

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Submitted by

Participating Institute



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BASELINE HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

Baseline household surveys of the adopted villages were conducted by the UBA volunteers. The collected data provided the information on demographics, such as household size, age distribution, and family structure, as well as socioeconomic factors like income sources, expenditure patterns, and asset ownership. The survey also furnished the data on housing conditions, access to basic infrastructure like clean water, sanitation, and electricity, and the availability of healthcare and educational services. Additionally, the agricultural practices, land ownership, and livelihoods patterns were also assessed. Social aspects such as community engagement, trust, and access to social services were also explored during the survey. The data gathered from such surveys establishes a baseline, which serves as a reference point for evaluating the impact and effectiveness of future interventions or development projects.

1. Glimpses of Household Survey of Village Pandah under UBA, Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry

The UBA cell volunteers and NSS volunteers conducted household survey of Village Pandah under the guidance of Pradhan Smt Poonam Devi, ward member Sh Om Prakash and UBA nodal officer Dr Yasmin Janjhua and NSS programme officers Dr Rashmi Chaudhary and Dr Rohit Verma on 25th February 2024. The students got an opportunity to interact with the villagers and became aware of the household systems and demographics of the village, the level of awareness among the farmers related to the government schemes. The students also learned the skills of problem solving, team work, initiativeness, listening, empathy, etc.





2. Glimpses of Baseline Household Survey and Farmers Scientist Interaction Meet with adopted villages Dadhog and Dawsli under UBA, Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry

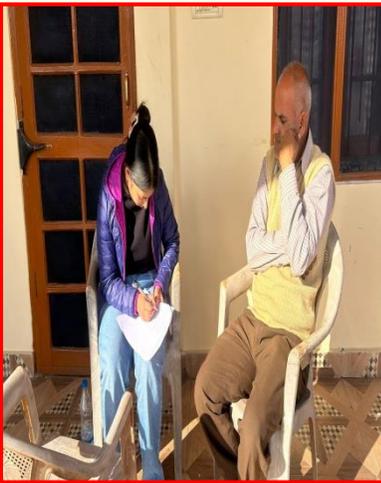
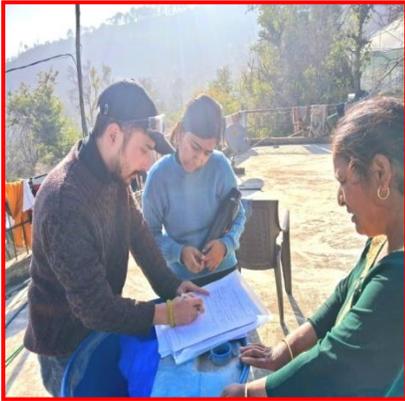
The Baseline Household survey was conducted on 6th June 2024 by the UBA volunteers and Rural Awareness Work Experience Students of BSc (Hons) Horticulture 4th year in village panchayat Padag. The Village Pradhan Mrs Meera Devi was also present. The UBA Nodal officer Dr Meera Thakur and RAWE Nodal officers Dr Seema Thakur, Dr Arti Shukla and Dr Anurag Sharma were present. The students actively interacted with villagers in the farmer scientist interaction meet and got the information filled. During the meet the farmers were made aware of the newer and sustainable farming systems by the scientists, the farmers also discussed their problems with the scientists. The students were also apprised of the cropping patterns and the farming practices being adopted by the farmers of these villages and the problems being faced by the farmers during cultivation. The Pradhan of the village Mrs Meera Devi provided full support and cooperation in organising the meet and in household survey.



3. Glimpses of Household Survey of Village Kotla Panjola under UBA, Dr YS Parmar University of Horticulture & Forestry

The UBA Members and NSS volunteers conducted the baseline household survey of the adopted village Kotla Panjola. The Pradhan of the village Sh. Mahendra actively participated and supported the team during data collection. The UBA nodal officer Dr Yasmin Janjhua, NSS Programme Officers Dr Meenu Gupta, Dr Anita, Dr Chandresh and Dr Rohit Verma.





