Why are Cities the Only Place for Dreams? Outmigration of Youths From Rural Uttarakhand

Peter Grunawalt

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Why are Cities the Only Place for Dreams? Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand

Peter Grunawalt

ISP Advisor: Anmol Jain

Academic Director: Tara Dhakal

School for International Training

Sustainable Development and Social Change Program

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Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand

Contents

Tables and Figures ........................................................................................................................................ 3
Acknowledgements ....................................................................................................................................... 4
Abbreviations and Acronyms ........................................................................................................................ 5
Abstract ......................................................................................................................................................... 5
Introduction .................................................................................................................................................. 6
Objectives ................................................................................................................................................... 7
Methodology ................................................................................................................................................. 7
Study Area .................................................................................................................................................. 7
Time Frame ................................................................................................................................................ 8
Data Collection .......................................................................................................................................... 8
Limitations ................................................................................................................................................... 9
Traditional Hill Agricultural System in Uttarakhand ................................................................................... 10
Migration ..................................................................................................................................................... 11
Push and Pull Factors ................................................................................................................................ 14
Push Factors ............................................................................................................................................... 14
Pull Factors ............................................................................................................................................... 17
Outmigration of Youths; a Matter of Perspective .......................................................................................... 18
“...I’ll have to think about it” ..................................................................................................................... 23
A Traditional System in Transition ............................................................................................................ 24
Duty ............................................................................................................................................................ 24
Left Behind; Female Aspirations and Constraints ...................................................................................... 26
Not Enough Dung ...................................................................................................................................... 28
The Factor that Pushes and Pulls ............................................................................................................... 30
Conclusions and Way Forward .................................................................................................................... 36
Recommendations for Further Study .......................................................................................................... 40
Appendix 1: 2011 to 2001 Census of Districts and State of Uttarakhand .................................................. 41
Appendix 2: Themed District Maps of Uttarakhand ................................................................................... 42
Bibliography ................................................................................................................................................ 45
Primary Sources .......................................................................................................................................... 45
Secondary Sources ...................................................................................................................................... 47
Tables and Figures

Figure 1: Decadal Growth Rate of Rural Population 2001-2011

Figure 2: Rural Sex Ratio 2011
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May this paper be useful to someone other than myself.
Outmigration of rural youth from the hill districts of Uttarakhand has happened since time immemorial. However, within the past decade it has appeared as a frontline issue. This is evidenced by the massive increase in government and NGO rural livelihood development schemes directly and indirectly targeting outmigration throughout the state. This study investigates migration from the mostly rural districts of Uttarakhand to the urban centers of the plains, namely Dehradun and Delhi. It focuses on the prospective livelihood of young adults. Questions addressed in the study; (1) What are the different factors which influence migration of youths? (2) What are the different perspectives on migration, and what are the consequences of these different perspectives for rural development? (3) How are youths changing the traditional agricultural system? (4) Why are the dreams and aspirations of many youths only possible in cities? Three different samples are used in this study; migrants residing in Dehradun and Delhi, NGO and government associated officials, and village communities in hill districts of Uttarakhand. Observation, interviews, questionnaires, and focus group discussions are the primary means of data collection. Research themes discussed include issues of rural livelihood, young adults, migration, modernity, globalization, socialization and rural development.
Introduction

“One day, I think all this farm land will be abandoned. No one will be in the village, because the youth are not interested in farming. If they can get better income somewhere else, they just leave.”

–focus group discussion with elders from Kherbhel Bassar village

The livelihood strategies of rural peoples in Uttarakhand are in transition. The regional disparities in development between hilly and plain regions have historically led to a general flow of people from the hills to the plains. Increasing awareness about employment opportunities in the cities and growing migrant networks have inspired many youths to leave their villages. However, in an era of trade liberalization in India, these regional differences have grown drastically as metropolitan regions

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1 Village elders, 2 males, 1 female, 65+, focus group discussion, Kherbhel Bassar Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 13:45.
were favored in policies across India. Additionally, the line between rural and urban is blurred as the consumer market enters previously self-sufficient agricultural systems. The traditional subsistence based hill economies are being integrated into the vast national and global economic network of India. This involves a process of livelihood transition, often resulting in outmigration to meet the balance of payment issue between villages and cities. The results have profound implications for the traditional hill agricultural system, the culture, and the rural peoples in the HKH regions of India.

Objectives

The objectives the study was to suggest and raise awareness about:

i. the factors affecting outmigration of youths
ii. the divergent perspectives on migration as a barrier to self-help and community based development
iii. the transformation of duty in youths to meet new challenges
iv. how youths are reshaping traditional agricultural systems through outmigration
v. dreams and aspirations of youths as the byproducts of a city-oriented social environment

Methodology

Study Area

The study focused on three main locations; (1) the Doon Library and Research Kendra in Dehradun City, Uttarakhand, (2) villages and towns in Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, and (3) Delhi.

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The Doon Library and Research Kendra campus was chosen for interviewing youths seeking to further education. It serves as a meeting for youths seeking to further their education from all over Dehradun City.

A total of seven villages were also visited for the study. Three were chosen in which the IFAD-supported ULIPH project is being implemented (Silori Bassar, Dhar, and Kapol villages), three were chosen because of the absence of an NGO (Dharkot, Laysal, and Khirbel villages) and one was chosen due to its close proximity to a small urban center where facilities are theoretically most accessible.

Within Delhi, hotels, restaurants, and small factories were visited which were known by locals to have migrants from Uttarakhand working within them. Here, the objective was to target migrants who were not pursuing further education.

Time Frame

Primary was conducted between April 9th and May 2nd. Secondary research was undertaken two weeks prior to and one week after the study. Report writing was done from April 27th to May 9th.

Data Collection

Data collection was done primarily through interviews and focus group discussions. Phone and email interviews were conducted when meeting wasn’t possible, and the use of a descriptive survey was employed to collect data from school children in the 10th standard in Bhinak khal, the urban center for the targeted villages. A total of 39 students took the survey, with 19 girls and 20 boys. This made up one of three sections of the 10th standard at this school.

The descriptive surveys asked students to describe the general role of young males and females in the village. This was done to reveal pre-existing perspectives on gender roles in the village. Students were also asked to describe their aspirations for work in the future. Questions were written on a
blackboard and answers written on blank half sheets of paper. However, owing to uncertainty about their future aspirations, many students were unable to answer the questions, or gave partial answers.

The following table depicts the locations and targeted samples that data was collected from:

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<th>NGO Officials</th>
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Limitations

A study of this nature relies to a certain extent on people’s subjective perceptions. Several limitations are, therefore, inherent and could affect the validity of the conclusions. The following should be taken into account when assessing the results. First and foremost was the issue of time. Significant time was dedicated to building contacts, rapport, and reliable resources for translation and guidance, which limited the window for primary research. Thus, because many of the questions asked were often personal, it was difficult to get beyond surface level discussions on the issues in a quantitative manner. Secondly there was the classical issue of translation; in almost all interviews, the use of a translator was relied upon extensively. It also meant that my schedule was dependent on the translator’s schedule, which further reduced the window of primary research. Thirdly, due to the broadness of the issue of migration, research questions and methodology evolved constantly in the field as the topic was further understood. This limits the relevance of initial primary research to the final objectives of the study.
Traditional Hill Agricultural System in Uttarakhand

In order to more holistically understand the issues that are raised in this paper, a light introduction on the traditional agricultural hill system is provided:

Subsistence agriculture is the mainstay of the hill economy. Due to this fact, local communities are heavily dependent on land resources. This dependence is compounded by the fact that the availability of land suitable for agricultural is greatly limited. Numerous physical factors also have an adverse effect on land productivity, including the harsh climate, altitude, aspect, hill topography, and shallow soil. Considering these physical constraints, local communities have evolved diverse land use patterns to maximize outputs in this hostile environment. Main uses of land include forest land, usually located above the villages; grasslands, comprising rocky and steep slopes near the villages; land for settlement, usually on mid slopes; and land for cultivation, on mid and bottom slopes.

