UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S WELL-BEING USING THE CAPABILITIES APPROACH

Final Project Report

Submitted by

ISHITA SINHA

In partial fulfilment of the requirement for the

**Degree of Masters of Arts in
Sustainable Development Practice**

Submitted to

**Department of Policy Studies
TERI School of Advanced Studies**

May 2019

DECLARATION

This is to certify that the work that forms the basis of this project *"Understanding Women's Well-Being using the Capabilities Approach"* is an original work carried out by me and has not been submitted anywhere else for the award of any degree. I certify that all sources of information and data are fully acknowledged in the project report.

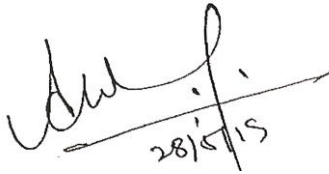Ishita Sinha   New Delhi, 28th May 2019

Certificate

This is to certify that **Ishita Sinha** has carried out her major project in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Sustainable Development Practice on the topic **"Understanding Women's Well-Being using the Capabilities Approach"** during January 2019 to May 2019. The project was carried out in the **Integrated Livelihoods Support Project (ILSP)-Uttarakhand Gramya Vikas Samiti (UGVS)** and was supported under the IFAD-Universities Win-Win Partnership.

The report embodies the original work of the candidate to the best of our knowledge.

Date: 28th May 2019

External Supervisor

Mr. Sanjay Saxena

Agriculture-Horticulture Manager

Uttarakhand Gramya Vikas Samiti,
Integrated Livelihoods Support Project
Dehradun, Uttarakhand

Internal Supervisor

Dr. Smriti Das

Associate Professor

TERI School of Advanced Studies
New Delhi

Dr. Smriti Das

Associate Professor & Head of the Department

Department of Policy Studies

TERI School of Advanced Studies

New Delhi

Acknowledgements

The inquiry at the heart of the present study was motivated by reasons both personal and academic in nature. As such, the entire process fused the boundaries between my personal and academic endeavours, and was one of extraordinary satisfaction. That is not to take away from the many trials and introspections undergone, in which I was fortunate to enjoy the support of many wonderful people.

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to my internal supervisor, Dr. Smriti Das, who has guided me from the time this research was just an unstructured idea in my head. Her insights have enriched this work, and her willingness to share her time so generously is greatly appreciated. I feel lucky to have learnt so much from her during this process.

I am deeply indebted to the residents of the villages I took my research inquiry to. I am lucky to have been able to learn from their compassion, insightfulness, and resilience. I thank them for bearing with my endless questions, and taking care of me at all times.

I am greatly indebted to everyone at my host organization, UGVS, and all the project and government officials who shared their valuable time with me.

My wonderfully supportive family made this process infinitely easier. Their insights and words of encouragement were invaluable, and I thank my mother, father, and sister, Aishwarya, for believing when I did not.

A bundle of thanks to all the fantastic people I get to call my friends; in particular to my colleague Prakriti, who provided invaluable support during the many ups and down in the field, and Alistair, who always responded to my work with appropriate enthusiasm, or encouragement.

This work embodies many people's voices, which made possible this attempt to navigate a complex subject. I thank them all profusely. All mistakes remain my own.

Ishita Sinha
May 2019

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

List of abbreviations used

BNA: Basic Needs Approach

BoD: Board of Directors

CA: Capabilities approach

CBDs: Community Development Blocks

DMU: Divisional Project Management Unit

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

GAD: Gender and Development

GoI: Government of India

HHs: Households

IFAD: International Fund for Agriculture Development

ILSP: Integrated Livelihoods Support project

LCs: Livelihood Collectives; Livelihood Coordinators (usage specified in text)

LDPE tanks: Low-density polyethylene tanks

ME: Measuring Empowerment framework

MIS: Management Information System

MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

NPV: Non-project village

NPV, m: Belonging to non-project village and member of SHG

NPV, nm: Belonging to non-project village and not a member of SHG

PGs: Producer Groups

PMU: Project Management Unit

PRA: Participatory Research Approach

PRIs: Panchayati Raj Institutions

PVs: Project villages

PV, b: Belonging to project village and a project beneficiary

PV, nb: Belonging to project village and not a project beneficiary

RAI: Relative Autonomy Index

SDT: Self-Determination Theory

SHGs: Self-Help Groups

TAs: Technical agencies

UGVS: Uttarakhand Gram Vikas Samiti

VPGs: Vulnerable Producer Groups

WID: Women in Development

WAD: Women and Development

I.   Abstract

The present study aims to understand how women's well-being is contoured by developmental projects that have women as the main beneficiaries. The study focuses on the women participants of the Integrated Livelihoods Support Project (ILSP), an IFAD project being implemented in Uttarakhand, India. The analytical paradigm is the capability approach, drawing from Amartya Sen's work. The objective is to understand how development projects facilitate women's well-being; by analysing women's functionings, capabilities, agency, and thus their freedom. The Measuring Empowerment (ME) Framework guided the research design. Understanding of agency is further enhanced by construction of the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI). Primary data was collected during 3 month-long fieldwork in 3 villages (2 project and 1 control village). Across domains, the assessment of well-being from observing functionings alone was highlighted as erroneous, as abilities and opportunities were required to explain the entire experience. Development projects run the risk of reinforcing women's traditionally defined dependence when bypassing the structural difficulties encountered by women as development actors holding multiple roles and identities. Expansion of social opportunities through project activities was deemed particularly valuable by women. An opportunity to refine processes in development projects is discussed.

Keywords: women, well-being, capabilities, agency, freedom, Uttarakhand

I.   Introduction

The correct 'treatment' of gender in development practice is characterised by the wide distance between academic understanding, and the processes through which relevant policies, plans, and projects are implemented on the ground. This gap is explained by designers of these practices i.e. government representatives and project officials as a practical bypass of stubborn social realities. Feminist scholars continue to emphasise the incommensurability of the factors that shape women's well-being and advise caution in substituting the lack of one for more of another (Agarwal, 2001). When the social milieu is characterised by persistent forms of inequalities such as gender inequality, it urges the question of whether the linkage between development objective and processes is being severed by these 'practical' alterations. To answer this question, the well-being of women

beneficiaries of any development intervention needs to be assessed; as "well-being" is one overarching goal most interventions (governmental or non-governmental) strive for. What accounts for "well-being" is complex, and requires a lens attuned to human universals as well as contextual realities. The *processes* undertaken become as important to analyse as the *outcomes,* that is, well-being.

Well-being of women is an important aspect to study across any society, as gender inequalities prevail across the globe, albeit taking different forms. But certain contexts get characterised by additional behavioural and demographic changes which further justify the use of a gendered lens. The present study is situated in such a context. Uttarakhand is a north-Indian Himalayan state, formed out of the hill areas of the state of Uttar Pradesh in 2000. The state has 13 districts in total, including (3) plain and (10) hill districts, and the primary dependence of the population is on agriculture (Census, 2011). Yet the contribution of agriculture in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is on the decline, and poor alternatives are available in the hill districts (Census, 2011).
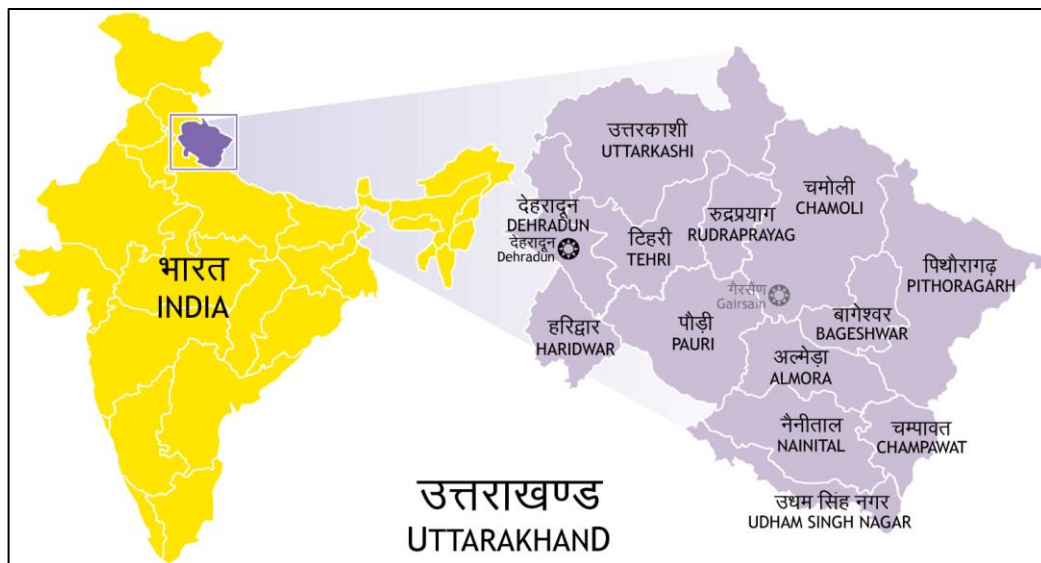
Figure 1: Map showing location of the state of Uttarakhand in India, and Uttarakhand's districts

Uttarakhand has thus witnessed large-scale out-migration of males, and often entire families, for alternative employment opportunities, and better healthcare and education services. Micro studies in the area estimate between 42-57% households reporting at least one out-migrant, with higher rates observed in the hill districts than the plains, and more from the rural areas of the hill districts

(Negi et al., 2016). The destinations include the state's plain districts (Dehradun, Udham Singh Nagar, and Haridwar), other Indian states, and foreign countries. This has changed the state's demographic profile, with larger number of women, children and the aged left behind in the villages. Women now solely undertake many productive activities such as agriculture which were jointly managed before, in addition to their exclusive responsibility of reproductive duties. Poorer development outcomes of these hill districts, as compared to the plains, have also brought in internationally funded development projects aimed at diversifying agricultural livelihoods. Given the demographic context, most of these projects have women as their main beneficiaries- by design or default.

One large development project in Uttarakhand is the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD)-supported Integrated Livelihoods Support Project (ILSP), being implemented in the hill districts of the state since 2013. The overall goal of ILSP is to reduce poverty, achieved via the more immediate development objective "to enable rural households to take up sustainable livelihood opportunities integrated with the wider economy" (ILSP, 2016). The project consists of four components: *(i) Food Security & Livelihood Enhancement; (ii) Participatory Watershed Management; (iii) Livelihood Financing;* and *(iv) Project Management*. The first component is being implemented by the Uttarakhand Gram Vikas Samiti (UGVS), which was also the host organization for the internship during which this research was conducted. As food security and enhancement of livelihoods is for people still residing in the hill districts of Uttarakhand, this component works mainly with women beneficiaries.

The present study, contextualized in the hill districts of the Himalayan region in India, explores women's well-being as contoured by developmental projects working with women as beneficiaries. It focuses on the women participants of the first component of the project, and includes stakeholders from the last component (ILSP managers and officials, project's Management Information System (MIS)) for additional inputs on research design.

The conceptual paradigm is of the capability approach (CA) proposed by Amartya Sen. CA understands development as a process of expanding people's freedoms, so that they can live lives that they value, and have reason to value

(Sen, 1999). "Freedom" in this view constitutes of the opportunity aspect of *capabilities ("*ability of a person to achieve those things that she has reason to value" from a range of other good possibilities), and the processional aspect of *agency (*ability to act on behalf of what matters). It goes beyond simply observing what people are currently able to do or to be, i.e., their *functionings*, in CA terminology.

This research thus aimed at understanding women's well-being in the region, through analysing their functionings, capabilities, agency, and thus freedom. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach, and data was collected during 3 month-long fieldwork. Three villages (two intervention and one non-intervention) were selected for the study in Almora district of Uttarakhand. The Measuring Empowerment (ME) Framework (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005), which rests heavily on the conceptual offerings of CA, was used to guide research design. To get closer to Sen's conception of agency, the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) was also constructed and analysed for all women (Alkire, 2007).

The next section of this report covers the Background and Rationale of the study, which traces the understanding of gender in development literature and its translation into practice, understandings on the nature of well-being, on development projects engaging with women beneficiaries globally and in Uttarakhand, and finally, how the capabilities approach allows for conceptual linkages for the purposes of this study. The third section is Objectives and Methodology, providing a detailed presentation of the research design. The fourth section covers the Results and Discussion, and the report ends with the section on Conclusions and Recommendations.

II.   Background and Rationale

i.   Gender and development thought

The perception of gender in development practice has typically crystallized from the broader thinking on societal change at the time. Starting in the 1950s, for about two decades, the modernization paradigm dominated thinking, which argued that massive expansions in education would produce stocks of skilled employees, enabling the transition of small agrarian societies into massive industrialized ones (Rathgeber, 1989). The *means* towards better living

conditions such as income and health were assumed then to "trickle down" to all people. This view was supported with the development of the human capital approach to development, which prescribes policies with heavy investments in education. Implicit in these approaches was the endorsement of male experience as the societal norm. These assumptions were being questioned by the 1970s, with empirical evidence of women lagging behind on most development outcomes. The integration of gender in development literature can be sketched back to this time in the 1970s, with Ester Boserup's study on 'Women's Role in Economic Development' pioneering findings on the sexual division of labour in agrarian economics (Boserup, 1970). Though it found critics, it was the first systematic analysis using gender as an independent variable; prompting the use of the term 'women in development' (WID). These findings shaped civil society organizations' work on policy and administrative changes to better integrate women into economic activities. WID's roots in modernization theory meant its policy prescriptions focused more on the equal inclusion of women, rather than the addressal of structural differences in the experience of societal change by men and women, as had been observed in the past decades. This view did not understand gender and its intersectionality with class, religion, caste and other socio-economic characteristics, and stressed productive activities for women; overlooking the burden of reproductive activities borne by them. The 'women and development' (WAD) view challenged this notion that productive activities had been *introduced* to women in the last few decades: women had always performed both productive and reproductive activities. But WAD placed this inequality in the broader context of dependency theory, wherein these gendered activities help maintain the overarching global order of inequalities. Class relations somewhat superseded the analysis of gender, and WAD continued WID's preoccupation with productive activities for income-generation; relegating women's social reproduction duties to the "private" domain and outside the purview of development interventions. The Basic Needs Approach (BNA) is firmly placed in this WAD approach, by not questioning the existing patterns of inequality in social settings.

The third chronological strand of thinking is referred to as 'gender and development' (GAD), which identifies the *social construction* of production and reproduction as the basis of women's oppressions, thus focusing attention to the

social relations of gender and questioning the roles, expectations, and responsibilities ascribed by gender in different contexts. Projects in the GAD approach analyse the range of work done by women, rejecting the public-private dichotomy. It recognises women as agents of change, and espouses collective action for greater political power (Rathgeber, 1989).

The concept of 'empowerment' arose from important critiques generated by the women's movements across the world, especially criticising the apolitical and economistic nature of WID, WAD, and GAD models existing in development projects. The convergence of these insights with emerging ideas such as Paulo Friere's "conscientisation" approach in popular education led to the spread of "women's empowerment" as a more political and transformatory idea for struggles that challenged not only patriarchy, but the mediating structures of caste, class, religion, and ethnicity (Batliwala, 2007). In India, it replaced the terms "women's welfare", "women's development" and "women's upliftment" used by the government and major donor agencies, but was often not defined at all. Batliwala's (1994) empowerment framework was developed from the experiences of South Asian grassroots organizations working on gender, or with a stated objective of women's empowerment. It identified the role of ideological, personal and institutional change for empowerment. This framework is also reflected in Kabeer's (1994) work on gender, which also highlights the differences between "ways of thinking and ways of doing" when it comes to gender in development practice. Both scholars highlight the role played by resources, personal agency for resource utilization, and institutional context to realize outcomes. They guide caution in using instrumentalist understandings of gender in development practice.

ii.   Operationalization of concepts into development 'practice'

In the present study, 'development practice' refers to the range of institutions and processes in the Third World which aim for these nations to approach the general quality of life as seen in the Western 'developed' countries (Rist, 2014) Development practice includes policies, plans, programmes and projects.

The treatment of the term 'empowerment' from theory to practice is particularly revealing of Kabeer's (1994) insight on how development literature's contributions on gender are often distorted or diluted when translated into

practice. Batliwala's (1994) framework on the factors shaping women's empowerment initiated a range of practices attempting to implement it. Many such projects created new spaces for women to collectivize into *sanghs* or *samoohs* (groups), developing political and personal agenda for change, and collective strength. India's National Policy on Education, 1986 identified empowerment as a critical pre-condition in girls' and women's participation in education, which led to the emergence of Mahila Samakhyas in 1988 (Ministry of Human Development, GoI, 2016). Under these groups, micro-credit successfully shifted productive resources to women, who showed that they invested it to improve health and education indicators at the household level. Legislative reform on reservations for women in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), laws banning sex selection, and stronger punishment for dowry etc. were examples of this strand of thinking. Such reforms accept the interplay of the diverse socio-economic, political and cultural factors that shape women's well-being, and attempt to craft interventions to expand women's abilities and opportunities, i.e. their capabilities, so that they could be the drivers of change that is intended for them.