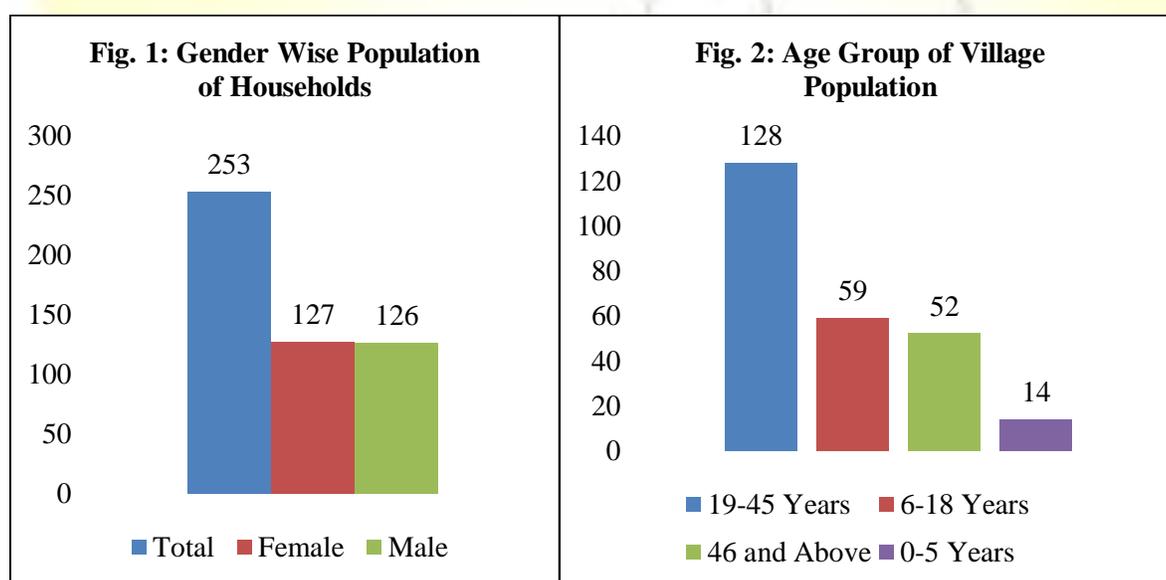
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Findings of Baseline Household survey of Pandoh Village

A general household survey has been conducted in Pandoh Village, Himachal Pradesh, as part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan initiative, located in Ward 3 of the Gram Panchayat Oachghat, in the Solan district of Himachal Pradesh. This survey aims to collect data on various aspects of village, such as demographics, socio-economic conditions etc.,

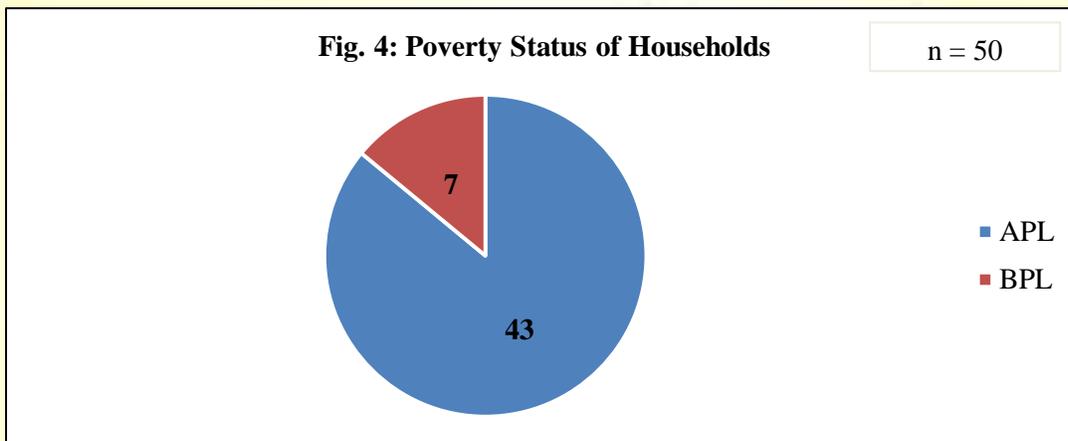
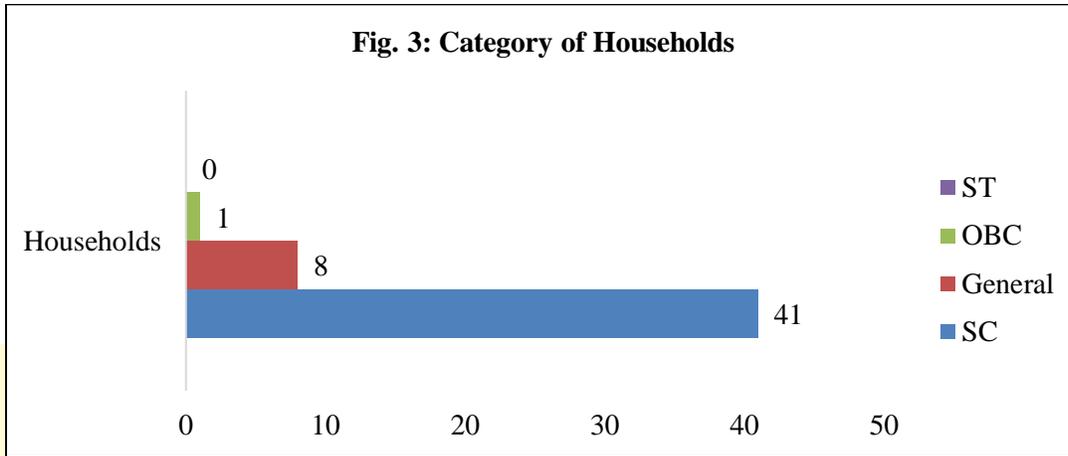
a. Gender Wise Population of Households - The survey of 50 households had been conducted, representing a total population of 253 individuals. There was an equal proportion between male and female in these families, with 126 males and 127 females. In terms of age distribution, a majority of respondents—128 people in all—were in the 19–45 age range.

