

ANNUAL REPORT

2018 – 2019



ARPAN

Association for Rural Planning & Action

Village Helpiya

PO Askot

Dist. Pithoragarh: Uttarakhand

Website: <http://www.arpanuk.in>

About us...

Our Vision *A SOCIETY BASED ON SOCIAL & ECONOMICAL JUSTICE, EQUALITY, EQUITY*

Our Mission *COMMUNITY INSTITUTION BUILDING FOR SOCIAL CHNAGE & JUSTICE*

ARPAN — Association for Rural Planning and Action is a Right Based NGO, registered under the Society Registration Act 1860 on October 24, 1996.

The organization is based in District Pithoragarh in the State of Uttarakhand, India, which lies in the Central Himalayan Belt and Pithoragarh lies at the tri-junction of Nepal and Tibet with river Kali separating its Eastern boards with Nepal.

The organisation was set-up with the following objectives:

- To Support Community Institutions in making them self-reliant and empowered.
- To revive the diminishing /shrinking space and values within the society.
- Socio-economic and socio-political empowerment of women through their capacity building to enable them to fight all forms of discrimination and oppression.
- Work in support and alliance with like-minded institutions on National & International issues.

Moving on...

The year has witnessed many social, economic and structural changes both at the National and State level. The impact of these changes and struggle of the most marginalised communities for their basic livelihood is a never ending journey with many ups and downs. The rural communities especially the ones standing on the last ladder of the socio-economic structure – the “women“ in general and sub-divided into class and caste , face challenges in braking the barriers of inequality and injustice both within the family and society at large. ARPAN has been working amongst the most marginalised community from the remote, inaccessible and fragile hill regions of Uttarakhand since past several years. The ongoing process has been increasing the all round life skills of women and girls to attain gender equality, equity and justice.

Our overall work involves to sensitize, build partnerships, facilitate, advocate, explore new ways and document.

The year’s progress has been reflected in the report through community accomplishments and challenges.

Major Issues of Concern:

- Gender Equality , Equity and Justice
- Child care and protection

Accomplishments of the year

Women Empowerment: “I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved.” - B.R Ambedkar

Collectives formed at Village, Block and District Level

Women Farmer collectives	Women Rights groups	Girls rights groups	EWR Federations’	Children groups
16	33	33	03 Block	30

The Impact of different activities organised for women during the year were as follows –

Women organised themselves into collectives with an objective to address their issues of concern. Women leadership as political leaders at the Gram Sabha/Panchayat level enabled them to address village level issues.

150 Elected Women Representatives from 82 Gram Sabhas (03 Blocks) in District Pithoragarh federated themselves at the Block and District level. The issue of reviving and activating the Van Panchayats was raised by them and as a result Van Panchayat elections were held in the 03 Blocks. Women were elected as Van Panchayat Sarpanch.

Issue of violence against women and children were raised by women pradhan’s in 05 gram sabhas with the support of women ward members and women right group leaders.

Women pradhan’s/village head women were able to get sanctioned work for women under NREGS and build necessary structures like retaining wall, check dams and toilets for women. Houses were sanctioned for the economically poor families, with focus on single women (08 houses were sanctioned). 25 families’ in Gram Sabha Bagrihat were devoid of drinking water. Women were most effected, as they had to walk miles to collect water. This issue was raised by EWR’s.

Case study

A girl studying in class 10th from Askot, was abused by an electrician, who had gone to attend to an issue of some electricity fault in the house. There was no one at home, thus the girl escorted the man (well known to the family and the girl) inside the house. The man tried to assault her sexually, the girl was able to run away. The matter was raised before the village, but people came in support of the electrician and tried to hush up the matter. The girl, her sister studying in class 12th and their mother (father not at home)

sought the help of the women gram pradhan. The girls were not able to go to school, as everyone was talking about them, and blaming the girl. The Woman pradhan along with SMC member visited the school and talked to the principal for giving support to girls in their studies. Simultaneously the case was booked at the police station.

Generally issues of social justice against women, girls, SCs/STs are not attended by the Panchayat members, but for EWR's it's a matter of grave concern.

Women farmers, the back bone of rural economy:



Women have very proudly started addressing themselves as Farmers. They are asserting and advocating for the rights of a farmer. The women farmer collectives formed are from land less SC/ST communities. In 15 villages around 800 women farmers have formed collectives. Regular capacity building programmes and support gave encouraging results during the year.

Women increased production of seasonal vegetables and sold them at local level, earning around Rs. 1500.00 per month per women.

Collective production of spices, collection and marketing at local fairs started by women members.

The women farmers were highly motivated by the functioning of the women self-reliant cooperative who were producing biscuits from ragi and maize floor, and have increased production on ragi besides collection. Organic Ragi floor was sold by them @60 per kg during the local fair.

