involves less physical effort. This implies that today’s mother are aware of the need of girl’s education and hence they do not

fully involve their daughters in domestic work lest they will not be able to complete their home work and study properly so as to pass/qualify their school examination. Thus the parents have realised that the students should be provided with some space at home so they can prepare themselves for the outside world.

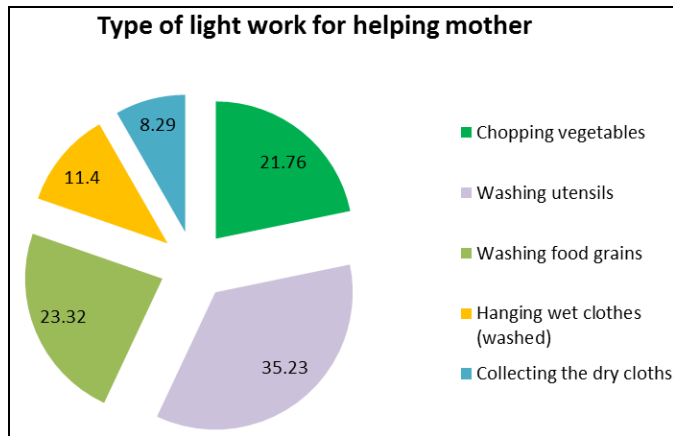


Fig 4: Chart showing the type of light work done for helping mother.

Helping mother in heavy work

It was found that among the total 300 respondents, only 11.67% of them helped their mothers in ‘heavy work’ (Table not shown), however, amongst them 25.71% were total drop-outs, 34.29% were class 12 students, and 40.00% were class 10 students. During interview when the respondents were asked about the type of heavy work they performed in helping their mother, they mentioned of collecting water from outside, gathering fuel and fodder, grazing cattle, purchase of grocery items from market, milking cattle, helping in cultivation, etc. (summarized in Figure 5). Thus, 31.43% girls (maximum) help in gathering fuel and fodder from forest area, 20.00% in collecting water from outside, 14.29% involved in cooking food, 11.43% in grazing cattle in nearby field, and purchase grocery items from market (both same % values), 8.57% help in cultivation, while 2.85% help in milking cattle. The observation that among all the drop-out respondents maximum (64.29%) of the girls performed ‘heavy work’ implies that their parents probably do not value education of these girls, taking advantage of their financial constraint and presence of daughters at home. Parents of class 10 and 12 students do understand the importance of education and support their children in studies. These girls willingly perform 'heavy work' at home due to nuclear family and otherwise considerable amount of work required at home. It can be concluded that illiteracy, unawareness and financial constraints of parents are ascribed to the cause of carrying out heavy work by daughters.

Liking their school

When the school going respondents were asked whether they liked going to their school, all of them answered with an excited and loud voice “Yes, we like going to school”. Nobody said they disliked going to school. They also added that they loved their school very much, are fond of their class mates/friends and highly respect their teachers. They also expressed their dislike towards 'Punishment' given in school

when someone is absent. Otherwise they love their school, like its surrounding and atmosphere. All of them said they are very serious about their performance so they regularly learn their lessons and love to study. They are more than willing to join extracurricular activities in school like playing different types of sports, NCC, drawing competition, music competition, debate, etc.

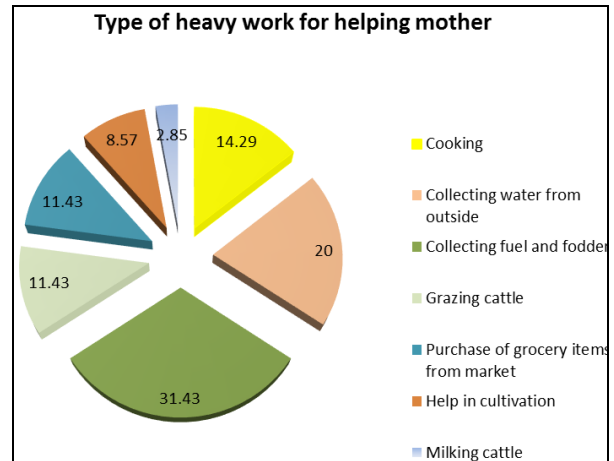


Fig 5: Chart showing the type of heavy work done for helping mother.