b. Age Group of Village Population - Furthermore, the survey data revealed a wide age demography, with numbers of infants aged 0-5 years (14 individuals), teenagers aged 6-18 years (59 individuals), and individuals aged 46 and above (52 individuals), as represented in the graphs (Fig. 1 & 2) below.

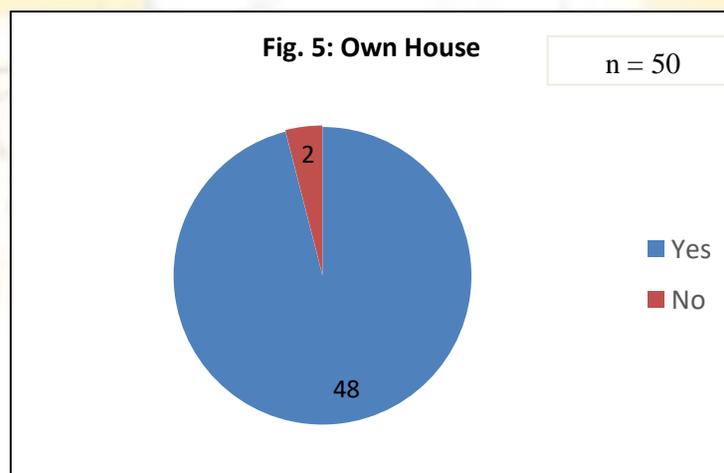


c. Category of Households -The socio-economic distribution among households shows that apredominance of Scheduled Caste (SC) population, with 41 households. There are 8 General households and 1 Other Backward Classes (OBC) household, while no households belong to the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category (Fig. 3).

d. Poverty Status of Households - In terms of poverty status, 43 households are Above Poverty Line (APL), while 7 households fall Below Poverty Line (BPL) (Fig. 4).