Agricultural practices were developed which involved the integration of crops, livestock, trees, and humans. Such practices frequently served to enhance the bio-diversity of an area. This holistic approach was recognized as inseparable and inter-connected. Forest biomass fertilizes the fields in the form of organic manure via livestock, as well as humus coming directly from rainwater runoff from the forests. Crop biomass is recycled into the fields through livestock and humans. The transfer of biomass from forest plants to cropland in the form of forest litter (usually pine needles or oak leaves) or manure

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3 Selected excerpts from Jain, A., Webster, S., Mathur, M., Das, N., & Barker, E. Traditional wisdom in natural resource management: the only way to conserve. Dehradun: Rural Litigation & Entitlement Kendra.
Terracing is an inherent feature of agriculture in Uttarakhand. A site selected for terracing is usually south facing. The ground is dug using a hoe and pickaxe and a loose retaining wall is built at the edge of the field. Terraces are irrigated where possible by diverting water from the nearby streams and springs through narrow channels (guhls). In the valley areas where sufficient irrigation is available, food grain production is more prevalent. The availability of water for irrigation determines the type of crops sown, so cultivated land has traditionally been divided into two categories: rain fed (ukhar) and irrigated (sera). Irrigated land is usually confined to river valleys at lower altitudes and sometimes mid-altitude areas, whereas cultivated land at higher altitudes is usually entirely rain-fed. Traditional systems receive water from smaller perennial streams, which descend down steep slopes to meet the main drainage. These can be tapped at various heights during the downward journey.

**Migration**

Migration in India is both a historical and present phenomenon. “People have always moved in search of work, in response to environmental shocks and stresses, to escape religious persecution and political conflict. However, improved communications, transport networks, conflicts over natural resources and new economic opportunities have created unprecedented levels of mobility” (Deshingkar & Akter, 2009). These new levels of mobility are evidenced by unfamiliar levels of migration to India; “In 2001, 309 million persons were migrants based on place of last residence, which constitute about 30%
of the total population of the country. This figure indicates an increase of around 37 percent from census 1991 which recorded 226 million migrants” (Center for Development Studies, 2007-2008).\(^5\)

Among the four types of domestic migration (rural-to-rural, rural-to-urban, urban-to-rural, and urban-to-urban), rural-to-rural migration was highest in 2001, accounting for 54.7% of total domestic migration (Mitra & Murayama, 2008).\(^6\) However, the share of rural-to-rural migration has declined over the past few decades, while that of rural-to-urban migration has gradually increased (from 16.5% in 1971 to 21.1% in 2001). Among the inter-state migrants, the majority (37.9%) migrate from rural to urban destinations (Mitra & Murayama, 2008). Additionally, there are more intra-state migrants than inter-state migrants. Female migrants account for the majority of migrants within India, accounting for approximately 60% of the migration flows. However, of these female migrants, virtually none of them have migrated for employment (Mitra & Murayama, 2008).

Within the more mountainous regions of the world, outmigration is rampant. “In the next decade, migration will continue to grow in the HKH and other mountain areas of the world, driven by the global financial crisis, food insecurity, climate change, globalization, and escalating income disparities” (Jain A., 2010).\(^7\) Development in Northern India has thus far been primarily concentrated in the plains of India, inspiring migrants to leave the geographically more inaccessible regions of India for cities in the plains. Thus, the most fertile land in India, the Indo-Gangetic plains, is the land being developed the most for non-agricultural purposes. As this outmigration occurs in the mountainous regions of the world, land is often abandoned in the process. Abandonment of agricultural land has been a commonly observed trend in rural mountain areas in many parts of the world since the 1940s (Walther

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1986; Garcia-Ruiz and Lasanta-Martinez 1990; Harden 1996; Kamada and Nakagoshi 1997; MacDonald et al 2000; Romero-Clacerrada and Perry 2004; Khanal, N. R., & Watanabe, T. 2006). Considering these trends, the state of Uttarakhand and indeed India itself may face food insecurity issues as fertile land is paved over in the plains and fertile land is abandoned in the mountains.

Migration in the Hindu Kush-Himalayan region is intra-regional (i.e., from remote rural locations to developed urban centres in the hills) as well as inter-regional (i.e., from the hill regions to the developed plains). Seasonal, rural-urban, and international migration are the predominant types of migration in Uttarakhand (Jain A. , 2010). According to the Census of India (2001), the number of migrants from Uttarakhand in 2001 was 3.07 million: 2.06 million women and 1.01 million men, with 55% being non-workers. The total population of the state in 2001 was 8,479,562. Female migrants mostly migrated for societal reasons; 66% for marriage and 19% moved with their families, with only 2% migrating for employment related reasons. Among male migrants, 39% moved for employment, 27% moved with their household, and 4% migrated for reasons related to education.  

More recent data shows a growth in similar these trends. Figure 1 depicts the decadal growth rates from 2001 to 2011. The Garhwal (Pauri Garhwal) and Almora districts witnessed negative rural population growth rates. Among the Tehri Garhwal and Rudrapraya districts, population growth was near zero, and among the Chamoli, Bageshwar, and Pithoragarh regions, growth rates were low. This is coupled with the rural population of Uttarakhand only increasing a total of 11.34 %, while the urban population increased a total of 41.86 %. Depopulation of the Garhwal and Almora districts and the significantly low population growth rates of other districts can only occur due to a movement of peoples. This conclusion is reached after considering that while child population growth rates have

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10 Ibid.
declined, they did not decline significantly enough to reduce population growth so dramatically.\textsuperscript{11} Given the respective growth rates of rural and urban populations, it can be safely concluded that much of the low population growth in the hills is the result of rural to urban migration. However, much of this migration cannot be accounted for with preliminary 2011 Census of India demographics since migrant flows are inter-state and international as well.

Within the rural regions of Tehri Garhwal district, similar trends to the other depopulating districts can be observed. However, the change is sex ratio is the most telling change within demographic information. While the child sex ratio declined from 927 females per 1000 males to 888 between 2001 and 2011, the total sex ratio increased, from 1049 to 1078.\textsuperscript{12} A simultaneous decrease in the amount of female to male children and increase in the amount of females to males can safely be interpreted as the result of a flow of males out of the district.

**Push and Pull Factors**

The classical method for reviewing factors which influence regional migration is by categorizing these factors into two broad categories; push factors and pull factors. Push factors are those local forces which compel an individual to migrate, while pull factors are those foreign forces which compel an individual to migrate. Typically, push factors induce migration due to a lack of livelihood opportunities locally, whereas pull factors induce migration due to a greater availability of livelihood opportunities elsewhere. However, I will demonstrate later in this paper that this dichotomy is insufficient to describe certain forces acting particularly upon youths.

**Push Factors**

One of the most prevalent push factors spoken about during interviews and focus group discussions were declining agricultural productivity and disillusionment with subsistence farming. “Our

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
fields are producing less than they used to,” said village elders in a focus group discussion. This is also affirmed strongly in other research done on migration from mountain regions (Khanal & Watanabe, 2006; Grau & Aide, 2007; Jain A. , 2010). Male youths in the 10th standard said during a descriptive survey also expressed this disillusionment; “Agriculture is not a financially sustainable option.”