On account of the high social consensus it generated in the development arena, the concept of empowerment was quickly co-opted by development jargon, but its deeply political edge was lost in practice. Development assistance agencies and governments embraced the buzzword, but operationalized it into a set of largely apolitical, technocratic and narrow interventions (Batliwala, 2007). Diverse political agendas and regimes endorsed the term, but reduced it essentially into two manageable sets of interventions: (i) SHGs, and (ii) reservation of seats for women in local government bodies. The concept of SHGs has been adopted by the central and state governments in India too, as women SHGs were found to have exceptional records on return of loans. Yet, studies question whether this targeting actually benefits the women, or forces them to be re-payers of loans actually utilized by other family members (Niranter, 2007).

From the late 1990s, the rights-based and results-based approaches have been replacing 'empowerment' for a number of political reasons, including that they are more easily quantified. But these approaches implicitly shift agency more towards the implementers (who decide what is to be measured and how), and focus more on formal structures and equality. Neo-liberal models of

development also mean that "empowerment" has crept out of the domain of collective and systemic change, into a phenomenon of individual transformation. Empowerment as a concept is thus differently understood and inconsistently defined; its *processes* such as formal collectivization of women into groups, for instance, is understood as achievements of empowerment in themselves, and the linkage between empowerment and well-being of women which finds support in development literature is often severed in development practice.

iii. Understandings on well-being of women

Traditionally, well-being has been assessed through 'objective' indicators mainly on resource ownership or control, while contemporary research recognises the role played by 'subjective' indicators such as happiness and satisfaction in well-being. Commonly used objective indicators include availability and access to food, water, housing, education, employment and care (Doyal & Gough, 1991); a number of these are assessed under functionings in the present study to help identify gaps between objective indicators and overall well-being.

But objective indicators do not necessarily identify resource *use*: "am I able to utilise my educational status to advance my well-being?"; and subjective indicators may not be sensitive to adaptive preferences: the acceptance of prolonged deprivation as a coping strategy in order to not mentally process it daily. An alternative to income-based and purely subjective approaches is taken in the present study to understand women's well-being. Addressing these concerns is a body of work owing much to its inceptor, the Indian Nobel laureate, Amartya Sen.

Sen's identification as an *economist* is always supplemented by elucidations on how his body of work transcends the boundaries of traditional economic thought. His work on social choice theory rests heavily on his arguments in moral and political philosophy. His contributions on equality and social justice are founded on the belief that one cannot fail to isolate gender as an important parameter in development studies (Sen, 1987, p.3) His addressal of gender is comprehensively well-argued, through global analysis of sex ratios at birth to reflect the phenomenon of "missing women", and the placement of gender and "cooperative conflicts" at the household level. This work on gender inequality has included

collaboration with other scholars including Jean Drèze (e.g. Drèze and Sen, 1991; 1999; 2002) and Jocelyn Kynch (Kynch and Sen, 1983).

To understand quality of life and what 'development' should look like, Sen accepts the importance of assessing well-being (Sen, 1985, p.208), but rejects its traditional utilitarian understanding, i.e., expressing well-being as a utility, in the form of happiness, desire fulfilment, or only the exercise of choice (p.203). Sen's alternative understanding of well-being focuses instead on functionings and capabilities; a proposition widely referred to as the 'capability approach' (or the 'capabilities approach', CA): "a broad normative framework for the evaluation and assessment of individual well-being and social arrangements, the design of policies, and proposals about interventions and social change in society. It is used in a wide range of fields, including development studies" (Deneulin, 2009, p. 101).

Functionings, capabilities, and agency are main constituents of CA, which all reflect important insights into a person's freedom to *live the lives they value* and *have reason to value*; well-being is one such goal which meets those two requirements. In broad terms, the primary feature of well-being in CA is how a person is able to "function" (Sen, 1985, p.197). **Functionings** are the various 'beings' and 'doings' that a person values: such as being well-nourished, not being diseased, being able to use one's knowledge towards valued goals. The set of functionings a person actually achieves is termed their "functioning vector", or their well-being achievements.

But by focusing only on the achieved functionings, one would eliminate the understanding of choices and opportunities people have (or do not have), through which they achieved those functionings. True well-being would thus be the *ability* to achieve valuable functionings. The "good life" is a life of genuine choice, and the freedom to pursue a life one values forms the core of the CA. To understand freedom, the notion of **capability** is proposed: the various combinations of functionings that a person can achieve (Sen, 1992, p. 40). Freedom here means only the *real* opportunities, and not the freedoms a person may theoretically hold but be entirely constrained to exercise. So, while functionings would represent current achievements of well-being, analysis of capabilities shines light on the roads available, but not taken.

Sen offers capabilities as a richer conceptual space to understand well-being, as opposed to utility or opulence. Thus, the capability approach would view development as *freedom*, wherein evaluation should be of the extent of freedom people have to achieve functionings that they value. If there is any demand of equality in social arrangements, that would mean equality in the space of capabilities (Alkire, 2005, p.122). "An essential test of development is whether people have greater freedoms today than they did in the past." (Deneulin, 2009, p.31)

In CA, freedom thus conceptualised is composed of two parts (Sen, 1992, p.31):

a) the (real) ***opportunity aspect***: "the ability of a person to achieve those things that she has reason to value" from a range of other good possibilities that is, *capabilities*; and

b) the (personal) ***processional aspect***: "the ability to act on behalf of what matters", that is, *agency*.

This focus on freedom and not just functionings is justified as there are other ways to expand functionings which include coercion and domination, and people may sometimes refrain from a functioning at one moment in time for another desirable functioning in the future (living in cramped hostel accommodation now for a degree vs. working and getting paid now). Development indicators showing women's poorer achievements on domains such as health and education indicate their constricted functionings. The ability to convert means such as income into functionings also varies across groups and individuals, allowing CA to be a critical lens to assess issues such as gender discrimination at the household, community and societal levels (Basu & López-Calva, 2011, p.176) Gender inequality is strongly associated with poverty, making it an important issue to address in 'developing' countries, although its field of application is in no way limited to poor countries only. Custom and politics dictate much of what is accessible and to whom, and for women, the possibilities are significantly lower than for men (Nussbaum 1990). With such observed capability failure, women from developing countries can provide an important litmus test for CA and other approaches by providing insights into what it is that these approaches can answer (Nussbaum, 2000, p.6).

A recent proposition in CA has been the concepts of *fertile functionings* and *corrosive disadvantages* (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007). While the authors explain both concepts with regard to functionings, it is possible to apply the understanding to capabilities (Nussbaum, 2009). The former then refers to those capabilities that advance other valuable functionings, while the latter indicates a capability deprivation that is pivotal in causing deprivations in many other domains.

The next section teethes out the conceptual offerings of CA, through review of the existing literature.

iv.   On capabilities

Scholars such as Ingrid Robeyns and Sabina Alkire have proposed extensive criteria and methodologies through which Sen's notion of capabilities can be operationalized. Proposing a 'list' of capabilities has been encouraged by both supporters and critics of CA, in order to guide anyone wishing to use the approach to focus on valuable domains of a person's life. Martha Nussbaum's proposed list of universal capabilities that should be constitutionally recognised and provided by governments is perhaps the most highlighted of such endeavours (Nussbaum, 2000). Robeyns believes that each application of CA must propose and rigorously defend its own list of capabilities, which must be context dependent, in terms of both geographical relevance and evaluation goals (Robeyns, 2007). She suggests working with two lists: an ideal list of what capabilities would be observed were it not for data related limitations, and another list that is born out of active participation and deliberation from those whose capabilities is being attempted to study (p. 81). The current study is in line with Robeyns' suggestion.

The following table (Table 1) lists some of the contents of well-researched lists of capabilities. These were used to identify indicators for the present study.

Table 1: Examples of proposed lists of capabilities. Source: (Robeyns, 2003)

Authors	Swedish approach: Erikson & Åberg (1987)	Alkire & Black (1997)	Nussbaum (1995, 2000, 2003)	Robeyns (2003)

Aim of list	*Quality of life measurement in Sweden*	*Universal*	*Universal*	*Gender inequality in Western societies*
Level of abstraction	Low	High	High	Low
Dimensions	1. Mortality 2. Physical, mental health and healthcare use 3. Employment and working hours 4. Working conditions 5. Economic resources 6. Educational resources 7. Housing conditions 8. Political resources 9. Family & social integration 10. Leisure & recreation	1. Life 2. Knowledge & appreciation of beauty 3. Work & play 4. Friendship 5. Self-integration 6. Coherent self-determination 7. Transcendence 8. Other species	1. Life 2. Bodily health 3. Bodily integrity 4. Senses, imagination, and thought 5. Emotions 6. Practical reason 7. Affiliation 8. Other species 9. Play 10. Control over one's environment	1. Life & physical health 2. Mental well-being 3. Bodily integrity & safety 4. Social relations 5. Political empowerment 6. Education & knowledge 7. Domestic work & non-market care 8. Paid work & other projects 9. Shelter & environment 10. Mobility 11. Leisure activities 12. Time autonomy 13. Respect 14. Religion

v.   On agency

The economist Sabina Alkire, director at the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI), has extensively published on using Sen's capability approach in multidimensional poverty measurement and analysis: one application has been the development of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). Her work on subjective quantitative indicators of human agency has brought in insights from disciplines such as psychology to development studies, and she has argued that developed indicators for autonomy such as under Self Determination Theory by psychologists Richard Ryan, Ed Deci, Valery Chirkov, and others working in SDT match Sen's concept of agency (Alkire, 2007, p.173). Ryan et. al understand autonomous people as those whose behaviour is willingly enacted- being most autonomous when acting in accordance with authentic interests or integrated values and desires; **this is similar to Sen's idea of the agency aspect of a person** "in assessing what a person can do in line with his or her conception of the good" (Sen, 1985, p.203)

Alkire has also linked the concept of 'empowerment' to these measures on autonomy (Alkire, 2005). Her study on measuring empowerment, or 'individual agency' for women in Kerala identified all current measures of individual agency as truly measures of *ability*- usually asset indicators such as skills and literacy to measure human assets, and social capital measures to indicate social assets (Pillai & Alkire, 2007, p.8). They revised and field tested a new indicator for agency, the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) based on the measure of autonomy developed by Ryan and Deci for two reasons: it studies agency not as a global quality of a person but rather with respect to different domains of a person's life, and because it understands agency as cross-culturally important for people to advance goals they value and not just as power to effect change- important in Sen's conception of agency (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The Measuring Empowerment (ME) framework was developed at The World Bank, to provide a guide on gathering and analysing data relating to empowerment (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). It bears relevance for project monitoring and evaluation, in-depth research, and ambitiously, as a tool to track empowerment at the national level. The framework is underpinned by the dynamic relationship between structure and agency, as embodied in many theories of the sociological tradition, and also draws from cross-disciplinary

fertilisation, including work on learning and motivation in psychology (Alsop et al., 2006, p.9). More specifically, it bases itself upon the capabilities framework:

> "Empowerment is based on tackling the differences in capabilities that deny actors the capacity to make transforming choices...it is a dynamic process through which the **interaction of agency and opportunity structure** has the potential to improve the capacity of individuals or groups to make effective choices. This concept has similarities to Sen's notion of expanding human capabilities and freedoms by focusing on people's ability to "enhance the substantive choices they have" (Alsop et al., 2006, p.15, emphasis added)

The ME Framework provides for an *asset-based understanding of agency*; this is important as participatory research from 47 countries has shown how poor people rarely speak of income but focus instead on managing assets — physical, human, social, and environmental — as a way to cope with their vulnerability, which frequently takes on gendered dimensions (Narayan et al., 1999, p.10)

Asset-based ability is only one aspect of agency, though. ME's definition of agency as "an actor or group's ability to make purposeful choices" while includes Sen's idea of "direct control" in agency, would not encompass his idea of "effective power" in agency: the person may not have direct control but is still able to get outcomes as per choice. The need to study agency *overall* is important as it helps analyse interaction with institutions- the degree of equity, freedom, and mobility afforded by socio-cultural institutions such as the household, influence and determine people's freedom to function and interact with other formal and informal institutions (Narayan et al., 1999, p.13). Albert Bandura's captures this notion of effective power in his measures of perceived self-efficacy- people's belief in their capabilities to achieve desired outcomes. His measures of *proxy agency* and *collective agency* are socially mediated forms of agency; in the former, people try to get influential or powerful people to act on their behalf to achieve desired outcomes, and the latter recognises the achievement of certain goals only through interdependent efforts (Bandura, 2000). These measures remain unexplored in agency measurement, and the current study will attempt to trace these social forms of agency through qualitative means.

vi. On freedom

Mahatama Gandhi understood a country's freedom as true only when that freedom reaches the door of the most dilapidated hut in the poorest village of the country. He held that this freedom could be attained by educating the people to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority (Prasad, 1969).

There is a tendency to attract arguments of elitism when 'freedom' is the matter of inquiry for people who appear to be occupied with more pressing needs of hunger and shelter. Using the CA lens though turns this assumption on its head, by addressing all people as active agents able to shape the course of their lives, in a context of supportive institutions and possibility of exercise of agency. Conceptually viewing *development as freedom* is thoroughly radical: viewing individuals as ends in their own right contrasts starkly with many patterns of existing inequalities, such as gender inequality, maintained in part by cultural narratives of gendered norms and mores. The understanding of development *as freedom* exists on two levels: under this view, (i) expanding people's real freedom to live the lives they value is the *ultimate objective* of 'development' and (ii) experience of certain freedoms is also the *primary means* of moving towards the ultimate objective. Thus, 'development' should enhance people's substantive freedoms, and a significant way of doing this is by expanding the kinds of freedoms called instrumental freedoms, that people can use to exercise their agency. These are termed the evaluative and the effectiveness reasons respectively, for understanding development as freedom. Through this analysis, free and sustainable agency emerges as a major engine of development (Sen, 1999). The five instrumental freedoms as postulated by Sen are political freedom, economic facilities, social arrangements, transparency guarantees and protective security. The interconnections and interdependencies between these instrumental freedoms are important to consider in all analysis of well-being.

vii. Development projects in Uttarakhand with women beneficiaries: ILSP

Uttarakhand has witnessed large-scale out-migration since the early 1990s. One of the hill districts, Almora, reports one-third of its population as long-term out-migrated; and long-term migration from the hills is heavily male-specific (HDR 2017, p. 146). This leaves villages in the hill districts inhabited largely by women, children, and the aged. Women's reproductive activities are undertaken

along with agriculture and livestock rearing, also devoid of labour by household males. It is in such a context that ILSP works chiefly with women beneficiaries from over 1,23,000 households in 11 hill districts of Uttarakhand, establishing market linkages for agricultural surplus (ILSP, 2016).

Women's role in agriculture remains largely unrecognised across the world, despite their massive contributions. Not enough leadership positions are occupied by women, which leaves the issues of rural women farmers largely unaddressed. This lack of voice in decision-making processes exists at all levels − from households to rural organizations − and in policymaking, making the problem severe (IFAD, 2015, p.8).

The livelihoods and well-being of women farmers are found to be constrained by similar factors that affect small agricultural producers overall, but these restraints are compounded by gender-specific factors, including: (i) traditional practices that limit women's access to and control over productive assets including land; (ii) limited access to agricultural inputs, services, education and technology; and (iii) women's propensity to have lower incomes than men as they tend to control food- rather than cash crops- and participate in less-profitable value chains. In addition, across most societies, a rural woman's working day is much longer than that of a man, where women also bear the responsibility for reproductive activities. The workload burden on women prevents them from participating in groups and engaging in leadership roles, thus limiting their decision-making capacity. (IFAD, 2015, p.11)

In light of these challenges observed in Uttarakhand, ILSP organizes women into groups, known as Producer Groups (PGs) and Vulnerable Producer Groups (VPGs). FAO defines producer's organizations in the following manner:

"Membership-based organizations, with elected leaders, that provide various types of economic and/or social services for their members and represent them in policy discussions. They include organizations − formal and informal − of small farmers, pastoralists, fishers, foresters and small- and medium-scale entrepreneurs engaged in agro-processing. These organizations may operate at the local level and can aggregate in union/ federations/apex organizations at the national, regional and international levels." (IFAD, 2015, p.5)

While PGs include women from households with land holdings, VPGs are composed of landless, marginal workers. Each project village consists of a maximum of 7 groups, depending on the population size. At the cluster level, about 50-70 of such PGs and VPGs are joined to form Livelihood Collectives (LCs). Collection of agricultural surplus, identifying market linkages, value addition for the produce, and return of profits to shareholders (i.e. group members) are some of the responsibilities borne by LCs. Project implementation is undertaken by technical agencies (TAs) i.e. non-government organizations in each Community Development Block (CBD), which are administrative units within a district. The Divisional Management Unit (DMU) is the nodal body at the district level. Most of the project's beneficiaries are women, and their high inclusion makes for a well-suited group to understand the core concepts of their well-being, capabilities, agency, and freedoms.

International organizations recognise the need for evidence-based research where, in addition to women's role in productive activities, attention must also be paid to their challenges in obtaining access to resources and information and their lack of opportunities for participating in leadership and decision-making roles (IFAD, 2015, p.20) The present research in also an attempt in that endeavour.