Three spice units for 3 clusters covering 15 villages are presently benefitting around 500 women, by saving their time, energy and resources. There is an estimate 20% increase in their livelihood status.

Spice unit of Baluakot cluster managed to get space / room for the processing unit from the Government Block department, after advocating for their rights.

150 women underwent different skill training.

Efforts have been on promoting the culture of collective work for mutual support, dignity and sustainability of women farmers on their issues of concern.



Case Study – Women farmers custodian of sustainable development

Agriculture cannot survive without women farmers, but they still remain invisible in the context of agrarian discussions. Women have and are continuously involved in making agriculture affordable and sustainable, as their main source of livelihood is from agriculture.

An initiative which began in 2016 with the support of Oracle and Action Aid in empowering women farmers of remote rural hill region of Uttarakhand, has picked up the pace. The women farmer collective from the 15 villages have started debating on the future of farming prospects, irrigation matters, loans and subsidies. The so-called male activities are being taken over by women (as men have either deviated from land based activities or migrated in search of job) that is assessing and deciding the crop patterns, liaising with government officials, bank managers and political representatives.

The 750 women farmers from 16 collectives took up agriculture in a systematic way, which now provided them and their families a healthy safe and sufficient food, practices that improves the health of the soil and conserves water and other natural resources. They have made agriculture affordable for poor women farmers through practices like the seed and goat bank.

Geeta, a single women farmer leader says “Presently 11 surrounding village women and 10 Nepal people have visited our spice unit for grinding of their raw material and purchase our spices too , we have been able to get order for grinded spices (coriander, ginger and turmeric) from the army and police camps.”

Bagirathi says “Now we are moving towards a more structured set up, a women farmers’ cooperative, with shareholders. We need to be educated on the functioning and formation of a cooperative.”

The journey has been from a single women to a collective movement in assuring women farmer livelihood, nutrition, food security, dignity and rights.

Violence against women, girls and children:

During the year there has been an increase in reporting of cases of violence against women. This also reflects the awareness to raise voice, not to suppress cases or tolerate inhuman treatment. Around 51 cases of domestic violence were reported from different villages. 10 cases were handled by women groups and 12 cases booked under PWDVA, Section 125 and for divorce. 06 cases of child marriage were attended to and 03 cases of child sexual abuse booked under POCSO.

During the 16 days activism campaign (25th November To 10th December), the coverage was 42 villages, 2745 people (1877 women and 918 men). 188 women attended different legal training, workshops and camps.

Enrolment of girls and drop outs in school increased to 10% after organising *school chalo abhiyan* in different villages.



Self-defence training for girls

Advocating for a dignified life and livelihood:

Women have understood that their efforts and socio economic issues have to be challenged again and again, and that is possible through collective strength. Social exclusion and discrimination on the basis of caste, class/economic situation, gender, education/information and single women, is widespread. The natural calamities resulting in loss of crop, land, house further aggravates their problems.

Campaigns and advocacy workshops were organised by women groups on the above issues. Some concerns were recognized and acknowledged by the district and state government, like special consideration for single women in different social security schemes and compensation for disaster effected poor families. Absentee of teachers from Primary schools were raised and teachers restored in 05 schools.

Child care and Protection:

CHILDLINE 1098 service is a 24 hour free emergency phone outreach service for children in need of care and protection. This is a project supported by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development and linking state Governments, NGOs, bilateral/multilateral agencies and corporate sector. ARPAN was selected by Child India Foundation to work as a **“Collaborative Organisation”** in district Pithoragrh in the year March 2014, since then all issues related to children below the age of 18 years are dealt with the child line. During the year a total of 465 were reported in the district, amongst them 461 have been closed after attending to them. The main **Objectives are** -

- To reach out to every child in need of care and protection by responding to emergencies on 1098.
- Awareness about CHILDLINE 1098 amongst every child and people as a whole.

Sl	Category of cases	Numbers
1	Health	70
2	Shelter	27
3	Cyber crime	17
4	Beggars	06
5	POCSO	09

7	Counselling	15
8	Child marriage	07
9	Education related	61
10	Sponsorship linkages	192
11	Missing	07
12	Domestic violence effected	35
13	Other	19

Our Partners in the change for a better Family and Society:

The accomplishments would not have been possible without the support of our donors, esteemed community leaders, government officials, civil society organisations and individuals. We would like to acknowledge them for their support and solidarity. We may not be able to name each and every stakeholder, but everyone with a positive and progressive thinking and action is important.

Action Aid, The Hunger Project, Child India Foundation, Ministry of Women and Child for their financial and programmatic support.

EWR's, women leaders, adolescent girls, volunteers and dedicated staff of ARPAN.