However, within the context of declining agricultural productivity, the perception of high risk in agro-business was a frequently mentioned issue among both villagers and migrants. “Our village is at a higher altitude on the mountain, so it’s dependent completely on the rain. Agriculture was too risky, so our family left,” said one migrant business owner in Delhi. “There’s too much risk in agriculture, and our children are realizing this. If conditions are still bad when they’re older, I will also want them to leave,” said one father in Kapol village.

Village elders and local NGO workers also mentioned classical push factors related to shrinking land holdings due to the continued subdivisions of land within families. The marginalization of small land holdings as these land subdivisions scatter individual land holdings around the village was an observed and frequently mentioned issue. Another classical push factor observed was the shift in the joint family structure to the more nuclear family structure, as well as a change in the dynamics of the household as a result of absent family members who had migrated. Traditionally, joint families are better able to manage collective resources, such as cattle, due to the availability of labor (Jain A. , 2010).

Other push factors frequently mentioned often together was a lack of employment opportunities within the villages, lack of educational and medical facilities, and lack of infrastructural

13 Two elder village men, 60+, and one elder village woman, 60+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 9:30.
14 10th standard class section, descriptive survey, conducted in Bhinak khal Government Intermediate College, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 24, April, 2012, at 10:00.
16 Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand

development. “Currently we don’t have a good school system; schools are too far away and we cannot keep studying there; I did not even pass the 10th standard, nor could I find employment, so I left for Delhi,” said a recent migrant in Delhi. “Why would we leave the village if we could earn income in the village?” said two other young returning migrants visiting families.

Other factors affecting migration were mentioned in specific villages. One factor was a lack of water. In one village, while en route to an interview, a fight between women working in the field was witnessed over the scarcity of land. An uphill family had diverted most of the water from the local guhl in order to begin rice cultivation for transplantation, and downhill families were suffering the consequence of significantly less water. These same families mentioned in interviews that water scarcity was a factor driving people out of the village. Another migrant from Delhi mentioned water scarcity as the main reason his family left the village; “People had to leave their homes. We would love to live there, but there is not enough water.”

Disillusionment with local NGO efforts that had failed seemed to be an important issue when discussing factors influencing migration. In example, a local NGO had supported the cultivation of lemongrass in an unsuitable area, and this had led to an almost complete crop failure. In another instance, a new plow had been imported through the NGO but had come missing critical components such as bolts for assembly. “We asked the NGO to help us arrange for new bolts, and he refused. How could we find the right sized bolts? We didn’t know where they bought it from. What good have they

17 “Vicky,” 18, student and worker, interview, Eros Boulevard, New Delhi, 28, April, 2012, at 17:50.
18 Two young males, 22 and 21, interview, en route to Dhar and Kapol village area, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 11:30.
19 Dhar and Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 11:00.
20 Gopal Singh, elder male, interview, in his restaurant, New Delhi, 1, May, 2012, at 19:30.
done us? Just look for yourself,” said one man in focus group discussion. This disillusionment has a pushing effect on villagers who feel that efforts to relieve rural poverty aren’t working effectively.

Among youths, failure of the 10th standard proved to be another strong push factor. “When I failed the 10th standard examination in my village, I felt so ashamed that I left for Delhi to live with a relative,” said one young migrant who identified himself as a ‘runaway’ and who had been living in Delhi for two years. His uncle owned a small mess (café) where he worked for a year until he found work elsewhere in a tea and snack stall. “We couldn’t even pass the 10th standard, so we came to Delhi for work,” said two other migrants working in a television assembly factory in Delhi.

Pull Factors

The influence of migrants and returning migrants proved to be one of the most compelling pull factors. “My uncle who works abroad used to call me all the time and tell me to leave the village,” said one youth migrant in Delhi. “My brother helped arrange for the current job I have in a hotel his friend works at.” Migrants often act as the medium through which information about job opportunities in the cities reach youth (Jain A., 2010). In this sense, migrants are active networkers for other youths. “I’ve brought my cousin and childhood friend to the city while returning from spending the holidays in the village,” said one student migrant. Most migrants interviewed had helped at least one friend or relative move to the city.

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21 Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
22 Pankaj, 20, male, shopkeeper, interview, New Delhi, 1, May, 2012, at 15:00.
23 Danesh, 25, and Manoj, 30, males, focus group discussion, television assembly factory, New Dehi, 2, May, 2012, at 11:00.
24 “Vicky”, 18, male, student and worker, interview, Eros Boulevard, New Delhi, 28, April, 2012, at 17:50.
25 Ibid.
26 Pushpendra “Vicky” Bhandare, 26, male, interview, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), 17, April, at 13:00.
Youth perceptions about cities were also a major pull factor. “In the cities, all of the facilities are available, within walking distance” said one village youth who had never been to a city before. These perceptions were shaped by returning migrants who came back to villages were observed wearing new city clothing and were equipped with watches and the latest phone models. “They come here dressed nicely, showing off the life in the cities,” said one father in a focus group discussion. It was also clear that the media was playing a big role in shaping their perceptions of cities, as a growing number of households have acquired satellite television.

Another more alarming consensus from younger migrants interviewed was the wish to bring their families from the villages to the cities for better medical facilities. “I don’t want to keep my parents in the village for much longer. They’re getting older and they’ll need the facilities of the cities,” said the same migrant. One migrant father who still had children in the villages also wished to bring their children to the cities for better access to educational facilities. However, he felt that he didn’t make enough income for his family to live in Delhi, with a monthly income of only 5,500 Rs. “After a pregnancy in the village, the family wants better facilities for their children in terms of health and education,” said local NGO officials.

Outmigration of Youths; a Matter of Perspective

Throughout interviews with different groups, responses varied widely as to whether outmigration was an issue. Representatives from NGOs, development consultants, government officials, ....

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27 Mukesh Negi, 18, male, interview, Laysal Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 20, April, 2012, at 10:00.
28 Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
29 Ibid.
30 Manoj, 30, male, focus group discussion, television assembly factory, New Dehi, 2, May, 2012, at 11:00.
31 Uttarakhand Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas (ULIPH) Business Promoter and Awareness Officer, interview, (village excluded for anonymity), Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 11:00.
and village elders generally thought that it was a problem. However, rural youths, migrants, local leaders and the families of migrants generally thought that it wasn’t an issue. Additionally, opinions varied as to whether it was a voluntary and compulsory reaction to classical push and pull factors in Uttarakhand. This poses an issue in itself, for if the different parties involved in rural development perceive that they have different issues, they will also seek out separate and sometimes even conflicting solutions. SHGs (Self-help Groups) and CBOs (Community Based Organizations) will also face disinterest and dissatisfaction should business assistance be developed on these divergent perspectives, for community members may see the assistance as irrelevant or unproductive.

From the perspective of the government, outmigration is an issue. NREGA is a government scheme being implemented across India but particularly in states with high rates of outmigration and rural poverty. The rationale for the scheme is primarily based off census data, which shows that 71.9% of India’s population still resides in rural areas (2001 Census of India). Given that the majority of India’s poor also resides in rural areas, the NREGA (now called the MGNREGA) can be thought of as a policy to boost rural income, stabilize agricultural production and reduce the population pressure in urban areas through migration. Here, although not the only focus of the scheme, outmigration is a targeted issue due to the issues urban centers face because of massive population influxes.