While CA has encouraged rigorous academic work, a thorough linking of its conceptual notions, and possible methodological procedures that do not lose out on its central tenets is missing. Following the above review of literature, the conceptual framework that was prepared to guide research design and analysis is discussed as follows:
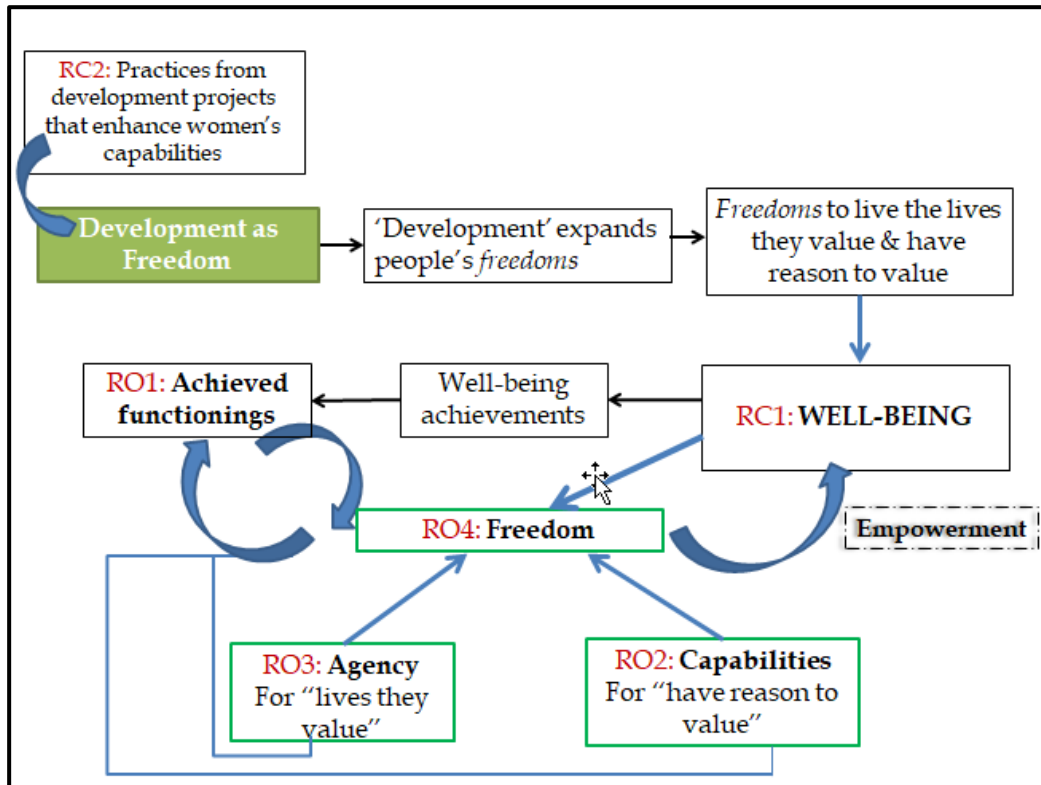
Figure 2: Proposed conceptual framework based on the capabilities approach

'Development as freedom' forms the starting point of the present inquiry. Well-being as a goal is identified as meeting the criteria of (i) a life people value and (ii) a life they have reason to value; making it the focus of the present study. To understand well-being, what women are currently able to do and be, i.e. their achieved functionings are assessed. But the CA lens requires expanding the field of inquiry by also understanding the freedoms people had to achieve these current states. Understanding this aspect of freedom is crucial as it is one of the factors that shape people's achieved status', and thus well-being, at future points in time. There is an interactive relationship posited between achieved functionings, well-being and freedom. The understanding of freedom is gained by studying women's capabilities and agency. The findings from this inquiry feed into informed understandings on practices from development practices that enhance women's capabilities. Attention is paid to the discourses and narratives accompanying the understanding of gender in development practice, to point out gaps and overlaps with the tenets of the capabilities approach.

III.   Objectives and Methodology

i.   Operational definitions

In light of findings from relevant literature, the following *operational definitions* and descriptions are proposed:

- **Well-being** *as a form of freedom for people to live lives they value and have reason to value.* This arises from CA's principles of valuable inquiry of goals which meet two criteria: allowing people to live the lives they value *and* have reason to value. Despite the indicators or combinations thereof used in studies on women in developing countries, their well-being is an overarching objective that these indicators are posited to provide insights on.

- **Functionings**: *The valuable activities and states that make up a person's well-being* (Deneulin, 2009, p. 31). Functionings is an umbrella term for the resources, activities and attitudes people spontaneously recognize to be important – such as poise, knowledge, a warm friendship, an educated mind, a good job (Alkire, 2003, p.5). Their relation to one's well-being is intrinsically human and well-supported in literature.

- **Well-being achievements/Achieved functionings**: *What is the person able to do or be?* The achieved functioning comprise of basic functionings (such as not going hungry, being educated) and more refined functionings (being able to choose between employment opportunities, for instance). Assessment of achieved functionings is thus what a person is able to do and be at the present moment in time.

- **Freedom**: *The real opportunity we have to accomplish what we value.* This draws from understandings on people's abilities and their opportunities, thus placing it conceptually parallel to ME framework's idea of empowerment (Alsop & Heinsohn, 2005). It includes assessment at two levels: the real/substantive freedoms people have and the instrumental freedoms which form the means to moving towards real freedoms (Sen, 1999).

- **Capabilities:** *The real opportunity to achieve valuable functionings.* It addresses the aspect of whether people are able to live the lives they have reason to value, thus including institutional contexts in analysis.

- **Agency:** *The ability to pursue the goals one values*. Agency may address well-being goals or certain other valued goals, and must address the notion of

responsibility of the individual in creating/sustaining the desired situation (i.e., to be an "agent").

ii.   Research Objectives and Questions

Research Objective 1: To understand well-being in the context of women in the hill districts of Uttarakhand (particularly in the context of out-migration & gender vulnerabilities).

Research Objective 2: To identify practices from development projects that could enhance women's capabilities.

To comprehensively address the above objectives, the **research questions** that need to be answered are as follows:

1. What are women's *achieved functionings* i.e. well-being achievements in project and non-project areas villages?

2. How do women assess their *capabilities*?
    2.1. What can be said about women's abilities?
        2.1.1. What *assets* (material, informational, psychological, organizational, financial and human) are available to women?
        2.1.2. What *institutional arrangements* (formal and informal) do women experience or participate in?

    2.2. Which *other capabilities* emerge as valued by women in project and non-project areas/villages?

3. How does *agency* exhibit itself in women's lives?
4. How do women experience *freedom*?
    4.1. To which extent do women experience instrumental freedoms?
    4.2. What interpretation can be made on 'development as freedom' in the local context?
5. Which *practices from development projects* can be identified for capabilities expansion?

iii.   Methodology

Well-being in CA would be assessed through functionings and capabilities, although tension exists in literature on what should be the unit of inquiry. Studying capabilities is the ideal methodological route, and the present study includes analysis on both functionings and capabilities. To aid the addressal of all objectives, in addition to the household surveys, other tools used for data collection included: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Participant Observations, Participatory Research Approach (PRA) tools (including, among other, daily clocks, seasonal calendars, and chapati diagrams) and Appreciative Inquiry, to track changes brought about through the project.

The ME framework guided research design. It assesses agency through asset indicators, and opportunity structure through institutional context indicators. Through these indicators, the ME framework provides for inquiry on valuable states of being, i.e. functionings, which were utilised to assess people's achieved functionings. Against each achieved functioning, the asset (for ability) & institutional context (for opportunity) is analysed to provide insights on the corresponding capabilities. Participatory tools are used to elicit capabilities identified by women as desirable (details in Table 5).

An attempt was made to get closer to Sen's conception of agency and its psychological underpinnings, through the construction of the Relative Autonomy Index (RAI) (Alkire, 2007). The domains for which RAI is calculated in the present study are from the original work on Self Determination Theory, which fits the context of the inquiry (Ryan & Deci, 2001). For each domain, participants were asked to rank their undertaken behaviour along four reasons: categorised from being entirely externally to absolutely intrinsically motivated. To understand the socially mediated forms of agency, *proxy and collective agency* were assessed through indicators on nature of participation in community and organizational activities.

Analysis of the findings on women's achieved functionings, desired functionings, and capabilities provided insight for the research question addressing women's freedoms. Instrumental freedoms were also addressed. Practices from ILSP that were observed and discussed by women in the field as

having linkages with perceived capabilities expansions were then analysed. The operational research design is summarised in Table 1.

Table 2: Operational research design for present study

Objective	Domains in current study	Indicators for domains
1. Achieved functionings	**To be:** healthy, educated, informed, employed, politically active **To do**: enjoy basic standard of living, planning for future, stand in community decisions	**To be educated:** women's highest educational level **To be healthy:** women's health status **To be employed:** women's current and past occupation status **To be politically active:** voting behaviour in last election **To enjoy basic living standards:** cultivable land owned, separate kitchen, sources of water and fuel accessed, house type & accessibility, electricity in HH **To plan for future:** assets & livestock owned, no. of credit sources, monthly expenditure, bank account, information change in last 5 years **To stand in community decisions:** group membership, perceived benefits, exclusion from local development

		activities
2. Capabilities	(i) **Ability** (asset-based ability: Material, Financial, Informational, Organizational, Psychological Assets) & (ii) **Opportunity** (institutional context) tested for each of the above achieved functionings ; also (iii) **other capabilities** people value	1. **To enjoy basic living standards:** Asset control & use 2. **To be educated:** Education by gender, by village 3. **To be employed:** Women & HH income sources; women's education & income sources; involuntary & voluntary changes in employment 4. **To be healthy:** Ease of accessing health services, quality of services 5. **To enjoy secure future:** Employment security, ability to choose different occupation, ease of changing, use of savings, domain-wise household decision-making, sources of credit, struggle in repayment, purpose of borrowing 6. **To be politically active:** Involvement in politics, accountability of leaders, voting decision determinants, do leaders instruct voting pattern, reasons for current involvement in politics, desired level of involvement

		7. **To stand in community:** Involvement & influence in community decision-making, community decision-makers, exclusion from developmental activities & reasons, benefit from organizational membership, selection of group leaders
		(iii) 1. **To experience autonomy:** Can make own decisions in household matters, if need be; Degree of control on decisions relating to own welfare; Reason for externally observed mobility
		2. **To address psychological well-being:** What change is desired in life?; Perceptions on its possibility; Who is the change-maker?
3. Agency	(i) **Domain specific agency:** Agency in Children's education, employment, mobility, organizational membership (ii) **effective control & power** in community & organizational context; (iii) advancing own well-being freedom	(i) Probing reason for motivation of sending children to school; engaging in current livelihood; mobility behaviour and organizational membership through RAI (ii) involvement, influence and interest in community and organizational decision-making; (iii) Cantril ladder of well-being: evaluation of own well-being

4. Freedom	(i) Instrumental freedoms (ii) Status on development as freedom	(i) Economic facilities, political freedoms, social arrangements, transparency guarantees, protective security; (ii) Contextually valued freedoms and means of their realization.

iv. Study site

The study adopted a case-control design, with two project villages and one non-project village being studied in one CBD. The study site was three villages in Syaldey block of Almora district, one of the 11 hill districts that are part of the project.

The choice of the site was made on the basis of certain exclusion and inclusion criteria, which are presented in tables 3 and 4 below.

Table 3: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection of project component

Primary criteria for **project component selection**	Women participation key focus area of the ILSP-UGVS project: • 87% of group members are women • 85% of LC members are women, and • 65% of the Board of Directors at the LC level are women members

Table 4: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for selection of district, block, and villages

Selection level	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria: Excluded areas
DISTRICT	Weather feasibility; Project running for at least 2-3 years; Rural areas; Greater than average	• Extreme weather conditions: Uttarkashi, Rudraprayag, Chamoli; • Inadequate focus on agricultural activities and

	performance of women on objective development indicators such as education and health; Data completion on project MIS as district choice had to be made from project head office in Dehradun	thus fewer women farmers: Pitthoragarh • Closeness to highly urban centres as many intervening factors other than the project would shape experiences on well-being: Dehradun • Containing villages with <100 HHs so as to permit weight in findings: Pauri • Project to be running for 2 to 3 years, so as not too recent and its effects unrecognizable: Pauri, Bageshwar
District remaining to choose from: Almora & Tehri **ALMORA chosen** due to (i) highest no. of CBDs with project being implemented since 2013 (ii) mainly rural populace (iii) greater than average performance on women's development outcomes		
BLOCK	• Further away from district project offices; • Ability to reside in villages during data collection;	• Fewer agricultural activities
Selected block was Syaldey: furthest from district office at Almora with arrangements to reside in villages matching inclusion criteria		
PROJECT VILLAGES (PVs)	• Ability to reside in a HH in the villages; • Contain greater than 100 HHs; • Contain women's groups-PGs & VPGs both	Too much overlap with other current/recently ended development projects so as to analyse findings with respect to ILSP

	• Agricultural activities along multiple value chains as main productive activity	
Selected PVs: Villages 1 & 2		
NON-PROJECT VILLAGE (NPV)	• Ability to reside in a HH in the villages; • Contain some women's group; • Agriculture as one of the main livelihood activities so as to match with project village	
Selected NPV: Village 3		

v. Sample

The sample population was identified through the project's district offices MIS. Within ILSP's component on *food security and livelihood advancement*, UGVS has created Producer/Vulnerable Producer Groups (PGs/VPGs) at the village level; with each group composed of 5-10 members (one village may have 2 to 7 groups). 50-70 of these PGs/VPGs are federated at the cluster level into Livelihood Collectives (LCs), which thus consists of between 500-1000 members. Study participants in the project villages were thus group members i.e. beneficiaries, and also non-project beneficiaries from the village. Care was taken to ensure that at least 80% of the respondents were project beneficiaries. In the control village, participants belonged to one of three existing self-formed SHGs, and also non-SHG members from the village.

The primary respondents are women aged 25-65, totaling 62 in number. Other respondents included male household members, village heads and elders, project officials and staff, staff from the technical agencies, and appropriate government functionaries.

- Stratified random sampling was utilized to include beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in the PVs, and SHG and non-SHG members in the NPV;
- Random sampling was done for HH selection for HH questionnaire in all villages;

- Purposive sampling was applied for selecting LC staff, BoD members, DMU staff, TA staff, and government functionaries

Table 5: Sample selected and research tools used

Level	Sample & research tools
District	KIIs, participant observation: DPMU Managers (7), Government representatives (2)
Block	KIIs, participant observation: TA, Block Project & Field staff (7)
PVs	Women interviewed: 45 HH level data: 244 (M:118 F:126) KIIs (6), Case studies (2)
NPV	Women interviewed: 17 HH level data: 87 (M:38 F: 49) KIIs (6) Case studies (2)

IV.   Results and Discussion

"The motivation underlying the approach of "development as freedom" is… to draw attention to important aspects of the process of development. An adequately broad view of development is sought in order to focus the evaluative scrutiny on things that really matter, and in particular to avoid the neglect of crucially important subjects" (Sen, 1999)

Before the objective-wise findings are presented, an overview of the Uttarakhand context and its 'development' plans i.e. policies, programmes, and projects are discussed.

In Uttarakhand, male out-migration creates a particular context which policy needs to address. All stakeholders (government and project officials, community members) identified the role of push and pull factors in migration, but there was differential emphasis based on the actor being interviewed. While community members identified push factors such as lack of employment opportunities, poor health and educational facilities, government officials stated that migration was not because of the inability to meet basic needs, but rather the attraction of *alternate* employment possibilities in cities and other states.

One consequence of migration has been increased wildlife conflicts in the studied villages. In the hill districts, farmland is fragmented; therefore land owned by a household would be spread out over different locations in the mountains. Fewer people now remain in households to tend to all the land, and when entire households migrate, their agricultural fields are left unattended. Resembling forestland, these unattended fields attract increased number of wild boars and monkeys, which destroy crops in the nearby cultivated fields too. Beneficiaries cite this as the single reason for lowering agricultural productivity. ILSP provides chain-link fencing to its members for sale or rent to combat this issue, and it has been successful in a number of blocks, with project officials recalling instances of people paying to fence adjoining fields too.

But a fencing solution alone is insufficient to address the larger problems of fragmented farmland and unattended agricultural fields belonging to out-migrated households. Less than adequate instruction to beneficiaries regarding the installation of fences meant that those who had bought it still saw their fields ravaged. Project officials attributed this increased conflict due to people's desire to remain at home instead of tending to their fields, so as to also scare the animals away. The women wondered how they were supposed to scare wild boars with sticks and stones. With monkeys, few officials said that their association with a Hindu god meant people would never hurt them; women in the field repeatedly asked regarding any policies that allowed people to kill these animals.