Reason for discontinuing studies

In this investigation out of sample of 300 respondents, 4.67% are drop-out students (Table 2) and amongst these drop-outs 14.29% were below 5th standard, 50.00% were below 10th standard, and 35.71% were below class 12. It was observed that respondents have stopped their education at different stages, hence the reasons for discontinuing their studies were ascertained.

The data in Figure 6 (comprising of drop out students only) indicate that maximum students, i.e. 35.71% left school as they were required for household work and sibling care at home, 21.43% left due to both far distance of school and marriage purpose, 14.29% due to illness, and least 7.14% because of financial constraints. Thus, it can be concluded that majority of the respondents discontinued their education because of household work.

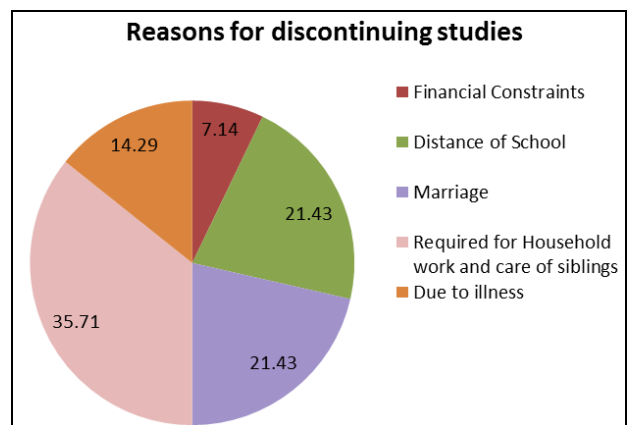


Fig 6: Chart depicting the reasons for discontinuing studies by respondents.

Conclusions

The present study is an attempt to profile the educational and sociological status of the school going girl students in rural Almora District. Here some relevant information has been gathered about the respondents' parents, their educational status and income, their attitude towards education, and mainly on the children's helping attitude at home, particularly mothers.

The empirical data gathered demonstrates that education has contributed significantly in raising the status of girl children in rural Almora. All the girls aged between 6 to 18 years were found to be enrolled in schools. The number of drop-out students is negligible, indicating that now the parents are also aware about the importance of education. It can be also notable from the educational status of the parents that new generation of parents had greater levels of education than the older ones and was found to influence respondents' education i.e., the higher the education of the parents, higher was the educational level of the girl children. The parents formed the source of encouragement for higher education of their daughters. The nature of encouragement from parents is indicative of the high practical value they had for higher education which contrast with a number of stereotyped notions about girls' education in rural areas. Although girl students studying in higher classes (10 and 12) have moderate percentage of illiterate parents, nevertheless, due to changing trend and importance of education such parents do encourage their daughters to get educated. Better income of parents was likely to place the children in a better educational position. But the parents with poor financial background were also found to influence the daughters' accessibility to education.

As the regards of the objective of education, most respondents stated that the objective of education is to be independent. They believe that education is the only factor in human life which can differentiate between other animal and human being. They said that education raises the status of women. They also depicted how higher education acted to enhance social mobility and status for themselves and their families. They cited several reasons for entering higher education, these range from personal interest, career aspirations, financial stability, personal independence, and can delay the age of marriage.