“Of course the outmigration of youths is an issue,”32 said Pawan Kumar, CEO of the Uttarakhand Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas (ULIPH). The primary objective of ULIPH is to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in a sustainable manner through the promotion of improved livelihood opportunities and strengthening of local institutions that relate to livelihood development.33 The NGO explains their rationale for the project when it was first written;

32 Pawan Kumar, CEO of ULIPH, phone interview, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 17, April, 2012, at 14:30.
Traditionally, communities in these regions had evolved subsistence-oriented but stable agriculture and a diversified, livelihood strategy combining crop, livestock, and forestry along with resource recycling and collective sharing. In recent years, this equilibrium has been seriously disrupted and the virtually self-sufficient system has broken down due to the need to spread cultivation to marginal and forest lands, making food crop-based farming system unsustainable. Improved communications have also led to aspirations for vastly different lifestyles. The net result of this process has been a weakening of the sustainability of past survival systems and an accentuation of poverty.

Himalayan people are recognizing that out migration is not a viable solution to economic security and that opportunities for improved well-being must be found closer to home, in the mountains themselves. A growing tradition of cooperation through the Self-Help Group movement, especially among women, offers a strong foundation from which innovative initiatives can be launched.\textsuperscript{34}

The agricultural system here is explained as being “disrupted,” but a causal relationship is not established between improved communication and migration, and this “disruption.” Here, it is to be understood that the disruption did not come from an exogenous force, but from an endogenous one; it was the villagers who encroached upon land that they shouldn’t have which disrupted the sustainability of the system. Additionally, it is also understood that the NGO perceives out migration as an issue because it is seen as an ineffective way of addressing economic insecurity. They claim that the Himalayan people are recognizing this as an issue as well.

“Outmigration of youths is a huge problem,” said a business promoter and awareness officer for a local NGO. “For one, there is abandonment of land; the youths leave, then the families move with them, and then they never come back. We are also losing our culture as we move to the cities. Because of this, there is even a shortage of labor.”\textsuperscript{35} Another local NGO implementer commented shortly after the interview as well that he felt the same way. “For example, just in this village, 46% of the families have left,”\textsuperscript{36} he said. Here, the emphasis of the problem is placed on the abandonment of land and

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid.
\item Uttarakhand Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas (ULIPH) Business Promoter and Awareness Officer, interview, (village excluded for anonymity), Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 11:00.
\item Local NGO project implementer, interview, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 20, April, 2012, at 12:15.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand

culture. From this perspective, there is an inherent value placed on the loss of cultivated land and culture.

Additionally, there was a perception of a shortage of labor within the village from the perspective of these officials. This implies that they believe there are employment opportunities within the village, and that outmigration was a choice. The business promoter sarcastically said, “We should start hiring people from Nepal to do the work here.” I then mentioned to the business promoter that in a trip I had taken to the state of Sikkim, this had been a reality; many of the landlords had begun hiring Nepalese migrants to do much of the cultivation and maintenance of the land. He then replied, “I was just joking. We wouldn’t actually do this, because the Nepalese tend to use chemical fertilizers in the fields.” Ironically, I later found in the study that many of the villagers in that same village had been using chemical fertilizers for a number of years.

Village youths had a much different mentality about outmigration. Not only did they not see employment opportunities within the village, but they generally thought agricultural employment was a very insecure livelihood strategy. One village youth, Mukesh Negi, whose father had passed away two years ago, said “I have never felt secure about my livelihood or my father’s livelihood as a farmer. Now only my mother and I farm, and we feel even less secure than we did before. If I get an opportunity to work in the city, I will take it.” Here, outmigration is seen as less of choice and more of a last resort or solution to livelihood insecurity. Although his family had been affected by a social shock, he indicated several times throughout the interview that he felt insecure about his future since he was young.

Recently migrated youths furthering their studies in Dehradun had similar perspectives to Mukesh. “There are no jobs available in the villages. But here, we can get government jobs. I can make 20,000 rupees (400 USD) per month in Dehradun, but I would only make 5,000 rupees (100 USD) per

37 Mukesh Negi, 18, male, interview, Laysal Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 20, April, 2012, at 10:00.
month in the village. We can better support our families that way,” said one student. Here there is an even stronger perception of unemployment in the village. Outmigration is seen not as a problem but as a necessary duty to their families or themselves.

The family members of migrants often felt the same way. “The only problem with the migration of youths here is the forced nature of the process,” said one village elder in a focus group discussion. One young mother, when asked only about whether she thought migration was an issue, responded “What would my husband be able to do if he was here? He could put all his effort into the agriculture, and still we wouldn’t produce much more.” Here, the argument is more clearly an economic assessment. This young mother sees the marginal product of labor for her husband as being less than the forgone opportunity cost of having him work for wage in the city. This was clear upon seeing the home of this mother. They had recently begun constructing another room made from cement onto their old home, and they had a satellite mounted on their roof. Other families mentioned that they were able to use the money from migrants to send their children to private schools and for higher education, which was viewed as a long term investment in the family.

A senior village Panchayat was interviewed briefly while en route between two villages. He also gave his opinion on the matter. “Out migration is not only a necessary thing, but a good thing. The village populations have increased, and as a result land holdings have decreased. It is necessary that people leave. But in addition, because of the migrants, our villages are developing.”

38 Jagbeer Rawat, 25, male, interview, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 16, April, 2012, at 13:00.
39 Chatter Sing, 50+, Kishan Singh, 50+, and Gangali Devi, 50+, focus group discussion, Silori Bassar Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 20, April, 2012, at 11:00.
41 Senior village Panchayat, 60+, male, interview, en route between Laysal and Kapol villages, 21, April, 2012, at 15:00.
Village elders generally thought it was a problem. “One day, I think all this farm land will be abandoned. No one will be in the village, because the youth are not interested in farming. If they can get better income somewhere else, they just leave,” one elder said grimly. Almost all village elders interviewed were unsure about who would be the next farmer in the villages. “The great traditions of our ancestors are being forgotten.”

As a result of divergent perspectives on whether outmigration was an issue, disinterest in NGO efforts was often expressed by villagers; “We have plenty of ideas. For example, we have some land up on the hill where the soil and climate would be perfect for growing a lot of potatoes, but they [the local NGO] won’t provide the help for our ideas,” said one man in a focus group discussion. “We’ve heard of the NGO, but no one is interested in what they’re about. Not even the NGO workers seem interested,” said another village elder. Indeed, in a focus group discussion with an NGO business promoter and awareness officer, they agreed with this disconnect in interest. “We provide them all the tools and training they need, but they’re still not interested in the projects.”

“...I’ll have to think about it”

While interviewing youths, both residing in villages and those who had already migrated, about whether or not outmigration was an issue, there was often a lack of response or the question wasn’t directly answered. In example, when directly asked whether migration was a problem, one student at

42 Village elders, 2 males, 1 female, 65+, focus group discussion, Kherbhel Bassar Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 13:45.
43 Ibid.
44 Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
45 Two elder village men, 60+, and one elder village woman, 60+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 9:30.
46 Uttarakhand Livelihoods Improvement Project for the Himalayas (ULIPH) Business Promoter and Awareness Officer, interview, (village excluded for anonymity), Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 11:00.
47 “I’ll have to think about it...” was a frequent reaction from youths when asked whether or not they felt outmigration of youths was an issue.
Doon Library replied, “There is no employment or facilities in the villages. How would we survive?”

Two young returning migrants also responding to the same question said, “The soil in this village is poor and the agriculture is declining. We have to seek employment in the cities.” Their responses were typically worded such that they sounded like excuses. This may be a defensive reaction to the question, because had they affirmed that outmigration of youths was a problem, they would be the culprits. Additionally, it was found that the question was irrelevant for many youths because the reason they were out migrating was for their families.