The development model in the state is focused on transitioning from a production-based economic system to a processing one. All officials recognised the superior quality of the region's agricultural produce, as did the women farmers in the field. For government and project officials, value addition to produce is seen as key, and experts and consultants are hired to undertake the processes of commercialisation and marketization of Himalayan produce. For women, the desired means of attaining this objective would include livelihood diversification, by involving women farmers themselves in the value addition task. The second focus of the model is on providing people a supplementary income source, realised through potential convergences with government schemes. This focus addresses the field observations of women taking up odd jobs in order to access monetary incomes. Availability of public services varied,

with education needs being met by private parties too in certain villages, while health services were reported as insufficient across. The government's strategy here was to expand infrastructure so that the existing services could be accessed by more people. The multidimensionality of issues was understood, and the state was focused on a sustainable model: growing only as much as needed.

Close interaction exists between projects and public policy, wherein the former allow for course corrections and clear outcomes. ILSP is one of the largest government-run projects in Uttarakhand, and was stated as an example of a visionary, efficient team. The match between the government's model of business expansion and ILSP's objectives of marketization of rural agricultural produce provided for an effective partnership.

Government officials differed in their classification of policies as gendered: while some identified a divide in terms of conceptualisation of policies, others believed that development for overall society meant, by default, development for women: *"If you follow the holistic model of development, somewhere, somehow you empower all genders."*

The following section presents findings for each of the research questions and objectives.

1. Women's well-being achievements

To be educated:
As shown in Figure 3 below, it is observed across villages that men tend to drop out of schools by the 10th grade (15 years of age), while women tend to study till the 12th grade (17 years). More women with higher education levels were found in the project villages (PVs).
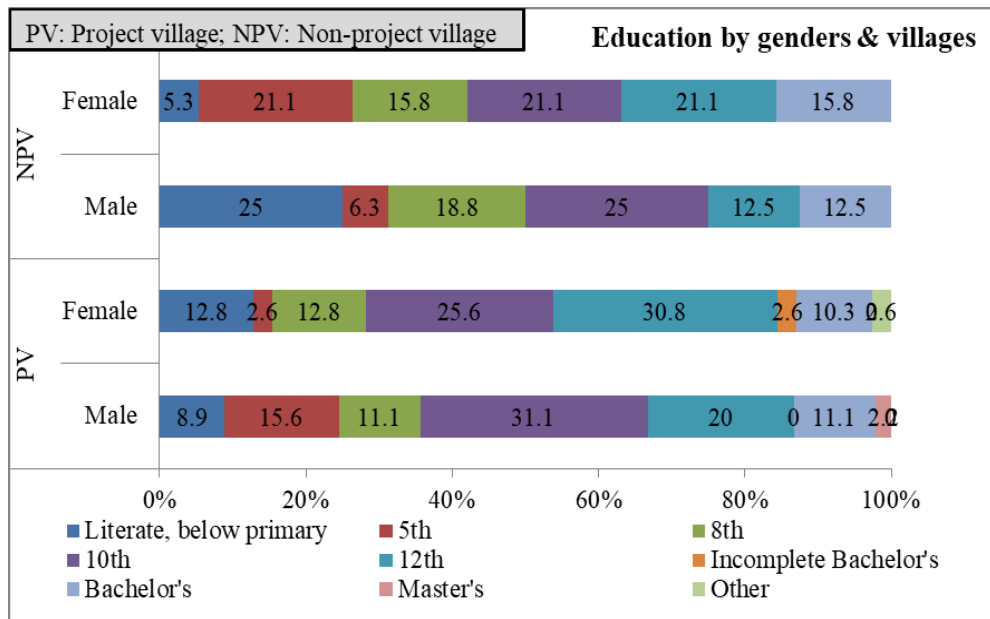
Figure 3: Education levels for males and females in project and non-project villages

To enjoy basic standards of living:

Cultivable land was owned at the household level, and the PVs had more people with land greater than 0.5 *nali* (approximately .05 acre), separate kitchens, and pucca houses. This allows for a linkage between project activities and desired functionings on certain domains.

To be healthy:

Secondary data sources were reviewed to reach an understanding of women's achieved functionings on domains of women's health that are widely reported by government and aid agencies. The district of Almora reports the highest life expectancy for females at 75 years (HDR 2017, P. 39). Anaemia exceeds 40% in each age group for women, and 66% women had institutional births as of 2016 (NFHS India, 2015-16).

To be employed:

More women in PVs practiced agriculture, although it was not found to be significant with the village type. There was a shared understanding amongst all stakeholders that women undertook the majority of activities in the hill districts of Uttarakhand. These activities were broadly classified as household chores; shaping women's responsibilities squarely on reproductive duties. Agriculture and livestock rearing were observed in the field as being done entirely by women, even when men were present in the households- in both project and non-

project villages. But these livelihood activities were clubbed in the household arena too as they were performed by women: "*Ghar ka saara kaam wahi sambhalti hain, aur khet, jaanwar bhi ghar mein hi aate hain*" (Women manage all household chores, and animal rearing and agriculture come within that too) *[ILSP official]*. Women respondents identified their livelihoods as non-economic endeavours too, despite sustaining food requirements of those in the household.

Project and government officials recognised the spirit of productive engagement in women: "*[Women] are doing the major bulk of the work here. Even when they are walking, they are knitting. Sitting and talking with friends and still knitting; so always using their time very productively*" (Govt. official). Women's motivation for alternative livelihoods was understood as desire to contribute to the household, and not for productivity *per se*. Women in the field too reported a desire to contribute to household expenditures and not necessarily accrue an income, but this may be because existing economic possibilities do not match women's traditionally socialised gender roles. For women, gender roles were imbibed by example, others' expectations, and fear of punishment. In terms of attribution of behaviours, women's preference for work from home was voiced by project officials as a given: "*I think women anyway prefer working from home and don't want to leave. They don't wish to work in other places, they like working from home.*" For women respondents, the inability to leave the house on account of their reproductive duties was an impediment and not a desired requirement. Women's lack of time autonomy was identified by project officials as a major barrier for conduction of project activities. This was often perceived as a lack of ownership on the part of the women; solved through better time management: "*If the adhyaksh herself refuses to go to the federation office, how will it work? These things are for them to manage in the end*"(ILSP official). Observing women in their contexts, it was clear that apart from two hours between lunch and time for bringing fodder, they were always on the move. But for project officials, this was an inherently myopic preference made by women to value their daily tasks over trainings. That these tasks made up their livelihoods was accepted, but officials desired a leap in women's vision to see beyond this.

<u>To stand in community decisions:</u>

In terms of community involvement, caste lines were explicitly recognised in determining food-sharing behaviour, but not daily interactions. 82% and 70%

women belonged to some group in the PVs and NPV respectively: these were the PG/VPGs and SHGs. It was the SHG members in the NPV who cited greater support for any benefits being felt from group membership (72% in NPV & 19% in PV). These SHGs had been formed by the women themselves, and the founding members were current position-holders in the group. This self-collectivization was recognised as one of their strengths, which in their experience also fostered greater community cohesion. More women in NPV find their group leadership effective.

To be politically active:

In terms of political participation, over 85% women in each of the three villages reported having voted in the last election, but these affirmations were universally suggested as highly ineffective. Women explained voting behaviour as a mandatory activity, but with unclear linkages to well-being.

To plan for the future:

Women in PVs had access to greater credit sources, and stated desirable informational change in the last five years; a possible effect of project activities that expand their interaction base with people outside their immediate communities. Any planning for the future had to account for the extreme insecurity felt with regard to livelihoods. Women found it impossible to change their occupations. Savings form a great sense of future security, yet in the studied villages, most household income was exhausted in meeting household expenses, on children's education, and in emergencies. Selwyn (2011) recognises the paradox of rising incomes and falling living standards in growing economies such as India, a process explained by "rural peasant differentiation and labour regime intensification" (p.69) Capitalist expansion takes places through these processes, and increased monetisation and land dispossession. With increased monetisation in rural contexts, trade and wage in kind is replaced by cash, which is then utilised to purchase essentials from an increasingly expensive market. Decisions of household expenditures follow a pattern across all villages: father-in-law or husband taking decisions on education, politics, and loans; in-laws on marriages and health.

People's "mind sets" were frequently called upon in order to explain lags and challenges in the project. Beneficiaries were understood as limited by their short-

term goal of subsistence, while the project wished to "take them" to a different state of affairs- one judged as rationally better by the officials. The project relied upon an undoing of traditional means of existence, such as barter of agricultural produce between friends and neighbours; as this detracts from the agricultural surplus that needs to be accrued. The redundancy of local customs was perceived as a challenge to be overcome; possible through technocracy. A dependence mentality was assumed by project and government officials, and expressed by beneficiaries.

"We told them that we can improve whatever is presently going on"; "We told them that we were giving them money and they could decide what to do with it" (ILSP officials)

"All we want is some money, is the project looking into this?" (Female beneficiary, 32 years);

"Before at least we got pension continuously, now without it, it becomes difficult to manage anything" (Non-project beneficiary woman in a household with 4 members of working age, 55 years)

Shaping of such dependent relationships is particularly problematic in the case of women, who have been socialised to be subservient, and accept choices as made for them. This model then reinforces women's culturally contoured dependence. While the choice of project *activities* was made at the district-office, they could not decide to introduce any more *domains* of operation. While officials mentioned that all business-level activities were based on people's demands, certain inconsistencies were observed in the field. Project officials in the field would mention built infrastructure as an indicator of project success, while many beneficiaries would be uncertain when asked of the details and operations of these buildings: *"We have utilised budget to make collection centres. No demand has ever come through though, but if it ever does, it will also be considered" (ILSP official).*

An insight into what constitutes as problem-solving is presented here too: is it the introduction of entirely novel ideas, or incremental steps to address existing issues before the beneficiaries themselves can envision a different way of being.

Communities were also understood as identical to their sensitive, polarised contexts, and discrimination based on social groups was common. The role of certain "active" people from the community was pivotal to project's entry into

the villages. Characteristics of them included comprehension, outspokenness and ability to rally people behind a goal; statements desiring an exercise of agency by beneficiaries.

The outcomes of developmental projects are most directly linked to indicators of women's well-being, such as educational status, employment, number of school-going children, and ownership of bank accounts. In the present study, women's well-being indicators were universally reported at the household level, and any suggested deviation from this was perceived as alien to the Indian culture of family-based social units. There are gendered gaps in functioning achievements on various domains such as education, employment, political and community participation. These gendered lags inhibit planning for secure futures.

2. Women's capabilities

To understand women's capabilities, which is the real opportunity she has to accomplish what she values, for each of the above reported functionings, the corresponding asset and institutional context is checked. In addition, for desired functionings for overall well-being, other capabilities perceived as important by women are suggested.

2.1. Assessment of women's abilities

2.1.1. Women's use of assets (material, financial, informational, psychological, and organizational)

Rural women's needs are covered under the purview of rural development schemes, and experiences here were coloured by the household's identification on the poverty line: Below Poverty Line (BPL) households were addressed as those benefiting the most under any government plan. 61% of all women belonged to BPL households, and 32% to APL households. Ownership of a BPL card was espoused as important currency in the village economy; receiving priority in receipt of government schemes as well as inclusion in CSO activities such as ILSP, where one of the qualifications for inclusion was a BPL card. Access to water was cited as a common source of well-being, saving time for women. Welfarist schemes such as those providing free LPG cylinders to rural households were found to be short-sighted: the full cylinder was scarcely used since the next filling would be an added expense. With schemes for house construction, more and more families were claiming their shares to construct,

thus shifting into different houses. Older, widowed women viewed this as rational, yet the withdrawal of familial support was felt deeply by them.

References to capability were most often expressed as 'capacity' for women, for which a severe need was identified. Tangible assets were, by default expressed at the household level. Assets most used by women were not for productive purposes, such as TVs with programme characters depicting highly regressive gendered identities. Even with owned assets such as jewellery, women themselves were unable to utilise them as per their choices. Despite women's educational levels, cultivation and casual daily wage labour were the two most common sources of income for women, as shown below in Figure 4 and Figure 5. Remittances and pension form the other sources, highlighting a form of dependence on financial support extended from other actors.
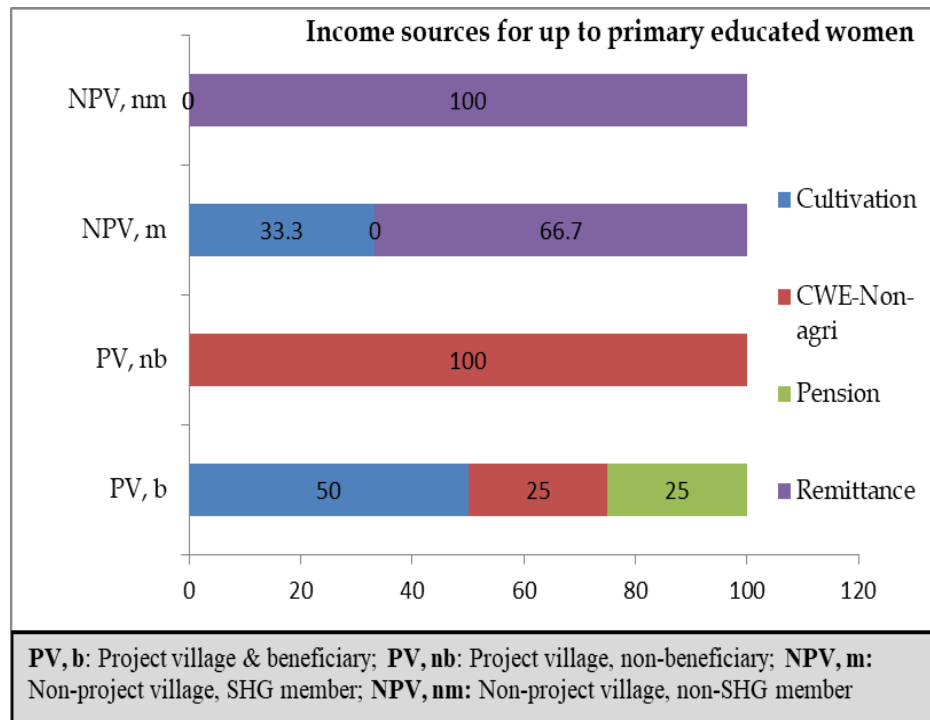
Figure 4: Income sources for women with primary school education, for project and non-project villages
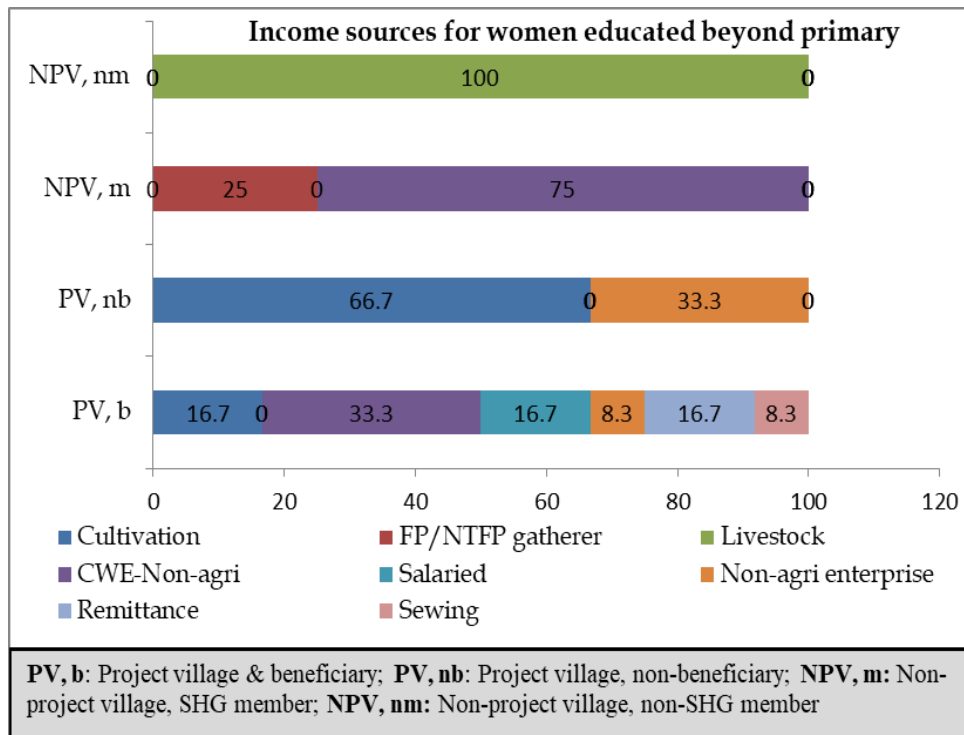
Figure 5: Income sources for women with higher than primary education, for project and non-project villages

The context of high male out-migration, low agricultural productivity and poor livelihood alternatives compels feminization of agriculture and labour, and there is a desire to step away from the traditional- agriculture - and into the modern forms of employment. This desire is operationalized in forms of informal employment, mostly unregulated.

Women's desire for modern forms of employment is further curtailed by the exhaustion of most daily hours in the conduction of reproductive activities. Greater than 85% of women in all villages had never made a voluntary change in employment, citing lack of skills and employment opportunities as reasons, in that order. 58% of women in PVs stated having changed jobs involuntarily, particularly the foray into traditional men's domains such as physical labour for daily wages. It appears that inversion of gender norms is permitted when it means economic returns and subsistence for the household.