When the parents were asked further, mostly mothers said that they were keen to support their daughters not only for higher education but also to make them economically more independent. The parents were found to play an instrumental role in encouraging their daughters to succeed, both academically and professionally. It can be noticed during the field trip that though they had some financial constraint, the parents of lower middle income group and above (i.e. income Rs 5000 and higher) did support their children towards higher education. Thus, financial background of the parents influences their children's accessibility to education. Better income of the parents is likely to place the children in a higher educational position. The majority of the respondents, irrespective of their age, expressed their willingness to get educated at least up to Graduate level and above. Therefore, based on the level of education, in general it was found that there is an indication of change in the attitude of respondents and their parents as the level of education increases. Currently

the girls are more interested in becoming self independent and making an identity of their own (also see Nandi 2017a)^[28].

The parents were asked whether they thought that education raises the status of woman, then majority of parents agreed to this view. According to them time has changed now, not like earlier days. Now educated women are respected everywhere and enjoy high social status. They are given differential treatment in social gathering and their opinions sought on several matters. Moreover, girl children also can raise their family status when they join a job after completing their education. At present maximum parents also changed themselves with time. Currently, besides their sons, they also wanted to educate their daughters to secure their future. Therefore, there is clear indication of a positive attitude amongst parents towards education, and have realised its importance as essential tool of raising status of women. Further, children were eager to take up higher education and become employed. In order to understand the weakness and strengths of the students and improve the quality of studies for future development, it is essential that all the schools should organize Parent-Teacher meeting regularly. Although better income of parents was likely to place the children in a better educational position, nevertheless it was observed in this study that parents with poor financial background were also found to influence the daughter's accessibility to education. It must be added that in a recent study on educational attainment in West Bengal, Bagchi (2017)^[3] reported that given equal opportunity, scheduled caste (SC) students who are generally perceived as possessing lower merit can perform equally well in achieving better results in school and colleges like non-SC students.

It was also observed that during school hours no girl between 6 to 18 years is roaming in the village; all girls were attending school full time. Interview also revealed that few girls were engaged in some domestic work like bringing potable water, cutting woods, and bringing groceries from shop after school is over. The nutritional condition of girl children was also up to the mark because of daily mid-day meal schemes. The girls now a day enjoy their student's life with their friends, family and pet. They also play games and watch television programme and improved their knowledge, etc. They are now quite confident and they can express their feeling fearlessly; they can complete their homework themselves. It has been observed that many of the school going girls realise and feel the rising workload of mothers, and wilfully help them on family/household work (although maximum of them in light work) even when attending school. The respondents also admitted that they loved their school and they attend school regularly. Majority of them were very serious about their performance and therefore learned their lessons regularly and loved to study. They are involved in extracurricular activities in school like playing different types of sports, take part in NCC, drawing competition, music competition, debate, etc. India has the second largest education system (World Bank, 2003)^[38] and largest number of children out of school in the age group 6-10 years (Huebler, 2007)^[12]. But over the last few decades there has been considerable change in status of girl's education in hilly areas of Uttarakhand. The situation has improved considerably following the formation of Uttarakhand state since currently the drop-out girl students of

6-17 years age form only a very small proportion, i.e. 2.9% in rural Almora and 0.5% in urban Almora (Annual Health Survey 2011-12. Fact sheet- Uttarakhand. <http://www.censusindia.gov.in>. Retrieved on 10th June, 2015). Thus, it can be concluded that now a day gradually a change has occurred in rural areas; the rural people now want to give chance to their daughters to live a hazard-free and open and enjoyable life.

In agreement to the findings of above mentioned studies the present study show the role of compulsory education for all bring a change in rural area for girls. All girls are now enrolled in the school and they are now continuing their school education with a belief that one day they will be economically independent after completing their education and will enjoy a standard quality of life.

The present study has depicted the role of education for all changing the status of girl children in rural Almora. The status of girl children in rural areas needs to be examined further. Moreover, several challenges would come their way but the girl children have to overcome them. They have to study seriously, improve their skill, establish themselves in the competitive world; they should become good citizen and good human beings. They need to first love, care and value themselves, increase their self esteem, then only they can understand the value of others. Then they can give care, respect and love others. They have to become not only a working and independent woman but also a caring and loving mother in their future.

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