A Traditional System in Transition

“The world is changing; how can we keep our ways?” – Recently migrated village youth in Delhi

Duty

During the study, it was often mentioned by others commenting on the reasons youths were migrating that it’s because today’s youth are generally less laborious and don’t have the same sense of duty to their ancestors. However, youths felt much differently. They claimed that they migrated for their own people, but in a less collective sense. This demonstrates that the concept of duty hasn’t become extinct in the next generation, but rather has transformed.

When discussing with village elders their own desires to migrate from the villages when they were young, they often replied that they sacrificed these desires for their families. “We felt responsible for carrying on the traditions of our ancestors. We sacrificed our want to get a ‘job’ in the city,” said one village elder. “However, today’s youth just leave as soon as there’s an opportunity.”

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48 Jagbeer Rawat, 25, male, interview, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 16, April, 2012, at 13:00.
49 “Vicky”, 18, male, interview, Eros Boulevard, New Delhi, 28, April, 2012, at 17:50.
50 Village elders, 2 males, 1 female, 65+, focus group discussion, Kherbhel Bassar Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 13:45.
51 Ibid.
identified that they felt a duty to a more collective body of people, and most often identified a duty to their village when expressing this desire to continue tradition. They saw their roles within the village as integral to its existence.

However, youths contended this. “I do have a duty to my village; I’d like to do social work there someday, particularly for the poorer children who were left behind. But my family told me they don’t need my help right now. They want me to focus on securing my own future. Of course, I will always stand by them when they need me,” said Devendra Pokhriyal, a young graduate waiting for his assignment letter from a paramilitary firm. This indicates that parents are actively shaping their children’s perception of their duties. Furthermore, the desires of their parents are more nuclear in nature. In the example with Devendra, his parents encouraged him to think individualistically and secure his own livelihood first. Other youths confirmed this “nuclearization” of duty. “We don’t have a duty to our village, at least not now, but we send whatever surplus money we make in the cities back to our families without them asking for it. Our family will always come first,” said two returning migrant youths walking along the village road. Here they acknowledge no collective duty to the village or ancestors, but a strong commitment to their families. “My friends and I are here to study so that we can open a government post in our village, because there currently aren’t many in Uttarakashi [District]. Then we can provide employment to our families and friends in the villages,” said another student studying for a government exam. Again, this emphasizes a strong sense of commitment to friends and family in villages, rather than a more collective duty to the village or ancestors.

Service sector employment, which is the objective of all migrants, requires a large investment of social capital in one’s self, mostly in the form of education beyond the 10th standard. For greater future

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52 Devendra Pokhriyal, 28, male, interview, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 17, April, 2012, at 14:00.
53 Two young males, 22 and 21, interview, en route to Dhar and Kapol village area, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 11:30.
54 Jagbeer Rawat, 25, student, interview, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 16, April, 2012, at 13:00.
security and income, more time is invested. This differs from the investment one makes in the village economy, where social capital is invested in one’s community for future security more so than the self. As village economies have integrated into larger regional, national, and even global economies, a more nuclear-focused approach to social capital investment has arisen to secure future livelihoods. Thus, parents and youths are responding to globalization not by abandoning their sense of duty, but by transforming it to meet the demands of a more nuclear oriented economy. Indeed, many still wish to continue the traditions of their ancestors; “We still gather to celebrate our festivals and traditions. We really enjoy these aspects of our traditions, and will continue them,” said two migrants in Delhi.

Left Behind; Female Aspirations and Constraints

The involvement of women in agriculture has been much more pronounced due to the constant migration of young males from the hills of Uttarakhand. In fact, Tehri, Pauri and Almora districts of the state have a trend of out migration since the 1870 due to the jobs created in the British Indian Army (Singh, O.P., 1990). The following excerpt from Chandra describes the situation well;

“A peculiar characteristic of hill agriculture—prevalent from Kashmir in the west to Arunachal in the east—is the important role assigned to women. In the difficult terrain no single economic activity can sustain the household. Typically, there is a ‘bask et’ of economic pursuits—cultivation, cattle rearing, outside employment, perhaps some trade—that requires the equal participation of women. Thus, the women of the house are also equal partners in the struggle to achieve economic security. Their labor is no way less valued than that of male members. They work equally with men in the fields, help them in looking after domestic animals and, of course, take physical care of husband and children. Except ploughing, a wife does virtually everything to help her husband in cultivation, which [elsewhere] are the men’s task” (Chandra, 1981).

55 Danesh, 25, and Manoj, 30, males, focus group discussion, television assembly factory, New Dehi, 2, May, 2012, at 11:00.
Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand

More recently, as these migration trends have increased, the workload has continued to shift onto women. “It tends to be highly gender-specific: typically it is men who leave their villages for varying degrees of time to engage in off-farm activities in neighboring hill towns or further afield in the plains while women remain behind to maintain homesteads and family farms” (Mehta, 2008)\textsuperscript{58}. The result of this gender-specific outmigration can be seen closely in Figure 2, which depicts rural sex ratios across the different districts of Uttarakhand.

One returning female migrant from Mumbai generally affirmed a feminization of agriculture. “It’s very beautiful, but the life of women is much harder here. The women work so much more than the men do. In the city, I can be more independent and develop my own personality. I can even work a job and climb up the economic ladder, which I couldn’t do here.”\textsuperscript{59} She indicated several times throughout the interview that while she generally enjoyed the village, she wouldn’t wish to live there due specifically to the social constraints women are facing. “I’m inspired by the culture of the cities, but I love my friends in the village. They don’t have greed in their minds.”\textsuperscript{60}

These sentiments were also found among female youths from the 10\textsuperscript{th} standard. While aspirations of female youths are aligning to male youths, they face constraints that males don’t. In a descriptive survey conducted with students of the 10\textsuperscript{th} standard in the Government Intermediate College in Bhinak khal town, many young females recognized the feminization of labor, and further more expressed opposition to the constraints they face. “We should be able to work service jobs as well.”\textsuperscript{61} One young male also expressed a similar sentiment to females, and said “men should help the women in


\textsuperscript{59} Sapna Negi, 19, student, female, interview, Silori Bassar Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 10:00.

\textsuperscript{60} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{61} 10\textsuperscript{th} standard class section, descriptive survey, conducted in Bhinak khal Government Intermediate College, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 24, April, 2012, at 10:00.
the fields more.\textsuperscript{62} However, another male described the role of females in the village differently; “The main role of agriculture of girls is to take care of agriculture”\textsuperscript{63}

These developing aspirations and calls for equality among youths are often denied by parents. Males are seen as more reliable investments, and village perceptions of the cities as dangerous prevent many female youths from out migrating. “We want to continue our studies, but our parents won’t allow us to. It’s also very costly for our parents,” said one girl in a focus group discussion about aspirations. This is also demonstrated by the divergence of literacy rates between males and females in Table 1. Male literacy rates for Tehri Garhwal are at 89.91%, where as female literacy rates are only at 61.77%.\textsuperscript{64}

**Not Enough Dung**

In the preliminary stages of the study, discussions were held with a social development consultant who had done extensive research on the consequences of migration. The following is an excerpt from the discussion that introduces the traditional family structure;

“The traditional joint family structure in the hill districts of Uttarakhand is two brothers living together with their wives. Women assist in all agricultural chores, with the exception of plowing, and take care of children and household duties. One brother manages the fields below the village, while the other manages the livestock. The livestock is taken to the steep grasslands and the forests above the villages for grazing. However, if just one brother leaves the system, the burden of work is greatly increased for others. The workload must be decreased, and due to the difficult nature of managing livestock, it is the first activity to be downsized.”\textsuperscript{65}

Among interviews and focus group discussions, it was found that most families were in the process of downsizing the amount of cattle they had. Elders were asked in villages to compare the amount of livestock they used to have in the past to how many they had in the present, and all agreed

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Anmol Jain, social development consultant, discussion on consequences of migration, Mussoorie Hill Station, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 15, April, 2012, at 13:00.
that the general numbers had decreased. “We used to have many more cattle in the past, including buffaloes. Now all we keep is enough cows for milk and plowing the fields.”⁶⁶ This affirms Jain’s assessment of the reason for declining livestock levels.