Linkage to formal banking institutions has become a current goal in women empowerment programmes, yet women in the study cited extreme discomfort with the idea, and preferred friends and family as reliable sources of loans. Bank accounts existed for most women, yet their usage was non-existent or unknown. Purpose for loans was most commonly household expenses and weddings; 74%

said they struggled to repay each loan. Women in PVs stated informational change in the past 5 years, suggesting a positive outcome of interaction with development organizations.

More than half the women (>55% in PVs and >85% in NPV) find it extremely difficult to access health services, and perceived quality of these services was found to be significantly higher in NPV than PV (12% vs. 71% citing it as "very bad" respectively).

Women feel low to no influence in the community decision-making process, in all villages. Despite the high voter turnout stated, women feel no involvement in politics, across villages; gender being the most commonly attributed reason (56%, all villages). Problematically, voting behaviour was found to be guided by political representatives. Women expressed complete detachment from the political process, expressing low to high desires of wanting more participation. Those satisfied with current low levels of participation justified it on grounds of existing burden of work, impossibility of navigating a male arena, and the transgressions of gender roles (such as speaking in front of men and village elders) that invited scorn. Desire of greater participation was motivated by current status of slow progress on village's developmental challenges and the evidence of women collectives self-organizing to conduct activities, such as clearing roads, cutting trees, cleaning public spots etc. An insightful finding from the PVs was that beneficiaries stated an awareness of holding their elected officials accountable; highlighting another positive correlation with project activities.

Most PV beneficiaries cited no personal influence in choosing group leaders; as it was often the most educated women who would be assigned positions. Desired benefit from group membership varied: from being monetary benefits for PVs and institutional linkage for NPV.

Across villages, it was clear that women utilise fewer assets to advance their own well-being. Land titles were neither in women's name nor jointly owned, and other *material* assets were valued for their ability to save time. *Financial* assets were valued largely for providing future security. *Informational* assets highlighted a gendered distribution in access: women's chief sources of information were male members in the household and the community.

Psychological assets were shaped by cultural narratives of women's roles; a pattern observed was of poor self-esteem and self-efficacy beliefs, perceived on account of one's gender. *Organizational* assets were valued chiefly for their networking prospects, and potentials of utilising their collectivization towards meeting other valued goals were unacknowledged.

2.1.2. *Women's experience of and participation in institutions*

Participation in formal institutions was found to be heavily policed by men: "*Vaad-vivaad auraton ki matlab ki baat nahi hai*" *[debate-discussion are not matters concerning women] (Male, project village, 55 years)* The meetings of village-level citizen bodies, Gram Sabhas were actively policed to keep women out, and no information on the procedures were passed on by men who attended. Women's lack of desire to participate in them can be explained by cultural narratives of masculinity & femininity (assertiveness for men vs. adaptiveness for women is desired, for example), and the gendered burden of shame. Financial institutions such as banks were also automatically associated with men's domains; beneficiaries frequently called upon male household members to deposit their group's monthly contributions.

Public health services were experienced with a gender component, with reproductive needs' services being especially poor.

"Gender-neutral" responsibilities such as those introduced by development projects for women conflict with their internalised gender roles. This was found to cause expectation mismatch when women's lack of time autonomy was perceived by other actors as paucities in time management skills. Where project officials saw ample possibilities, women expressed extra burdens on their already busy days. PGs and VPGs were treated as bodies formed by external parties, to fulfil externally set goals, although the rationale was well accepted. Models that are perceived to be imposed may fail to sustain themselves in the future as they do not convincingly match their processes to beneficiary needs. Co-creation of activities can be expected to have higher chances of performing well, but avenues for these were limited.

Gendered norms found reinforcement again in public policy and scheme conceptualisations: all government officials cited the Maternal and Child Health, and Education departments when identifying those departments that work mainly

with women. This then strengthens the existing contextual identification of women with primarily reproductive roles. Government departments working with women are mainly the Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Uttarakhand Women and Child Development Society, and Uttarakhand State Women Commission (Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand, 2019). The Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development is the nodal agency for all schemes relating to women. The Uttarakhand State Commission for Women was formed in 2005, yet their draft policy on women remains to be passed by the state government (Dighe, 2008). The lack of an overarching policy on women means that each Department approaches the objective of 'women's empowerment' in different ways, but coalesces around the ideals of economic efficiency broadly.

2.2. Daily autonomy and cultivation of psychological well-being as capabilities women value in well-being assessments

Livelihood alternatives and *equitable returns on activities already undertaken* were the most desired changes by women, but half of them marked this as impossible due to their lack of marketable skills. A commonly stated desire was that of autonomy, realised in the reality of male migration. *Daily-schedule autonomy* for women was highly desired, and women mocked neighbours whose husbands were still at home: unemployed, and yet exerting pressure to follow rules regarding leisure time. But most women, regardless of the presence of migrated members, stated feeling no control over decisions regarding their own welfare, and impossibility of changing things beyond the household level. *Mobility by compulsion* explains the external observation of community women always on the move: these were most likely regular trips to the market for daily needs with limited cash inflow, or attendance to livestock needs. Increasing distances had to be covered to access forest land for collection of fodder, an exclusively female chore. It would be erroneous to deduce a freedom of movement from this externally observed mobility alone.

From the implementers' perspective, the rural-urban divide appeared to blur when describing desirable skills and qualities in women beneficiaries. Rural women's 'empowered' status featured financial literacy, business and marketing skills, outspokenness, and eloquence. It is crucial to note that most of these are

constricted in the local contexts, and requires exercise of agency. For project officials, technical or physically rigorous work was perceived outside women's capability set: *"All of our established enterprises focus on women's employment. But we can't do this for heavy work…There are some tasks involving technical work too so women can't be employed there either."(ILSP official)*

For project officials, there was also a direct correlation between project activities and an expansion in the capability sets of women participants. Breaking it down, women were seen as deprived with regards to marketable skills and exposure. 'Ownership' and 'responsibility' were deemed as the most crucial of capabilities for project success, and were being transmitted through project mandated initial trainings for capacity-building. Trainings were conducted on three domains: governance, business, and marketing: *"So governance would mean whether regular savings are being made, timely return of loans, record of transactions, SOPs followed; business would mean amount of surplus generated; marketing focused mainly on its need" (Project official).* The larger concept of governance was equated here with monitoring.

In addition to these trainings under component 1 of ILSP, convergence with government schemes was made possible through partnership with a state company (UPASaC) formed for component 3 of the project, on financial inclusion. The theme of UPASaC's trainings was economic efficiency. Expansion in capabilities was seen through women's increased participation in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI), where reservation of seats for them was considered an accessible opportunity. Both themes signal a linkage to the reduction of women's empowerment programmes to the twin sites SHG-like credit behaviour, and reservation in local political bodies (Batliwala, 2007).

Paternalistic notions were common, with development actors perceiving themselves as well-placed to diagnose and solve societal issues: *"From this position you get to see how society is, and also how can this system function" (Government official).* Beneficiaries' traditionalism was seen as a major impediment in this development process, characterised by lack of comprehension of goals such as market linkages.

Women's desired capabilities are those realised at the household level: autonomy to schedule day's activities, and ability to plan for a secure future. Yet those

espoused by development practitioners stress community-level engagement, such as being active in the community and politics, as efficient farmers.

3. Domain-specific experiences and exercise of agency

Agency or the ability to act towards valuable goals has clear psychological underpinnings, and thus the RAI has been used to understand domain-specific agency for women in the following domains: their children's education, own employment, mobility, and organizational membership.

For each of the domains, women were asked to rank four reasons from lowest "not true at all" to highest "true". The four reasons explain the type of motivation regulation to indulge in that behaviour: *external* (forced or coerced to act) *introjected* (mainly for reward/avoidance of punishment), *identified* (considered valuable) and *integrated* (in line with person's global value set). Weights were assigned to each type of regulation, being higher for the last two reasons to identify "autonomy" in the RAI. Combined with the scores obtained, the total score i.e. the domain-specific RAI was calculated. An illustrative calculation is shown in the figure below:

Table 6: Example of calculation of RAI for one woman for one domain

	Weights	Scores				
		Completely untrue 1	Not very true 2	Somewhat true 3	Completely true 4	TOTAL SCORE
External regulation	-2	-2				-2
Intojected regulation	-1		-2			-2
Identified regulation	1				4	4
Integrated regulation	2				8	8
						8

Figure 6 below depicts the findings on RAI for all women, in the four domains.
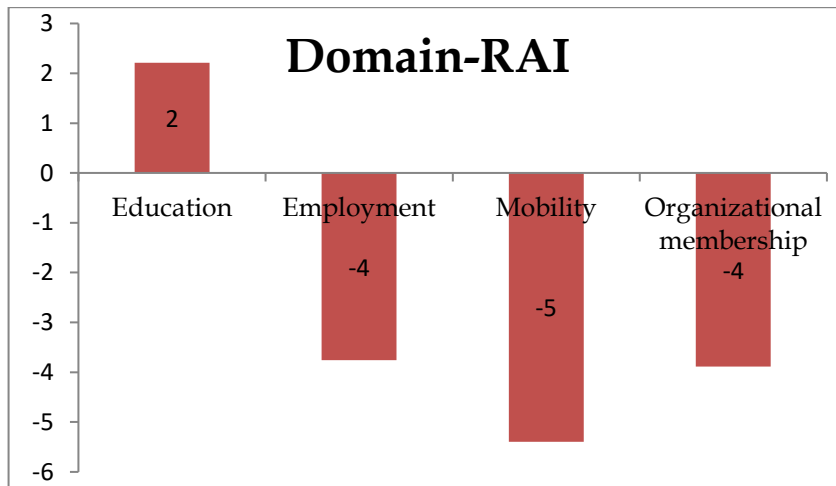
Figure 6: Domain-wise RAI for all women

Women act most autonomously in educating their children, which is done chiefly for its perceived relation to better future prospects. Mobility was the domain most guided by external regulation, eliciting evidence for the observation of *mobility by compulsion* discussed before. For employment, women expressed no control, and organizational membership was differently motivated, according to the process of group formation.

They recognised that any aware woman would send their children to school, so that their future would not be as choice-less as theirs. Mobility was limited to the market and their farms, and this was accepted as a normal outcome of their limited time and many chores. Remittances from migrant family members meant they had to travel to the local market multiple times to buy foodstuffs, but this was more a chore than an independent trip. For employment, women expressed having no control, but more on account of Uttarakhand's limited employment opportunities than being a solely gendered experience. While the aspect of 'no control' in employment here is indicative of regional issues, the next most commonly cited reason for engaging in productive activities was externally motivated, as subsistence of the household was their responsibility. Organizational membership was most commonly explained by aspirations to network. For PV women, affiliation was motivated by external pressure: women explained having joined the group because others in the village were, on expectations of monetary benefits. Their monthly meetings were little more than opportunities to socialise. For NPV members, membership was internally motivated as they had self-mobilised into SHGs. Their meetings too were social events, but lasted longer and had more debate and discussions. Self-organization

accorded them the responsibility to take their meetings seriously and decide the course of action for their future. Both groups of women identified the strength in numbers, but could not visualise ways of utilising this form of collectivization to address any of their well-being goals.

Influence in community decision-making

- None
- Low
- Reasonable
- Great deal

PV, b: Project village & beneficiary; **PV, nb:** Project village, non-beneficiary; **NPV, m**: Non-project village, SHG member; **NPV, nm**: Non-project village, non-SHG member
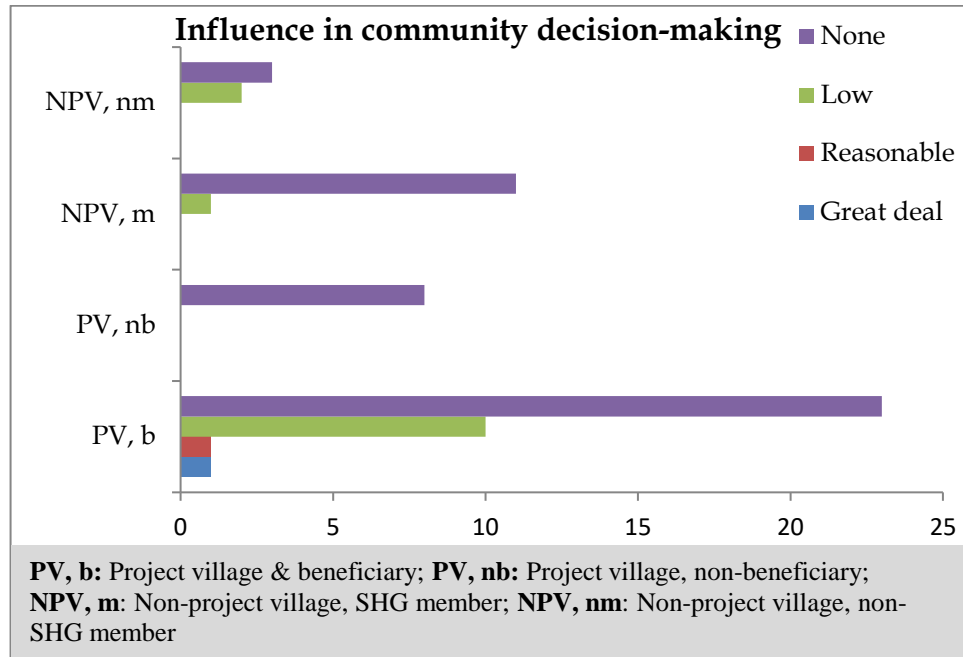
Figure 7: Influence felt by women in community decision-making

Women's influence, interest and involvement in political and community decision-making were not found to be significant with their village or beneficiary/non-beneficiary status, as shown in Figure 7. This non-participation in formal governance institutions meant exclusion of women's concerns from discussion, thereby constricting multiple instrumental freedoms such as those provided by the state. Yet, there were clear demonstrations of agency from certain women, such as the refusal of a young, widowed mother to even discuss marriage prospects for her two teenage daughter, or one illiterate woman's crafting of innovative livelihood activities, such as foraging of forestland for Ayurvedic herbs- an activity usually performed by men. Agency appears to act as one filter in the experience of capabilities expansion, even in restrictive contexts.

A question was asked regarding women's perceptions on their current status on well-being, by asking them to place themselves somewhere between the first and the ninth rungs of a 9-step ladder depicting degree of felt power over own life's

outcomes. For all women, mean position was the 3.5th rung of the ladder. Village-wise results are shown below in Figure 8.

Village 1	Village 2	Village 3
Mean: 3.9	Mean: 3.4	Mean: 2.4
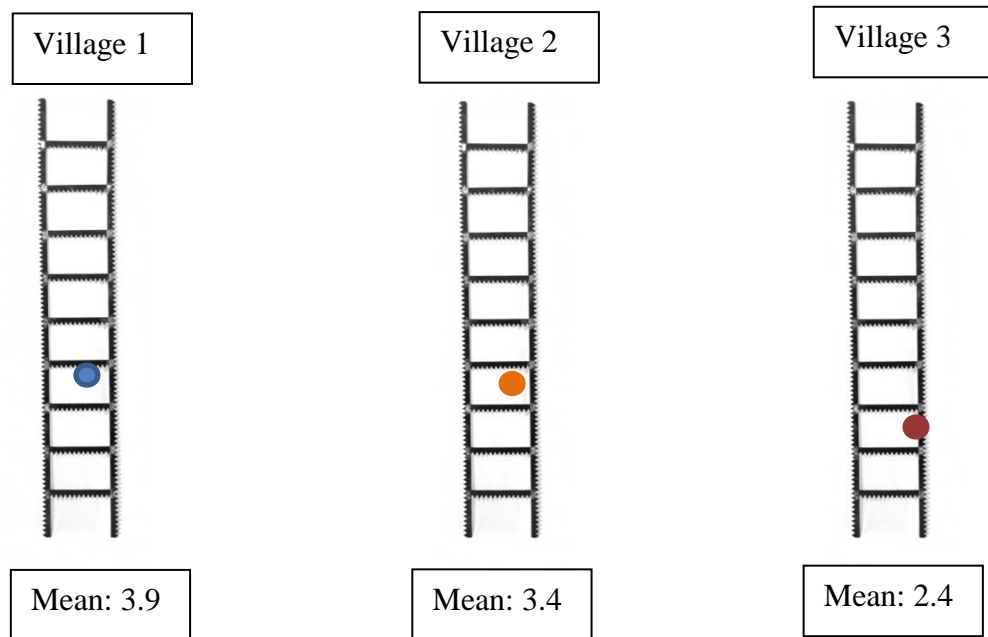
Figure 8: Visual representation of the average woman's position on the Cantril ladder of well-being

Women cited their gender, lack of ability to contribute economically to the household, and skill deficit to explain these findings. Development actors such as project officials and government representatives mentioned the idea of *development through habituation* repeatedly: the task of developing habits such as holding meetings and visiting banks in beneficiaries, as the process of development. This belief in 'habituation for development' for project and government officials indicates an externally perceived locus of control for beneficiaries, and an inherent incomprehensiveness in them, wherein change through internalisation could not be the strategy. Development practitioners were thus responsible for developing new 'habits' in people. Implicit in this assertion is the negation of individual or collective agency at the community level. While instances of individual agency were observed in many instances in the villages, collective agency was relatively weaker, as an outcome of fragmented identities along caste lines.