The downsizing in cattle has severe consequences for the traditional system. Traditional hill agricultural practices were developed which involved the integration of crops, livestock, trees, and humans (Jain, Webster, Mathur, Das, & Barker, 2005). The significant decline of cattle means that an integral component of soil revitalization from manure is harmed. This coincides with the frequently cited reason for declining agricultural productivity being the decline in soil fertility.

As this connection was understood, the issue was presented to farmers at the end of interviews to get their opinion on the matter. “This is definitely happening. However, it’s not just that they’re hard to manage. We need veterinary services to take care of our cattle when they get sick. Otherwise, it’s too risky. This village has already gotten rid of all its buffalo and we’re still looking to downsize the amount of cattle we have.”⁶⁷ In three out of five focus group discussions with elders, the issue of risk related to illness among was raised separately without priming.

In all cases, households that had downsized cattle significantly admitted that they had started supplementing manure for chemical fertilizers. “We’ve already started to use chemical fertilizers in the

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⁶⁶ Two elder village men, 60+, and one elder village woman, 60+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 9:30.

⁶⁷ Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
fields, mostly Urrea. We haven’t seen any results though; we’re just hopeful that it does something, because we have no other options.\textsuperscript{68} Despite even having awareness of the harms of using chemicals, some farmers still proceeded using them. “We know they’re harmful, but we also feel it is necessary. We’re trying to just use them scarcely,” said village elders in a focus group discussion.

As focus group discussions centered around the potential consequences of outmigration on agricultural productivity progressed, another issue was raised twice on separate occasions; increasing pest attacks from monkeys and wild boards. “Now, we’ve had to abandon much of our uphill land due to increasing attacks from monkeys and wild boars from the forest,”\textsuperscript{69} said one village elder. “But in the past, when we were still young men, we would sleep out in the fields in our little shelters on and scare away the wild boars and monkeys when we heard them, like this,” he said, pausing to make a loud shout. “Now we don’t have our youths doing that anymore.”\textsuperscript{70}

**The Factor that Pushes and Pulls**

*If it is true that people are always in search of ‘greener’ pastures, who is deciding what is greener?*

“Farming can be employment, but only if you have a surplus to sell and generate income,”\textsuperscript{71} said Sanjeev, a village youth eagerly awaiting his final exam results for a BA in English. He has returned to the village after a final semester at a college in a city in Uttar Pradesh, where he studies and works part time in the hotel industry. His family owns an apple orchard sponsored by a local NGO. However, he was not interested in the project. “Employment is something that has to suite my personality, and I am

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{69} Two elder village men, 60+, and one elder village woman, 60+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 9:30.
\textsuperscript{70} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{71} Sanjeev, 23, male, interview, Laysal Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 9:00.
an innovative person. I want to do something different, probably in business. I plan on moving to the city soon, and I don’t think I’ll back.”

This was found to be a typical response from village youths. “Agriculture is not enough; if it wasn’t for the migrants in our family, we wouldn’t even be able to continue our studies,” said another village youth in a focused group discussion. Between the four youths in the discussion, two of them had brothers who had out migrated to a foreign country after working in Delhi for a number of years. Each of the male youths also mentioned that their fathers mostly worked in the local government schemes as wage laborers. “We aren’t interested in doing what our parents are doing; we want to do something different.” All male youths interviewed during the study mentioned, to some varying degree, disillusionment with agriculture. This affirms prior research on the extent of youth disillusionment with agriculture (Pragmatix Research, 2009; Jain A., 2010).

However, although there is disillusionment expressed by these youths with agriculture, they also explicitly express a desire for a difference in livelihood between themselves and their parents. It is because Sanjeev identifies his personality as unfitting to his parent’s livelihood that he wishes to migrate. He sees a lack of space in agriculture for him to be innovative in. In other words, when he dreams of having a different life than his parents, he sees himself in a city rather than a village.

Village elders felt different. They often expressed that they thought innovation was an inherent part of farming. “I have so many ideas for our land, even about how to earn cash money,” said one elder man during a focus group discussion. During another focus group discussion, two men also said, “We have plenty of ideas. For example, we have some land up on the hill where the soil and climate

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72 Ibid.
73 Balbir Singh Bisht (main speaker), 21, male, Ashist Parmar, 18, male, Aruind Bisht, 18, male, and Anup Singh Kandari, 19, male, in Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 18:00.
74 Ibid.
75 Two elder village men, 60+, and one elder village woman, 60+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 9:30.
would be perfect for growing a lot of potatoes, but they [the local NGO] won’t provide the help for our ideas.”

This begs the question of what difference between these generations has caused agriculture to seem as having such limited scope for innovation. For one, a key historical difference between these generations has been the presence of a formalized education system. Although villagers will complain about the lack of educational facilities, compared to previous generations, access has increased substantially. Between only 2001 and 2011, average literacy rates in Tehri Garhwal increased from 66.73% to 77.10% (Table 1). To give a firsthand example, Sanjeev’s grandfather never went to school as a child, and his father only graduated the 10th standard. However, should he pass his examination, Sanjeev will have a BA in English and be the most educated member of his family.

Other villagers agreed with this trend. “The kids would go to school for half the day, and then play games like volley ball over here for the other half,” said one village elder, motioning to a flat area between a temple and a rusting earthquake shelter. “Before, children were supposed to help in the fields.” Here, it is clearly described how children are being socialized out of agriculture. Within the villages, many of the youths, particularly the males, are spending more time studying and doing other

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76 Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
78 Village elder male, 60+, shopkeeper and farmer, interview, village near Binak khal, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 23, April, 2012, at 11:30.
79 Ibid.
non-agricultural related activities afterschool, such as sports like cricket and volley ball which are popular in the hills. It was also a common site to see male children working roadside shops, tea stalls, and restaurants after school.

“Now, none of the youths are staying; they’re all seeking higher education in the other towns and cities. Many families have already left. There is banjar everywhere,” said the same village elder while showing us the banjar, or “fallow, unused land” in his village. Binak khal, a growing town near his village, has one of the most prestigious colleges in the region, as well as several schools for studying up to the 12th standard. Of all villages visited, his village also had the highest rates visual rates of outmigration of families, with vast sections of. This contradicts one of the most often cited reasons for outmigration of youths from villagers being the inaccessibility of educational facilities.

Recognizing this contradiction, other villagers identified that there was another issue related to education and outmigration. In a focus group discussion with village parents about outmigration of youths, one father of two young male adults concluded that, “It’s the education system itself; [the village youths] are getting educated, but not in the right things. They do not have the right mentality.”

Here, this parent is blaming the formal education system for the prominence of non-agricultural pursuits among village youths.

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80 Ibid.
81 Two village men, 40+, focus group discussion, Kapol Village, Bhillangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 19:00.
This father’s assessment of the reason for the prominence of non-agricultural pursuits among youths is well supported; “In the course of childhood and adolescence, an individual is exposed to learning experiences that are of potential career relevance. These experiences are reinforced by activities that create a sense of efficacy and expectations about performance, which in turn influence the development of interests, aspirations, and the identification of achievable goals” (Lent et al., 1994). Within the Indian context, this theory especially holds true. Studying beyond the 10th standard in India means that a child has to choose only one of three main “tracks” to pursue until graduation of the 12th standard; science, commerce, or the arts. Within these three tracks, perhaps science is the most related agriculture, although it does not place value and indeed may act to undermine traditional values of the hill agricultural system.

Furthermore, though there are some schools which exist for furthering education past the 12th standard in hill agriculture, there was no awareness about these opportunities among youths. “If there were such schools, I would have enrolled in them,” said one student when asked about whether he had an interest in studying hill agriculture at a local hill agricultural school. Out of the five students interviewed, none of them knew of any hill agricultural schools; “There are schools which study industrial agriculture in the plains, but I don’t think there are any for studying hill agriculture.”

Some of the most common forms of employment migrant youths from Uttarakhand pursue within the private sector is in the hotel and restaurant industries (Jain A., 2010). “Go into any hotels or restaurants in Delhi and you’ll find at least a few migrants from Uttarakhand,” said Pawan Kumar, CEO of ULIPH. Considering the case of the 12 year old boy running his own restaurant, this is certainly an activity that creates a sense of efficacy and expectations about performance. “One day, our uncles

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83 Pushpendra Bhandare, 27, male, student, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 16, April, 2012, at 14:30.
84 Jagbeer Rawat, 25, male, interview, Doon Library, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 16, April, 2012, at 13:00.
85 Pawan Kumar, CEO of ULIPH, phone interview, Dehradun (city), Uttarakhand, 17, April, 2012, at 14:30.
returning to the village from Orissa tasted some of the food we cooked at our stall in the village, and thought it was so good that he offered us both jobs as assistant chefs in his hotel,” 86 said two young male migrants returning to their village for holidays. This also shows that the network through which male youths find employment directs youths towards cities, and in particular into the hotel and restaurant sector.

Returning migrants also take an active role in shaping the aspirations of youths. In one instance, a returning migrant from Russia had been visiting his village for several weeks prior to the study. Youths interviewed in this village often mentioned specifically a wish to leave the country for work; “I dream of spending time abroad in a foreign country for working, probably in some European country or Russia,” 87 said one youth from the same village. They also slant the process through which youths identify achievable employment goals in the favor of cities, not only indirectly through modeling city life, but also from direct pressure; “My uncle who works abroad used to call me all the time and tell me to leave the village,” 88 said one young migrant in Delhi.

Teachers may also play a critical role in shaping the aspirations of youth, as they are not only the authoritative source through which youths learn about the world outside their villages, but also one of the only sources of contact with service sector jobs youths encounter within their own village. This is demonstrated by the desire of many youths in the 10th standard section which took the descriptive survey to become teachers; “I’d like to be a teacher when I’m older,” 89 said one young male student.

86 Two young males, 22 and 21, interview, en route to Dhar and Kapol village area, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 11:30.
87 Sanjeev, 23, male, interview, Laysal Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 9:00.
88 “Vicky”, 18, male, student and worker, interview, Eros Boulevard, New Delhi, 28, April, 2012, at 17:50.
89 10th standard class section, descriptive survey, conducted in Bhinak khal Government Intermediate College, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 24, April, 2012, at 10:00.
“Even I remember wanting to be a teacher when I was young,” said Anmol Jain, a social development consultant.

**Conclusions and Way Forward**

Many classical push and pull factors from prior research was affirmed in the study. However, the study unearthed several new factors. For one, water was found to be a recurrent issue throughout villages in Tehri Garhwal. Second, the perception of risk in agriculture was found to be stronger in respondents than in previous research. Reducing risk factors may be a powerful strategy to reducing disillusionment with agriculture. Third, disillusionment with failed NGO projects was often brought up in discussions about push factors on youths. Local NGO organizers could reduce such disillusionment significantly by reflecting on these failures with villagers involved in the process. This may also serve to increase awareness about and restore faith in local NGO organizers should they give villagers more direct channels through which they can become a part of the discussion on rural development. Fourth, failure of the 10th standard proved to be a push factor for many migrants particularly working in unskilled sectors. Increased awareness about this push factor among schools could serve to reduce the instances of “running away” among students. Fifth, the consensus among parents and migrants to bring the whole families to the cities is becoming a strong pull factor. This is particularly alarming, because prior cycles of youths migrating and then returning to the village to farm in retirement will be broken as newer generations are socialized only into city environments.

As demonstrated, perspectives on the outmigration of youths are different, and consequentially NGOs and government policy makers have sought out solutions to outmigration based on the perspective that it is an issue. However, it was found that many villagers are noticing the benefits of

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90 Anmol Jain, social development consultant, discussion on consequences of migration, Mussoorie Hill Station, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, 15, April, 2012, at 13:00.
migration more so than the potential consequences. Additionally, many village youths and parents still saw outmigration as a solution to economic insecurity. Thus, unless the different groups involved in rural development see outmigration as an issue in the same light, community based organizations and self-help group efforts will face disinterest as they will seem irrelevant to villagers. Parents and migrants may even work directly against NGO efforts due to this disinterest and lack of faith in local NGO organizers.

Although many believed the concept of duty among youths to be extinct, it has not disappeared, but rather it has transformed in order to meet the new challenges the increasingly more nuclear family structures are facing. NGOs and policy makers should recognize these changing duties, and through acknowledging them, use them to their advantage. Directly confronting youths about how the traditions of their ancestors are becoming extinct because of their decisions to leave the villages will not be received well because they do not access what youth’s consider more relevant and pressing issues. However, confronting issues of related to the security, health, and well-being of village families will be better received because they fall in line with the more nuclear-oriented concerns of youths.

At the end of many of my interviews with youths, particularly in Dehradun, I would often suggest some of the ways in which others had suggested outmigration of youths was a problem. Towards the end of my study, while I was conducting follow up interviews, I found that when asked the same question again, they replied differently than the first time. “Because people are leaving the villages for the plains, agricultural productivity is declining in the hills. Eventually, the hill regions may be completely dependent on food from the plains regions if this continues,” said one student. They had adapted the rhetoric of a development consultant I had spoken to a week prior to interviews. This suggests that the opinions of youths, particularly out migrated youths seeking to further education,
remain flexible in their outlook on the consequences of the outmigration of youth. Engaging these youths more directly with the academic issues of rural development would prove rewarding.

It was also revealed through focus group discussions and interviews that migrated youths seeking to further education had strong tendencies towards social work; “One day, I would like to return to the village and help educate the poorer youths, work on environmental issues, and neat and clean the villages, but I have to find employment now” said one student. However, due to a lack of avenues to realize these tendencies, youths are still pursuing city oriented careers for mostly private and government sector employment.

The aspirations of female youths were also found to be aligning to those of male youths. However, due to the social constraints females faced, virtually none of them are realizing those aspirations. Some female students from the 10th standard in a Government Intermediate College held an active stance against these constraints. It is clear that female youths are facing large issues of inequality as a result of the favoring of male for outmigration. Significant future research must be done in this regard.

The outmigration of youths was found to have negative impacts on agricultural productivity indirectly. Traditional hill agricultural practices were developed which involved the integration of crops, livestock, trees, and humans. Due to a recent decline in cattle, associated with a shortage of labour and risk factors in livestock, there is decline in manure for the soil. This decline is being substituted by chemical fertilizers, which have further negative consequences, particularly for fragile mountain ecosystems and lower altitude villages who receive runoff from higher altitude villages. Additionally, increasing pest attacks from monkeys and wild boars were found to be the result of male youths not

\footnote{Ibid.}
practicing traditional methods of protecting crops. This was found to be a justification for families to abandon marginalized fields that were too far to protect from their homes.