Women's agency exertion for children's education was internally motivated for all women; for the instrumental value that education had in improving future

prospects of employability and shift out from agricultural activities. The lack of livelihood alternatives meant there was no platform to exert agency on, such as to choose the kind of work desired. Mobility *as a functioning* was not an exertion of women's agency, whose perceptions of movement were shaped and reinforced by social norms of appropriate behaviour. Organizational affiliation was yet to be utilised as a form of collectivization, capable of addressing other development challenges in their contexts.

4. Women's experience of freedom

4.1. Relation between women's well-being and provision of instrumental freedoms

Sen (1999) proposes that people's freedoms shape social development, but only in alliance with a range of other institutional provisions. These instrumental freedoms can be of multiple kinds, with mutually reinforcing interconnections. He classified five types of instrumental freedoms as important, and findings below are categorised along the suggested typology.

i. *Economic facilities*

In order to establish a link between ILSP's goals and the idea of *development as freedom*, one clear overlap is identified: that of economic freedom. The project vision is to link rural communities to the wider market economy for increased incomes and higher quality of life. Project managers expressed how the project would be successful when people in rural contexts could approach lifestyles similar to their urban counterparts. This raises an important question on sustainability, with consumption trends already skyrocketing beyond planetary boundaries.

The project understands integration to the wider economy as economic freedom, in line with Sen's views on markets as a source of individual freedom. Sen views this ability to engage and exchange with others as an essential freedom. It is here that observations from the field cast a doubt. Women cited great anxiety in this newly developed market dependence for satisfaction of even basic needs, and recalled times in the past of low market dependence with nostalgia. It was especially the area of food security where women were concerned with the growing importance of the market in their lives. In line with Selwyn (2011), participation in the market and sale of labour power may not be so much a freedom than an imperative for many communities. Exchange in the market is

guided by control over assets i.e. property, which itself is guided by institutions and contexts. Freedom of some, thus, is ensured by unfreedoms of others. This becomes a necessary requirement for capitalist expansion, which, following that chain of argument is interlinked with questions of social class. Women in the field did not own land; it was in the name of the household's male elders. Fewer controlled assets were utilised productively by women; this is critical in a context building market dependency, as bargaining power draws from one's asset base. Instead of freedom then, field observations pointed more towards increasing market *dependence.* Accumulation, under capitalism, requires and reproduces these unequal freedoms, so the poor face no option other than follow the rich's example of greater accumulation of material goods, or experience shame (Selwyn, 2011, p.75). It is in the vision of capitalist market as spheres of freedom that the possibility of development as freedom becomes untenable. Capitalist market system is a source of structural unfreedoms, and increasing market dependence when realised through dispossession generates vulnerabilities amongst the poor (p.73).

It is also worth observing that the criteria of land ownership to form groups, by default created separate groups of members from the General and the Scheduled Castes. This was done so that collective action could be possible, while not delving into the complexities of social divides. While income poverty was a commonality across all groups, provisioning of public services, participation in village activities, social traditions etc. which keeps members of these groups aware of their identities were now formalised through group membership.

ii. *Political freedoms*

For practitioners, developmental gains could be identified in women's participation in PRIs, particularly as candidates standing for the elections of Pradhans, the village-level head. This indicated the entry of women into domains earlier absolutely inaccessible. But observations in the field highlighted the desire to mostly avoid the arena, and women heads were openly discussed with a sense of ridicule. In the field, decisions to vote were taken at the household level, and guided by party affiliations of nominated persons. These decisions did not rank high on women's priorities, but the responsibility to vote was duly undertaken.

Men attended all village-level meetings, and the women who asked to attend were discouraged: *"Woh humein kehte hain ki tum jaan kar kya karogi, yeh aauraton ki matlab ki baatein nahin hain" [men ask us why we wish to inquire [of meeting's outcomes] as none of these are things of concern for women] (Woman project beneficiary, 35 years).* Interviews with women Pradhans painted a similar picture, where they expressed a lack of authority with men in the village and local government officials. Men would refer to women Pradhans with an undisguised air of contempt, asserting that their position-holding was merely an unnecessary outcome of appeasement politics of reserving seats for women. Gendered norms thus shaped women's experiences with the political terrain. The values underlying legal reforms such as reservation can be appraised by analysing what the set indicators are: *number* of women in PRIs has certainly shot up, but their *effectiveness* appears to be low, and their struggles with systemized gender inequality reinforces a narrative of woman as insufficient for holding office.

Political freedoms would also include the ability to scrutinize authorities, and for respondents, power was apathetic to poverty, and the expectation of authorities to undertake their responsibilities itself was unrealistic. Project women did acknowledge awareness of the possibility of holding their elected representatives accountable. Few people (men) who had complained against a public servant in the past expressed even more humiliation when their concerns were squashed. This experience for them was linked to their economic poverty, and for women, their gender and its associated characteristics of poor education, few assets, and culturally shaped subordination.

iii. *Social opportunities*

Social opportunities refer to arrangements that society makes for facilities such as education and health care, which influence individual's substantive freedom to live better (Sen, 1999). These opportunities also influence ability to participate in public activities such as the political and economic domains. It is here that women fare particularly badly. While women's education status has grown over decades, a wide gender gap still exists. Against the male literacy rate of 88.3%, the female literacy rate stands at 70.7%. Women lag behind by a wide gap of 17.6% in literacy (Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand, 2019). With migration in the villages

of Uttarakhand, older women have been left behind. Growing up in the early 1950s-60s, these women were mostly illiterate, or had attended school for a few years but expressed no substantial takeaways from it. The process of inking their thumbprints to sign documents was experienced with incredible shame. Their educational status also meant poor access to informational assets such as newspapers, and they relied mostly on men in the community for updates on politics and current affairs. This communication was of course not direct as they could not simply ask men to tell them; they would overhear or receive some comments.

Women's health needs were self-reported as being low priority, and seeking medical treatment for own health needs was a very last step. Availability of health services, even during pregnancies and for deliveries was low. Women reported clinics and hospitals with inexperienced doctors who were initiating their medical practice by treating rural patients.

Project beneficiaries acknowledged an expansion in social opportunities such as to travel, network, and access more informational sources. This highlights an important aspect of women's freedom: while existing mobility was viewed as by compulsion, a desired freedom is that to travel and network, with other women in the region. So, mobility per se is not an issue, but the reasons requiring it mark the difference.

iv.   *Transparency guarantees*

Societal interactions would most likely collapse without the element of trust in them: there are presumptions about what is on offer and what people can expect. Transparency guarantees are about ensuring this disclosure and openness in social exchanges (Sen, 1999)

Project officials' behaviour often approached that of bureaucrats, whom community members had always felt distant from. Communication was rife with issues such as information mismatch and backtracking. Beneficiaries' experiences abounded with incidents of being misinformed and misled. One major instance was regarding receipt of monetary support: project design mandates a direct member transfer of INR 3600 in the first year; in the second year, this is given to the LCs instead of the members directly. All group members mentioned that they had been promised this amount in their bank

accounts *each year*. Clarification regarding *indirect* support through LCs in the second year did not satisfy members' questions about benefits *for them*. This has to be linked to the non-identification by beneficiaries of LCs as their own institutions, and to LCs' struggles with their roles on marketing and business. Another incident was regarding construction of LDPE tanks, wherein women members had been promised compensation for undertaking the activity of digging a hole for the tank, but later asked to undertake additional construction activities which required purchase of inputs. Women were now entirely uninterested in the endeavour, and any others that may arise in the future. Carving out rocks from the river bed, hauling it on their bodies straight up a mountain to the decided spot for the tank and working to build the structure were all understood to have been in vain. Women accepted their powerlessness in this unequal treatment. Men commented on this event as a classic example of the educated fooling the illiterate and powerless: the women.

Women position-holders in the groups and LCs narrated instances of being coerced into leadership roles due to familial ties to the local field staff responsible for making groups. Existing inequalities thus crept into project implementation, wherein the interaction order is power charged.

v. *Protective security*

Protective security arrangements would refer to fixed institutional support for the most vulnerable, so that they do not crash into deprivation with the slightest of material changes. This becomes relevant in the post-migration context. Ploughing in agriculture was an exclusively male task, and its physical toll was perceived as qualifying it outside women's capabilities- even by women. With mostly women and children in villages now, ploughing is a major issue, and often the one causing reduction of crops planted, or fewer cycles of harvest. Daily labour has emerged as the only source of monetary income for those left behind, but the opportunities for these are few, and unpredictable. Work as well as remuneration under MGNREGA was inconsistent, and this was attributed to the "street bureaucrats" responsible for implementation of the Act, and undertaking its administrative procedures. People relied on cultivating relationships with local contractors and elites, frequently not from Uttarakhand themselves, in order to find work. These relationships were certainly exploitative, but also ensured survival in desperate times.

From the above discussion, it is apparent that instrumental unfreedoms still exist for most women in Uttarakhand, and their substantive freedom is non-existent, with most choices made for them through the excessive operation of gendered stereotypes in their lives. The notion of adaptive preferences is important here; sometimes people may report satisfaction with an objectively dismal state of affairs because they have re-calibrated their expectations to make everyday survival more bearable. With regard to mobility, women did not comprehend why a woman would want options to go somewhere other than what was required for work or the household's needs. That this was an acquired belief became apparent when in different discussions, women would voice the desire to travel and meet other women from different contexts. The difference between the two statements was that restrictions on their movements, through pressure of expected behaviours and lack of choices, was a lived reality while freedom of movement was an aspiration, and it was psychologically more efficient to endorse the reality.

As a result of migration, women experienced a newfound control over their time and leisure activities, such as socialising with friends. Women joked that the truly unfortunate were those women whose (mostly unemployed) husbands still lived at home and policed their whereabouts. In terms of *fertile functionings* (Wolff & de-Shalit, 2007), daily-schedule autonomy and ability to plan for a secure future were identified for their impact on improving well-being. *Corrosive disadvantage* was highlighted in inability to be stand in community decision-making, which left women's concerns unvoiced, and unaddressed in political decision-making.

4.2. Development as freedom or compulsion?

The term 'empowerment' was frequently mentioned in the project environment, particularly on mentioning the present study's focus on gender. In these instances, the assumption was that women's status needed improvement, and that the project, ILSP, *through its design* was able to achieve that. In terms of which project component most directly addressed it, it was the element on 'innovation linkages', which included activities on *drudgery reduction*. The most often cited example from the project team was of a low-weight handheld tiller which had been designed and provided to some beneficiaries (ensuring block-wise coverage) through heavy subsidization. This was to address the issue of tilling

the field; an agricultural activity performed by men who have migrated from villages in huge numbers. But project officials lamented the slow uptake of technological interventions such as these:

> The problem is that they don't understand; any time you tell them of new things, they will resist. We gave these tools with such deals in 2014, where 15 gave demonstrations free of cost. Women from the community still resisted, so we got 15 women from outside the community to come in and give demonstrations of actually using the tool to easily cut grass. Now the women finally agreed to purchase (ILSP official)

Most activities for drudgery reduction across CDBs were similar technological interventions, mainly to reduce the amount of time taken by women to complete some task. This approach of technocracy as problem-solving found ample support from project officials, where the *best* reported practices most often included citations of engineering, infrastructure building, and "modern" scientific solutions. Tailoring these to beneficiaries' capabilities was a secondary concern.

The complete project design of linking rural households to the wider economy was understood as empowering. Empowerment for rural communities meant realizing the economic value of their agricultural produce, and the ability to sustain market linkages built by the project. The income received by the household through the sale of agricultural produce was indicative of increased financial control for women: "*Now women have seen banks for the first time, and are using them too.. khud paise istemaal kar rahi hain"[Women have now seen banks for the first time… they are using money themselves] (ILSP official).* Yet it is important to understand that monetary decisions in most cases are not made by women in the household, so an increase in income does not automatically translate into women's increased financial control. Men and women also use income differently. Findings from Narayan et al., 1999 support the observation: while men are likely to spend a substantial share of their income for personal use such as smoking, drinking, and gambling, the women tended to devote virtually all of their income to the family-for food, medical treatment, school fees and children's clothing (p. 146). These domains were reported by women as

indicators of well-being too, so focus on building support for increased say by women in financial matters is important.

A common notion espoused by the project officials was how the implementation of systems and operations of the project were empowering in themselves. They discussed how PG and VP-level discussions centred on building marketing possibilities, and these marked a shift for from rural gossip as usual to 'productive' discussions, which was a sign of empowerment: *"They carry out productive discussions during their meetings… as they are thinking economically even while sitting in villages" (Project official).* Another interesting insight was how across project and government officials, examples of empowered women were characterised by experience of *tremendous personal hardships,* lending support to empowerment as a matter of individual transformation.

The most direct display of empowerment was remarked to be the *business sense* that ILSP was inculcating in their beneficiaries. This was understood as capacity-building: beneficiaries' skill set was being expanded to include roles more often taken up in urban contexts. As mandated by the project design, trainings on roles and responsibilities of group members and operating procedures were conducted right after formation of groups. These trainings, less frequently repeated since, were understood as building capacity.

Women's outspokenness was the second clearest indicator of empowerment for the project team, and some examples of women's collective action to face other village issues were highlighted. The instances of these were higher in the villages where the project was running for the longest time, which allowed officials to link it as a project outcome.

Another indicator was said to be *women's say in decision-making at the household level*. This indicator was understood as applicable across contexts, but government officials remarked how most other indicators could not be applied without relevance to context: empowerment looked different for different women. The intersectionality of women's experiences explained this, and "Westernised" ideas such as asset ownership at the individual level of women were understood at odds with India's family-based social fabric. But making

assumptions on freedom from observing functionings alone posits a problem: it hides the tension and anxiety caused by extra burdens on women, realised in their dual days of taxing reproductive activities managed with productive roles. Women's existence in the broader social framework is equated with their reproductive duties, which makes capabilities such as say in decision-making on additional matters a source of extra pressure. Extra responsibilities of group involvement without addressal of structural barriers or any changes in division of labour increase women's burden of work (Niranter, 2007).

Women themselves first associate *freedom* with arbitrariness of licence, a deeply unfeminine desire. But in their daily interactions and undertaking of productive and reproductive activities, contextually valued freedoms emerged as important in shaping self-assessments on well-being. *Freedom to network, enjoy time autonomy, educate children and choose alternatives in the productive domains of their live* emerged across three villages. The first three were being realised in the functional reality of migration: project women could travel to district and state offices to interact with other project beneficiaries; women not living with their in-laws could decide the scheduling of daily activities while those residing with in-laws felt excessive pressure to utilise time only for farm and household chores; with remittances being sent, women were now responsible for managing all monthly expenditures with the set amount of resources available and would proactively save more, in order to utilise it for better (private) education for their children. These changes were fostered by a climate of male out-migration and development project intervention, but the broader institutional constriction of livelihood alternatives was an issue unmatched by changes at the household or individual level.

5. Practices from development project that influence capabilities expansion

1. Women's organizational affiliation within development projects is capable of re-distributing power within the HH: *"Ab jab mere husband mujhe lakhon ke cheque sign karte hue dekhte hain toh fir dus bees rupaye ki jo pareshaani karte thhe poochh pocchh kar, who ab nahi kar paate"[When my husband now sees me signing cheques of lakhs, he no longer bothers me about trivial*

expenses of 10- 20 rupees, as he would in the past] (PG position-holder, 40 years).

2. Mobility for capabilities expansion (and not task fulfilment only) is desired by women, and successfully fostered by ILSP. A clear identification by women of the mobility required by the project as capabilities-expanding is important, as they currently experience these demands as another form of task fulfilment for their roles as development actors.

3. The experience of women's groups as networking sites across all villages highlights the possibility of collective re-thinking of behaviour that is *entirely socially tabooed* such as political participation, freedom of movement, and public speaking. Interaction with female project staff provides one avenue for this, as observing female models of leadership can provide cues into desirable forms of agency exertion and navigation of structural impediments.

4. To meet its objectives of linking rural households to wider market economies, ILSP understandably stresses those capabilities for women which will assist the development and sustenance of these market linkages. This requires business and marketing skills, which beneficiaries receive training on at the time of group formation. Findings from the present study highlight factors shaping the effectiveness of these trainings: (i) women's poor resource utilisation, due to (a) achieved functionings on education, employment opportunities, (b) restrictive capabilities of autonomy, self-esteem; and (ii) gendered norms of being shaping women's existence; while marketization requires exertion of authority as equal parties. For the trainings to be well-received, these factors would need to be targeted by implementers.

5. The interaction order (IO) between beneficiaries and project officials is critical. Efforts at creating truly decentralised structures which amplify beneficiary needs would be enormously effective. This can be fostered by harnessing the massive communication infrastructure already built by the project, for beneficiaries to voice their evolving needs and challenges.

6. Sustainability of project outcomes was imagined by building LCs' financial self-sufficiency. Grading of PGs and VPGs allowed for project officials to see gaps in operation; as grading parameters include groups' demand of new activities- an indicator of mobilization. Convergence through other schemes was also visualised, to meet communities' other needs which the project is

unable to address. This holistic purview of community needs holds potential for sustainable change.

As observed in many instances above, implementation activities themselves were understood as project successes. This included foremost the organization of people into groups, and federation of multiple groups into LCs at the cluster-level. This allowed collectivization beyond caste and religion lines for working towards overall community development. Forward and backward linkages, built by the project through input and output support were understood as the need, and the project's delivery of this thus a success. Another matter of pride for the project team was the communication infrastructure built; they felt connected to thousands of households and could ensure the receipt of any message to them all in a matter of hours.

A trust deficit was highlighted by project officials, and observed during participant observations in the field. This deficit underpins the operational difficulties faced by the field staff, and also the foreseeable problems in establishing 'ownership' amongst members. It can be linked to the nature of interaction order currently prevailing between the project and beneficiaries.

Some project *challenges* were also offshoots from design: feasibility of farm business was a critical challenge as officials struggled to both aggregate surplus and establish marketing channels. With different value chains, identification of different, appropriate marketing channels was a necessity that the LC staff was struggling with.

The second set of challenges was regional: huge project area meant problems in coverage. Socially mediated regional phenomenon such as the out-migration of men meant agricultural productivity declined and barren lands meant increased presence of wildlife in villages.

The third set of problems had emerged from the process of project implementation. Beneficiaries' preoccupation with immediate, basic need fulfilment meant that they were unable to visualise the larger vision the project was after. The capacity of LC staff, which is perhaps the most important aspect of success post project exit, was cited by all as a concern. Ranging from inexperience in accounting skills, fund utilisation, consolidation of marketing

channels and a lack of ownership, these problems pose serious concerns. Capacity-building of LC staff was expected as a result of *operational procedures* such as monthly meetings, but it is uncertain whether those alone are appropriate for the missing skill sets.

Batliwala (1994) and Kabeer's (1994) concern for side-lining of the transformatory nature of 'empowerment' in development practice is identified at multiple levels here. While utilisation of resources for well-being is an important aspect of empowerment, the questioning of ideological restraints that maintain gender inequalities was found to be absent, or highly diluted. The addition of 'empowerment' as one of many goals, and its unclear definition meant satisfaction with the belief that practices undertaken were empowering in themselves. This of course is to be taken in the broader context of the project, which is on increasing agricultural productivity and is thus unable to focus steadfastly on gender issues. The present study aims to press the point of structural impediments shaping women's experiences as project beneficiaries, which require addressal in order to meet the project objectives.

V.   Limitations of the study

The foremost declaration in understanding this report's findings is that it is not an evaluation of the project. It presents insights gained on complex issues of research and practical interest, which bear relevance for design and implementation of projects working with women, more so than being an evaluation exercise. A single researcher with limited time and resources would be particularly insufficient to evaluate a project as vast in scope and coverage, and thus linkage between findings and project operation are attempted only in certain areas. A limited number of villages were studied, which again suggests caution in establishing generalised linkages between observed outcomes and project operation. There is definite scope in expanding the sample size to invite observations of additional linkages of women's well-being.

VI.   Conclusion and Recommendations

There is great fuzziness in the concept of "empowerment", yet for development practitioners, there is firm belief in the *processes* undertaken towards the aim of empowerment. A "gender-neutral" nature of development washes over the

structural issues that woman beneficiaries may first need to address, before realising any additional benefits from projects. Such an approach also falls under the WAD paradigm, where income poverty overall and not gender inequality is seen to be the correct area for intervention. ILSP's objectives of linking rural communities to the wider economy builds upon a widely accepted strand of thinking in development literature wherein the market is seen as a space of unlimited opportunity and with the potential to accurately value people's products and return to them a fair income. Participation in the market is certainly a source of freedom, and the terms of such participation become important when it involves rural participants who have so far not been entirely dependent on the market. With increased monetisation and commercialisation, the possibility of rural communities receiving a fair share of monetary income becomes possible, and economic progress is indeed associated with many desirable development changes such as the ability to access healthcare, education, have financial security etc. But the capabilities of participants shape the desire, experience and sustenance of such linkages. In the studied villages, out-migration has left behind the elderly, women, and children in the villages. In a context of poor state institutional support for valued functionings such as in health and education, increased market dependence can be problematic. Women continue to carry out reproductive and productive activities in the villages, and projects require them to take on additional roles. Women's culturally shaped dependence is reinforced when development projects struggle to identify them as partners. As such, women's actualised capabilities are low; hindered by rigid structural barriers and developmental trajectories that reinforce their traditionally contoured dependence. With reference to project officials' understanding of project beneficiaries, substitutability between capabilities was imagined: *lack of autonomy can be compensated by greater access to income.* This is in contrast to conceptual understandings that see capabilities as mutually exclusive. Inability to don these new roles efficiently is looked upon by implementers as symptoms of beneficiaries' incapability of visualising change. But field observations highlight the aspirations that women embed in their consciousness for a better life. There is a strong desire for upwards mobility and a better life for their children, as reflected in the higher relative autonomy observed in the domain of children's education. So they approach these new roles with hopes, but face structural challenges at every step in projects most often implemented and managed by

men, in a context that has deeply ingrained gender roles. Women's agency thus becomes a crucial factor, and is evinced in their efforts to educate their children, make the most of participation in such development projects, and enjoy their new roles as de-facto decision-makers. For women, a "job"/ "going on duty" were the signs of ultimate empowerment. But women wished for opportunities for self-employment based in their own homes as they knew they could not leave their homes and children, as found by Narayan et al., 1999 in their 47 country study too (p. 147). The effective exercise of such agency requires institutional support for it to become a true *opportunity*, thus expanding people's freedoms through the process of "development". Yet, what was observed was the mainstream conception of development as "catch-up": increase economic growth and technological interventions to approach the status of developed societies (Selwyn, 2011, p.69).

Expansion of women's social opportunities as fostered by ILSP is greatly valued by women, holding potential for re-negotiation of many socially tabooed behaviours.

The following section presents certain learning from the experiences of women's producer groups. These are presented to address multiple challenges analysed in the context of development projects in Uttarakhand:

1. The singular association of women's groups with credit/thrift needs to be re-visualized more transformatively: by questioning social inequality and strengthening exertion of agency (Agarwal, 2001).

2. Trainings on rights are important for women in Uttarakhand, as the first step towards mobilization. Misinformation regarding government schemes etc. was commonly observed in the field and this could be an initial area to address.

3. Another common challenge was the poor attendance of meetings at the group level. Absentees valued their daily livelihood tasks as more important so would not take out the time to attend meetings. It is important that members be brought into the idea that their daily faced problems are linked to wider structural, social, political scenarios. With this, their engagement with village institutions can be facilitated as the means to solve daily faced issues.

4. In creating an enabling environment for the organizations that women join, a focus on hard, technical skills has to be in parallel to the "softer" aspects of change, which are more human-centric, as perceptions, attributions and internal values calibrate how people engage.

5. Trainings on soft skills such as communication, advocacy, and negotiation are critical for women to act as agents for change they desire.

6. In the case of LC staff, educated women from the community are identified for some positions. They become the group members' representatives in interaction with project officials higher up in the hierarchy. This arena requires a broader skill set than the one a rural woman possesses; particularly the capabilities required in organizational settings. It is important for women to be introduced to these skills, ideally through the opportunities to observe other women in managerial roles. A focus on gender by having women as project beneficiaries *only* fails to build the organizational infrastructure required for expanding their capabilities in a safe way. The opportunity to have role models that share a critical characteristic in how the world perceives people- gender- can be a great way of socialising women into these behaviours.

Women's well-being is complex, contextual, and experienced not only via what has been achieved, but in light of the opportunities available for living a life of value. Exercise of agency is a valued goal; restricted by rigid social norms, that appear to allow for negotiations when certain changes in context take place. Instrumental freedoms for women are severely constricted, and its provision is central in the possibility of 'development as freedom'. Development projects secure a powerful vantage point for transitioning from a dependence mentality to building the capabilities of women to be self-sufficient agents of change.

References

Agarwal, B., 2001. *UN Expert Group Meeting on Gender and Poverty: Some Issues*. United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women. https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/empower/documents/Agarwal-EP2.pdf.

Alkire, S., 2003. The Capability Approach as a Development Paradigm? In *3rd International Conference on the Capability Approach*. Pavia, 2003.

Alkire, S., 2005. Subjective quantitative studies of human agency. *Social indicators research*, 74(1), pp.217-60.

Alkire, S., 2005. Why the capability approach. *Journal of human development*, 6(1), pp.115-35.

Alkire, S., 2007. Measuring agency: Issues and possibilities. *Indian Journal of Human Development*, 1(1), pp.169-75.

Alkire, S. & Black, R., 1997. A Practical Reasoning Theory of Development Ethics: Furthering the Capabilities Approach. *Journal of International Development*, 9(2), pp.263-79.

Alsop, R., Bertelsen, M. & Holland , J., 2006. *Empowerment in Practice: From Analysis to Implementation*. Washington D.C: The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/THE WORLD BANK.

Alsop, R. & Heinsohn, N., 2005. *Measuring Empowerment in Practice: Structuring Analysis and Framing Indicators*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 3510. World Bank.

Alsop, R. & Heinsohn, N., 2005. *Measuring Empowerment in Practice: Structuring Analysis and Framing Indicators*. Policy Research Working Paper. The World Bank.

Bandura, A., 2000. Exercise of human agency through collective efficacy. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9, pp.75-78.

Basu, K. & López-Calva, L.F., 2011. Functionings and capabilities. *Handbook of social choice and welfare, vol 2*, 1 January. pp.153-87.

Batliwala, S., 1994. The meaning of womens empowerment: new concepts from action. In G. Sen, A. Germain & L.C. Chen, eds. *Population policies reconsidered: health, empowerment, and rights*. Harvard Series on Population and International Health ed. Boston: Harvard Center for Population and Development Studies. pp.127-38.

Batliwala, S., 2007. Taking the power out of empowerment–an experiential account. *Development in Practice*, 17(4-5), pp.557-65.

Boserup, E., 1970. *Woman's role in economic development*.

Deneulin, S., 2009. *An introduction to the human development and capability approach: Freedom and agency*. IDRC.

Department of Women Empowerment and Child Development, Government of Uttarakhand, 2019. *Women Development*. [Online] Available at: http://wecd.uk.gov.in/pages/display/152-women-development [Accessed 20 April 2019].

Dighe, A., 2008. Women's Empowerment at the Local Level (WELL)- a study undertaken in the state of Uttarakhand.

Doyal, L. & Gough, I., 1991. *A theory of human need*. Hampshire and London: Macmillan.

Erikson, R., 1992. Descriptions of Inequality: The Swedish Approach to Welfare Research. In M. Nussbaum & A. Sen, eds. *The Quality of Life*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Erikson, R. & Åberg, R., 1987. *Welfare in Transition. A Survey of Living Conditions in Sweden 1968-1981*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Frediani, A., 2010. Sen's Capability Approach as a framework to the practice of development. *Development in Practice*, 20(2), pp.173-87.

IFAD, 2015. *Promoting the leadership of women in producers' organizations: Lessons from the experiences of FAO and IFAD*. International Fund for Agricultural Development.

ILSP, 2016. *Project website*. [Online] Available at: https://ilsp.in/.

Kabeer, N., 1994. *Reversed realities: Gender hierarchies in development thought*. Verso.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GoI, 2017. *National Family Health Survey (NFHS 4), 2015-16: India*. Mumbai: International Institute for Population Sciences, and ICF.

Ministry of Human Development, GoI, 2016. *Mahila Samakhya Programme*. [Online] Available at: https://mhrd.gov.in/mahila-samakhya-programme [Accessed 20 May 2019].

Narayan, D. et al., 1999. *Voices of the Poor: Can anyone hear us? Voices from 47 countries.* The World Bank.

Negi, A., Kaushal, D. & Singhal, C., 2016. Migration a social Problem: A Study of factors Responsible for Migration from Hills of Uttarakhand. *Journal Global Values* , 8(Special Issues ISSN (e): 2454-8391), pp.142-54.

Niranter, 2007. *Examining Empowerment, Poverty Alleviation, Education within Self-Help Groups; a qualitative study*. New Delhi.

Nussbaum, M., 1995. Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings. In M. Nussbaum & J. Glover, eds. *Women, Culture and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. pp.61-104.

Nussbaum, M., 2000. *Women and Human Development: The Capabilities Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Nussbaum, M., 2003. Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice. *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3).

Nussbaum, M.C., 2009. Creating capabilities: The human development approach. *Hypatia*, 24(3).

Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India, 2011. *Census of India*.

Pillai, V. & Alkire, S., 2007. *Measuring individual agency or empowerment: a study in Kerala*. MPRA Paper.

Prasad, D., 1969. *Gandhi's Concept of Freedom*. [Online] IISG/WRI (Archive Box 15: Folder 2, Subfolder 3) Available at: http://www.satyagrahafoundation.org/gandhis-concept-of-freedom [Accessed 5 April 2019].

Rathgeber, E.M., 1989. *WID, WAD, GAD: Trends in Research and Practice*. Ottowa: International Development Research Centre.

Rist, G., 2014. *The history of development: From western origins to global faith*. Zed Books Ltd..

Robeyns, I., 2003. Sen's capabiltiy approach and gender inequality: Selcting relevant capabilities. *Feminist Economics*, 9(2-3), pp.61-92.

Robeyns, I., 2006. The Capability Approach in Practice. *The Journal of Political Philosophy*, 14(3), pp.351-76.

Robeyns, I., 2007. Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities. In B. Agarwal, J. Humphries & I. Robeyns, eds. *Capabilities, freedom, and equality: Amartya Sen's work from a gender perspective*. Oxford University Press. pp.70-105.

Ryan, R.M. & Deci, E.L., 2001. Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), pp.68-78.

Selwyn, B., 2011. Liberty Limited? A Sympathetic Re-Engagement with Amartya Sen's "Development as Freedom". *Economic and Political Weekly*, 46(37), pp.68-76. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23047282.

Sen, A., 1985. Well-being, Agency and Freedom: The Dewey Lectures 1984. *The Journal of Philosophy*, 82(4), pp.169-221.

Sen, A., 1992. *Inequality Reexamined*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Sen, A., 1999. *Development as freedom*. New York: First Anchor Books Edition.

Wolff, J. & de-Shalit, A., 2007. *Disadvantage*. Oxford University Press on Demand.

Appendices

1. Women's interview schedule

					Household Survey						

Q. No.: [_____] Date:

District: Hamlet: HH head:
Block: Federation: Religion:
Village: PG/VPG: Caste:
Forest Village/ Revenue Village: Gram Panchayat:

Respondent Name: [_____]   Who else is present during interview: [_____]

1. Household Member Characteristics

1.1 PID	1.2 Name of the members	1.3 Sex (1=Male; 2=Female)	1.4 Age	1.5 Relation w/ HH head	1.6 Marital Status*	1.7 Highest level of education*	1.8 Occupation	1.9 Place of birth	1.10 Do they currently live in the HH?	1.11 Purpose of leaving	1.12 How long have they been away?
1											
2											
3											
4											
5											
6											
7											
8											
9											
10											
11											
12											

CODES

Q1.6   Unmarried:1, Married:2, Widowed:3, Divorced:4, Separated:5, Abandoned:6, Other:7

Q.1.7   Illiterate:1, Literate but below primary:2, Primary:3, Middle:4, Secondary:5, Higher Secondary:6, Graduate or higher:7, Other:8

NOTE: Check for reverse migration

Intermediate Indicators of Individual Agency

II. MATERIAL ASSETS

2.1 Land tenure (nali)				2.2 Housing				
2.11 Owned		2.13 Land can be inherited by women?	2.16 Cultivable	2.18 Irrigated	2.20 Type of house*	2.23 Type of fuel used*	2.26 Perennial source-drinking water*	
2.12 Possessed		2.14 Any women in this HH owns land?	2.17 Non cultivable	2.181 Source of irrigation*	2.21 No. of rooms in HH	2.24 What sanitation facility do you use?*	2.27 Electricity in HH?	
2.121 Status*		2.15 Land owned by women?	2.171 Reason for 2.17	2.19 Non-irrigated	2.22 Separate kitchen?	2.25 Seasonal source-drinking water*	2.28 Waste disposal*	
2.29 Assets owned*					2.30 Livestock owned*			

CODES

2.121: 1= Rented; 2=Sharecropped; 3=Combination; 4=Used with no formal agreement; 5= Other (specify)

2.181: 1= Canal; 2=Natural lakes/pond; 3=Rivers, streams; 4=Artificial reservoir (write type); 5=Rainfed; 6=Others (specify)

2.20:1=Kacha; 2=Pucca; 3=Semi-Pucca   2.23: 1=Firewood; 2=Cow dung; 3=LPG; 4=Solar; 5=Electric appliances; 6=Other (specify)

2.24: 1=Water-sealed sewer septic tank, used exclusively by HH; 2=Wsast shared by other HHs:2; 3= Water-sealed,another depository,used exclusively by HH; 4=Wsod ,shared; 5=Open pit; 6=Closed pit; 7=Other

2.25 & 2.26: 1=River, stream; 2=Lake, pond; 3= Artificial reservoir; 4=Traditional NRM (specify); 5=Piped water; 6=Common tap; 7=Common pump; 8=Others

2.28: 1=Burning, 2=Composting; 3=Throwing in river; 4=Fallow land; 5=Pit without cover; 6=Pit with cover; 7=Waste collection; 8=Other

2.29: 1= 2-wheeler motorised vehicle; 2= 3WMV; 3= 4 or more WMV; 4= Mini-tractor; 5=Thresher; 6=Harvester/Combine; 7=Mechanized Tiller/Harrow/Seed drill; 8=Bullock/other cart; 9=Processing plant for agricultural commodities; 10=Generator/Inverter; 11=LPG/biogas; 12=Computer/laptop; 13=TV; 14=Landline; 15=Mobile; 16=Cable conncetion; 17=Radio; 18=Others (sp)

2.30: 1=Cow/Buffalo (she); 2=Bullock/Buffalo (he); 3=Horse/mule; 4=Pigs/Goat/Sheep; 5=Hen/Chicken/Duck; 5=Other (Specify)

III. FINANCIAL ASSETS

3.1 Two main sources of HH income in last yr?*	3.3 If agriculture, crops grown?*	3.5 How often have you voluntarily changed employment in the past? 1=Very often; 2=Fairly often; 3=Not v.often; 4=Never	3.7 How secure do you feel in current employment? 1= V. secure; 2=Fairly secure; 3=Neither; 4=Fairly insecure; 5= V. insecure	3.8 Previous source(s) of income?*	3.9 Monthly income from previous source? (approx INR)	3.11 Able to save money monthly?
3.2 Two main sources of women's income in last yr?*		3.6 Involuntarily changed employment?^			3.10 Monthly income from current source?	3.12Saving mode?* / 3.13 Use of savings?