The interests, aspirations, and identification of achievable goals of youths are evolving in an environment slanted towards cities. Youths feel that staying in the village is becoming more impossible, and that the cost of forgoing the opportunity to work in the cities is becoming too great. Their personalities are developing in such a way that they can no longer connect themselves with agriculture or the traditions of their ancestors. Their aspirations now seem only possible in cities. Thus, the dreams of youth do not fit in to the dichotomy of “push and pull” factors; rather, they are more akin to boulders on a steep mountain slope, in which the moment they are dislodged by some foreign force and begin moving, the laws of nature direct them towards the plains in the valley.

Should village communities wish to retain the aspirations and dreams of youths in the village, the authority through which they are shaped must be reclaimed by them. The curriculum of formal education systems must be developed with the values of traditional hill agriculture in mind. This can be done by opening dialogue between curriculum creators, teachers, and village communities. Education institutions must recognize their power in shaping these aspirations and dreams, and make an equal effort to reach out to communities. Additionally, these village communities should confront and involve migrants in the discussion of retention of youths, for they are passive and active shapers of youth aspirations as well. Awareness about issues migrants face and the realities of cities, such as real costs of living and access to facilities, should be promoted. Opportunities and awareness about opportunities for furthering education in hill agriculture would prove rewarding. Aspiring student youths often expressed a strong desire to stay within their village, and acknowledged that they would have were there more educational opportunities to do so.
Recommendations for Further Study

Because the broad issue of migration was explored during this study, many particular issues arose during the study that justifies further qualitative research. Foremost, gender issues arose as the negative consequences of outmigration were explored. When examining the particular causes for shifting aspirations of youths, education was found to be the most significant factor. However, the process through which education shifts these aspirations needs to be expanded upon, for the power dynamics at play were only lightly discussed in this paper. Additionally, the emergence of the village economy into the vast regional, national, and global economic network is having profound social effects on the communities. These need to be examined carefully, as marketing schemes travel through villages at amazing speeds. Throughout the study, it was also found that the food preferences of villagers are shifting dramatically. In example, most villagers interviewed mentioned that they prefer the imported, finely ground flour to their own flour whole grain flour. This may have severe consequences for not only the nutrition of villagers, who are now cooking with foods that are largely foreign to them, but also the biodiversity of wheat varieties they grow.

First and foremost, there is one particular issue that needs to be addressed. During the trips between villages and the small urban centers, I encountered numerous migrant child laborers from Nepal. As outmigration from Uttarakhand occurs, many families are deciding to hire Nepalese migrants to cultivate their fields. Because of issues of class registration, migrant children are often not sent to school by these parents, but rather sent to these small urban centers to work wage labor jobs. The jobs they work are menial and do not provide training of any kind, such as a child laborer working on motorcycles would in the plains. This process of Nepalese families migrating to the rural hill districts of Uttarakhand needs to be examined, as the consequences for children in particular could be severe.
Appendix 1: 2011 to 2001 Census of Districts and State of Uttarakhand

### Table 1: 2011 to 2001 Census of Tehri Garhwal District Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Actual Population</td>
<td>616,409</td>
<td>604,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>296,604</td>
<td>295,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>319,805</td>
<td>309,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth</td>
<td>1.93%</td>
<td>16.24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area Sq. Km</td>
<td>4,085</td>
<td>4,085</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density/km²</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion to Uttarakhand Population</td>
<td>6.09%</td>
<td>7.12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio (Per 1000)</td>
<td>1078</td>
<td>1049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>888</td>
<td>927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Literacy</td>
<td>75.10</td>
<td>66.73</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male Literacy</td>
<td>89.91</td>
<td>85.33</td>
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<td>Female Literacy</td>
<td>61.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Child Population (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>82,422</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male Population (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>43,667</td>
<td>51,116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Population (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>38,755</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literates</td>
<td>401,040</td>
<td>337,816</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male Literates</td>
<td>227,423</td>
<td>208,251</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Literates</td>
<td>173,617</td>
<td>129,565</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Proportion (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>13.37%</td>
<td>16.29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys Proportion (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>14.72%</td>
<td>17.32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls Proportion (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>15.31%</td>
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### Table 2: 2011 Census of Tehri Garhwal District Rural to Urban Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (%)</td>
<td>88.63 %</td>
<td>11.37 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>546,354</td>
<td>70,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Population</td>
<td>258,038</td>
<td>38,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Population</td>
<td>288,316</td>
<td>31,489</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>1117</td>
<td>816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Sex Ratio (0-6)</td>
<td>894</td>
<td>830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Population (0-6)</td>
<td>74,632</td>
<td>7,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Child(0-6)</td>
<td>39,410</td>
<td>4,257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Child(0-6)</td>
<td>35,222</td>
<td>3,533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Outmigration of Youths from Rural Uttarakhand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Percentage (0-6)</td>
<td>13.66 %</td>
<td>11.12 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Child Percentage</td>
<td>15.27 %</td>
<td>11.04 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Child Percentage</td>
<td>12.22 %</td>
<td>11.22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literates</td>
<td>346,248</td>
<td>54,792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Literates</td>
<td>195,465</td>
<td>31,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Literates</td>
<td>150,783</td>
<td>22,834</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average Literacy</td>
<td>73.40 %</td>
<td>88.00 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male Literacy</td>
<td>89.41 %</td>
<td>93.15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Literacy</td>
<td>59.58 %</td>
<td>81.68 %</td>
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</table>

Table 3: 2011 to 2001 Census of Uttarakhand Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2001</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approximate Population</td>
<td>1.01 Crore</td>
<td>84.89 Lakh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Population</td>
<td>10,116,752</td>
<td>8,489,349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5,154,178</td>
<td>4,325,924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4,962,574</td>
<td>4,163,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population Growth</td>
<td>19.17%</td>
<td>19.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of total Population</td>
<td>0.84%</td>
<td>0.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex Ratio</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Sex Ratio</td>
<td>886</td>
<td>967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density/km2</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Density/mi2</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area km2</td>
<td>53,483</td>
<td>53,483</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Area mi2</td>
<td>20,650</td>
<td>20,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Child Population (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>1,328,844</td>
<td>1,360,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Population (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>704,769</td>
<td>712,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Population (0-6 Age)</td>
<td>624,075</td>
<td>647,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>79.63 %</td>
<td>71.62 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Literacy</td>
<td>88.33 %</td>
<td>81.02 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Literacy</td>
<td>70.70 %</td>
<td>63.36 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Literate</td>
<td>6,997,433</td>
<td>5,105,782</td>
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<tr>
<td>Male Literate</td>
<td>3,930,174</td>
<td>3,008,875</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female Literate</td>
<td>3,067,259</td>
<td>2,096,907</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix 2: Themed District Maps of Uttarakhand

Figure 1: Decadal Growth Rate of Rural Population 2001-2011
Figure 2: Rural Sex Ratio 2011
Bibliography

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Amrita, 33, and Rameshwari, 30+, en route to Kherbhel Bassar Village, Bilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 22, April, 2012, at 15:00.

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Pankaj, 20, male, shopkeeper, interview, New Delhi, 1, May, 2012, at 15:00.

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Sanjeev, 23, male, interview, Laysal Village, Bhilangna Block, Tehri Garhwal District, Uttarakhand, 21, April, 2012, at 9:00.

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