3.3 CROPS:

3.14 Borrowed money in 3 yrs?	3.19 Expenditure (monthly)				3.20 Type of ration card?	3.25 NREGA days by HH?		RABI (Oct-Mar)	KHARIF (July-Oct)		Horti
	3.191 Electricity		3.197 Livelihood-related						(Jul-Oct) Upland rice Lowland rice	Chaulai Ogal Arbi	Lemon Elephant citrus
3.15 Borrowed from?*	3.192 Food		3.198 Clothing		3.21 Pension in HH?	3.26 If any HH member is part of ILSP enterprise, specify type*		Wheat Barley Masoor Mustard Rai Ginger Garlic Green laafy veg Coriander Naurangi Rajma Chira Phaphar	Onion Maize Mandua Koni Jhangora Kulthi Bhatt Urd Toor	Pears Peach Nut-fruits Almond Papaya Mango Plum Apricot Apple Walnut Kiwi
	3.193 Housing		3.199 Loan repayment							
3.16 In debt ATM?	3.194 Education		3.1911 Savings		3.22 Type of pension?					
3.17 How indebted? 1=Extreme; 2=Very; 3=Fairly, 4=Little	3.195 Transportation		3.1912 Entertainment		3.23 How many own bank account	3.23a M			Chilly Turmeric	
3.18 Struggle to repay? 1=A lot; 2=Little; 3=No	3.196 Health		3.1913 Others (specify)		3.24 Own KCC?	3.23b F			NTFP Honey Bay leaf Lichen Amla Buransh	Spices Chilly Turmeric

3.12:1=Bank; 2=Gold; 99=Other(sp)
3.15: 1=Institutional; 2=Non-Institutional; 3=Both
3.20: 1=APL (yellow); 2=State Food Yojana Card (White);3=BPL (white); 4=AAY (pink); 5=Annapurna (green)
3.22: 1=Old age; 2=Widow; 3=Disabled; 4=Retired govt employee; 5=Other(specify)

3.1, 3.2, 3.8: 1=Cultivation; 2=Fishing; 3=FP/NTFP gatherer;4=Livestock; 5=Agri-enterprise (sp); 6=Casual Wage Employment-Agri; 7= CWE-Non-agri; 8=Salaried; 9=Non-agri enterprise(sp); 10=Rental/Interest; 11=Pension; 12= Remittance; 13=Traditional occupation (specify); 14= Other (specify)
3.26: 1=FMB; 2=Input-Output; 3=Agri-Chemist; 4=Non-agri (specify)

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL ASSETS

4.1 Are you member of any producer group?	4.3 Any other groups?*			4.5 For each of the 3, how effective is overall leadership? 1=V. effective; 2=Fairly 3=Not			4.7 How much personal influence you think you have in choosing leaders? 1=Lot; 2=Some; 3=Little; 4=None			4.9 What is the most imp. benefit you feel you could gain?	
4.2 PG or VPG? (Specify name)	4.4 Which of the groups are most imp. to you? Specify 3.										
	Org 1	Org 2	Org 3	4.6 How are leaders selected in each?*			4.8 How much does it benefit you to be a member? 1=Greatly; 2=Fairly; 3=Little; 4=Not at all			4.10 Are members same in all 3 groups? 1=Little overlap; 2=Some; 3=Much	
4.11 Anyone in VT training?		4.12 Duration of enrolment		4.13 Type of training?			4.14 Placed where?				

4.3: 1=Farmer coop; 2=Other PGs; 3=Traders association; 4=village community; 5=religious group; 6=political group; 7=cultural group; 8=festival society; 9=finance group/SHG; 10=Other (specify)
4.6: 1=outside entity; 2=choosing successor; 3=by small group of members; 4=decision/vote of all members; 5=Other (Sp); 5=Can't say

V. INFORMATIONAL ASSETS

5.1 How long does it take to reach the nearest post office? 1=less than 15min; 2=15->30min; 3=>60min; 4=>1hr<3hr; 4=>3hr; 5=Can't say		5.7 Compared to 5 yrs ago, has your access to info about current event, govt updates: 1=Improved; 2=Deteriorated; 3=Stayed the same; 4=Can't say	
5.2 How many times in last month have you read newspaper/had one read to you?		5.8 Do you feel the roads to your ccommunity have: 1=Improved; 2=Worsened; 3=Remained same; 4=Can't say	
5.3 How often do you listen to the radio? 1=Everday; 2=Few times a week; 3=Once a week; 4=Less than once a week; 5=Never		5.9 Is you HH easily accessible: 1=All yr long; 2=Certain seasons only; 3=Never easily accessible	
5.4 How often do you watch TV?^		5.10 What purpose do you travel to (closest town)? 1=Market; 2=Health; 3=Bank/govt purposes; 4=Other(sp)	
5.5 Where do you watch TV? 1=own HH; 2=someone else's HH; 3=communal spot (specify); 4= Other (sp)		5.11 What is their source of information regarding govt. schemes, political updates etc?	
5.6 What do you use you mobile most for?			

VI PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSETS

6.1 Are there any activities (by local govt, religious, school, local devt. association etc in which you think you aren't allowed to participate?	6.6 Why do you feel you cannot socialise with them?*	6.12 What main difficulties will prohibit this change? (correspond with each change mentioned in 6.8)
	6.7 Is there anything in your life you'd like to change?	
6.2 In which activities aren't you allowed to participate? (list 3)	6.8 What would you like to change most? (list 3)	6.13 Do you feel people like yourself can generally change things in your community if they want to? 1=Yes, v.easily; 2=Yes, fairly easily; 3=Yes, but with little difficulty, 4= Yes, but with great difficulty; 5=Not at all
6.3 Why do you think you aren't allowed to participate?*	6.9 Do you think these will ever change? 1=Y; 2=N; 3=Maybe	6.14 What is the one thing you'd like to do most in your own life?
6.4 In last week, how often have you interacted with people from other social groups outside the HH?*	6.10 When do you think they'll change? 1=V.soon; 2=Fairly soon; 3=Long time in future	
6.5 Are there any social groups you feel you would have difficulty interacting with?	6.11 Who will contribute most to this change?*	6.15 How difficult do you think it'll be to achieve? 1=V. easy, 2=Fairly easy; 3=Fairly difficult; 4=V. difficult

6.3 & 6.6: 1=Poverty; 2=Occupation; 3=Lack of education; 4=Gender; 5=Age; 6=Religion; 7=Political affiliation; 8=Caste/tribe; 9=Other (Sp)
6.4: 1=Several times a day; 2=Daily; 3=Several times; 4=Once; 5=Not at all
6.11: 1=Myself; 2=My family; 3=My group (Specify); 4=Our community; 5=Our village; 6=local govt.; 7=national govt.; 8=other (Sp)

Direct measures of empowerment

VII. Domain/Sub-domain: STATE/Political

1=Yes, 2=No; 3=Can't say; 4=Rather not say

	Local	State	National	
7.1 How often are elections held to choose your reps? 1=Never; 2=Not regularly at all; 3=Every 2-3 yrs; 4=Every 4-5 yrs; 5=Every 6-7 yrs; 6=>7 yrs; 7=Do not know				7.10 Do local leaders tell who to vote for?

7.11 How involved do you feel with political processes? 1=Very; 2=Fairly; 3=Slightly; 4=Not at all

	Local	State	National	
7.2 How interested are you in these? 1=V.Interested; 2=Fairly interested; 3=Slightly interested; 4=Not interested at all				7.111 Reason:

7.3 Do you own a Voter ID?

	Local	State	National	
7.4 Did you vote in the last elections that were held at these levels?				7.12 Would you like to be more involved?
				7.121 Reason:

7.5 How do you decide whom to vote for? 1=Decide myself; 2=Decide with spouse; 3=With other family members; 4=community leader; 5=govt. official; 6=political party member; 7=Rather not say; 8=Others

7.13 Are there ways to hold your local leaders accountable?

7.6 Are you/any HH member part of Panchayat?

7.14 Have you used these?

7.7 Specify post

7.15 Did they work?

7.8 Do you attend Gram Sabha meetings?

7.16 Are you aware of the state pol party?

7.9 Frequency of these meetings/yr

7.17 How often do their reps visit the village?

VIII. Domain/Sub-domain: STATE/service delivery

8.1 What publicly provided services are generally available to people in your area? Distance?

8.3 Quality? 1=V. good; 2=Fairly good; 3=Neither; 4=Fairly bad; 5=V.bad

8.43 Do you think others's complaint would have been treated better?

Primary school		Aanganwadi				8.44 Reason
Secondary school		ASHA			8.4 Have you ever complained about lack of these services?	
College		ANM			1=Completely; 2=Fairly; 3=Slightly; 4=Not at all	8.5 Which public service needs the most improvement and why?
PHC		VHSNC				
Hospital		Police stn			8.42 Reason	
PDS		Others				
Bank						

8.21 PID	8.22 Disability*	8.23 Chronic Illness (Past 12 months)*	8.24 Facility used for treatment	8.25 Minor Illness (Past 6 months)	8.26 Facility used for treatment	8.22: 1=blind; 2=deaf;3=mute;4=orthopaedic; 5=mentally challenged; 99=Other 8.23: 1=Cancer; 2=HIV/AIDs; 3=TB; 4=Leprosy; 5=Silicosis; 6=Anaemia;99=Other

IX. Domain/Sub-domain: MARKET/Credit

9.1 Felt need to borrow goods/money last year? 1=V.often; 2=Fairly often; 3=Not often; 4=Not at all

9.5 Purpose for borrowing? 1=Livelihood reltd; 2=Marriage; 3=Education; 4=Health; 5=HH; 6=Emergency(sp); 7=Festival; 8=Loan repayment;

9.62 If no, why? 1=No collateral; 2=Interest rates; 3=Level of formal literacy; 4=culturally unacceptable;

9.2 Actually borrowed?

9.3 Which two sources do you usually borrow from? 1=Bank; 2=Coop/SHG; 3=Shopkeepers; 4=Local lenders; 5=Family; 6=Friends; 7=Others

9.6 Do you have access to any other sources?

9.7 Who decides how savings are used? 1=Myself; 2=With spouse; 3=With family; 4=Spouse decides; 5=Other decides; 6=Others(sp)

9.61 If yes, which ones?

9.4 Why these two? 1=Proximity; 2=Interest rates; 3=Ease; 4=No formal rules; 5=Only options; 6=Others

X. Domain/Sub-domain: MARKET/Labour

10.1 How much choice do you have in deciding your occupation? 1=Complete; 2=Some; 3=None

10.2 How easy would it be to change it? 1=V.easy; 2=Fairly easy; 3=Not v.easy; 4=Impossible

10.3 Reason 1=Lack skills; 2=No alternatives; 3=Caste-determined; 4=Others (sp)

10.4 How many HH members own Aadhar Card?	M:	F:	10.5 What have you used it for?

XI. Domain/Sub-domain: MARKET/Goods

11.3 Have you inherited property?

11.1 Have you ever felt threat of eviction from property? 1=V.often; 2=Fairly often; 3=Sometimes; 4=Never

11.4 Have your brothers? 1=Y; 2=N; 3=Can't say; 4=Rather not say

11.2 Source of threat

XII. Domain/Sub-domain: SOCIETY/HH, Kinship

12.1 Who takes following decisions: 1=Male HH head; 2=Adult male; 3=Female HH head; 4=Adult female; 5=All HH heads; 6=All adults; 7=All, inc. children				12.2 To what degree do you feel you can make own decisions regarding these issues: 1=V.high degree; 2=fairly high; 3=small; 4=not at all			
HH expns		Political decisions		HH expns		Political decisions	
Education		Marriages		Education		Marriages	
Health		Religious		Health		Religious	
Travel		Loans	NOTES	Travel		Loans	NOTES

12.3 To what degree do you feel you have control over decisions regarding own personal welfare, health, body? 1=V.high degree; 2=fairly high; 3=small; 4=not at all		12.6 More or less spent on your health Vs. HH members? 1=Much more; 2=Little more; 3=Same; 4=Little less; 5=Much less; 6=Spend equally; 7=Unsure	
12.4 Where can you go on your own? 1=for HH work; 2=children's needs; 3=other family member's needs; 4=my own needs; 5=others		12.7 Is this generally the case each year?	
12.5 Places you can visit freely:		12.8 How easily can you access health services? 1=V.easy; 2=Fairly easy; 3=Fairly diff; 4=V.diff; 5=Impossible	
		NOTES	

XIII. Domain/Sub-domain: SOCIETY/Community

13.1 Who makes main decisions about public services in your community? 1=Panchayat on their own; 2=With inputs from Gram Sabha; 3=Village elders; 4=Rich; 5=Dominant castes; 6=Together; 7=Others	Past	Present	13.4 In which areas:	
13.2 How involved do you feel in that process? 1=Very; 2=Fairly; 3=Slightly; 4=Not at all	Past	Present	13.5 How much influence do you feel in community decision-making process? 1=great deal; 2=reasonable; 3=low; 4=none	
13.3 How involved would you like to be? 1=Much more; 2=Slightly more; 3=Same as now; 4=Slightly less; 5=Much less				

XIV. AGENCY (Rank each from 1 to 4)	Not at all true	Not very true	Somewhat true	Completely true
14.1 Education: Why your children go/went to school?				
External Pressure: Someone else insisted my children go; I send them for midday meal etc				
Others' opinion: So others would approve of me and respect me.				
I think it is important: I personally believed it was imp, valuable for them to be educated				

I deeply support this: Thought about various educational possibilities for my children, and value the education they have				
14.2 Employment				
No control: To earn income; have to work no matter what				
External Pressure: Someone insists I do this work				
So people approve of me: So people think well of and respect me. May feel ashamed otherwise				
I think it is important: I personally believed it is imp, valuable for me to work				
I deeply support this: Considered various options & I value what I do				
14.3 Mobility				
No control: Not able to go out at all, other than what is required for work. Stay at home				
External Pressure: Need permission in order to go out.				
So people approve of me: Need to be careful where I go else people might think badly of me				
I think what is important: If it is important to go out, I will no matter what				
I am free to move around: Going out or staying in, I am able to think about it and freely decide what seems appropriate. No restrictions in this respect.				
14.4 Organizational assets				
External Pressure: We need the benefits these groups give me/ under pressure to meet				
So people approve of me: Do this because everyone else is doing it; and it is a popular group to be part of				
I think it is important: We stay together because we know we can benefit it by working together and think it is important & valuable to cooperate				
I deeply & freely support this: We meet because we draw strength from being together. This group helps us become what we want to.				

15. Please imagine a 9-step latter. On the lowest rung are people completely without power, and on the highest, stand those who have a lot of power. On which are you today?	
16. Some people believe that individuals can decide their own destiny, while others think it impossible to escape a predetermined fate. 1=Everything by fate; 2=Mostly fate; 3=Both; 4=Mostly people's work; 5=People shape their fate themselves	

ENUMERATOR'S NOTES: 5=Supernatural, heroic empowerment; 4=Fully empowered; 3=Moderately empowered; 2=Somewhat empowered; 1=Disempowered

Education	Rank	Employment	Rank

Mobility	Rank	Organizational assets	Rank