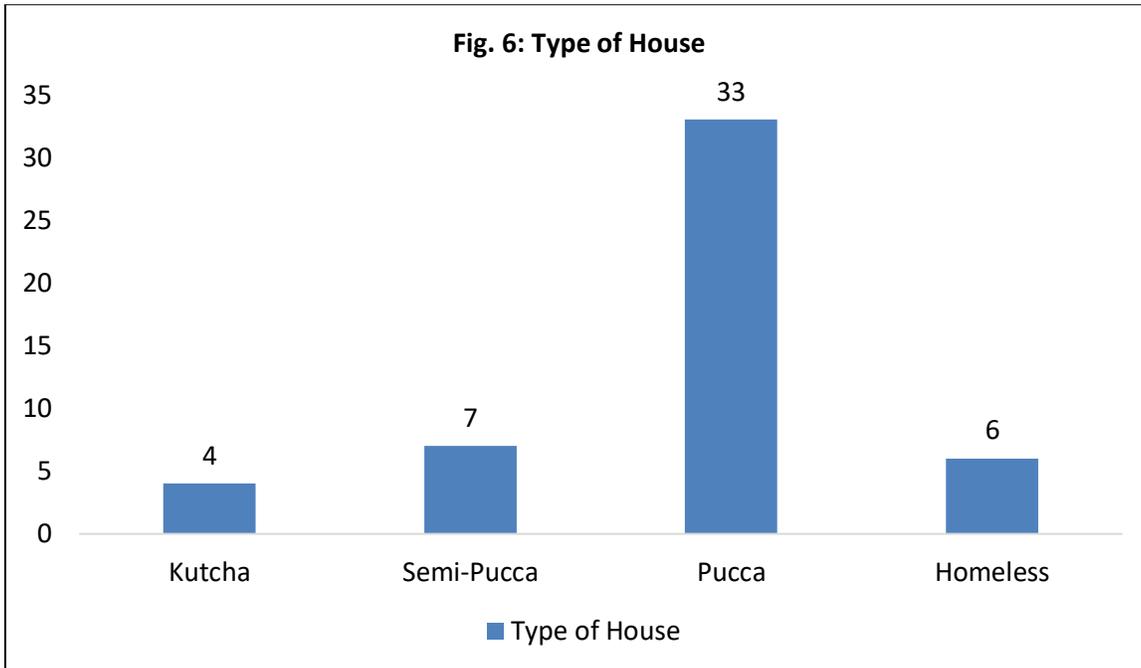


- e. **Own House** -In the sample of 50 respondents, the majority that is 48 respondents (96%) own their own houses, while a very small minority that is 2 respondents (4%) do not own their houses. This indicates a high rate of ownership within this specific group (Fig. 5).

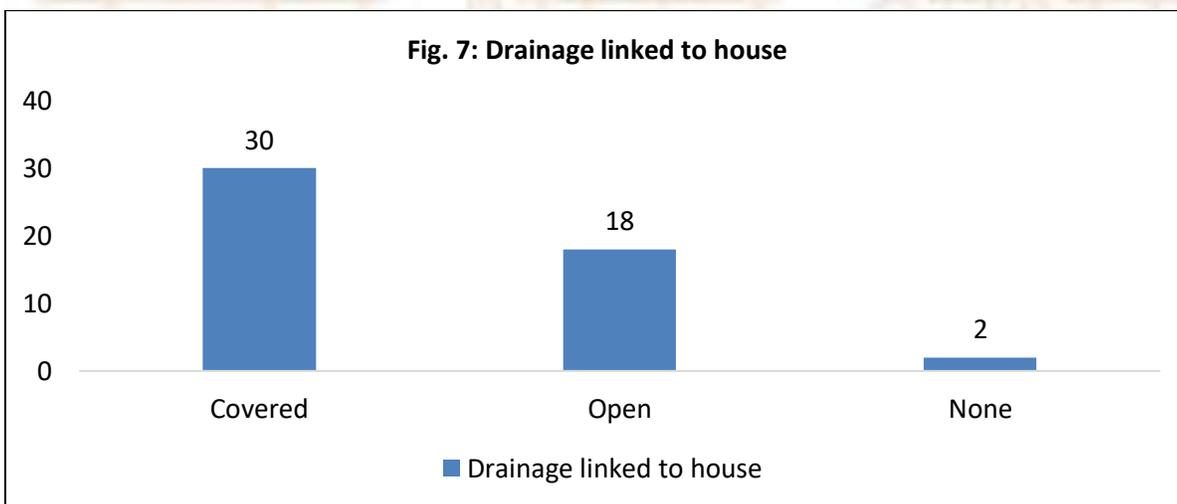


- f. **Type of House** - In the sample of 50 respondents, the majority (4) live in pucca houses, indicating a relatively high standard of housing. A smaller proportion of respondents (7)live in semi-puccahouses, which suggests

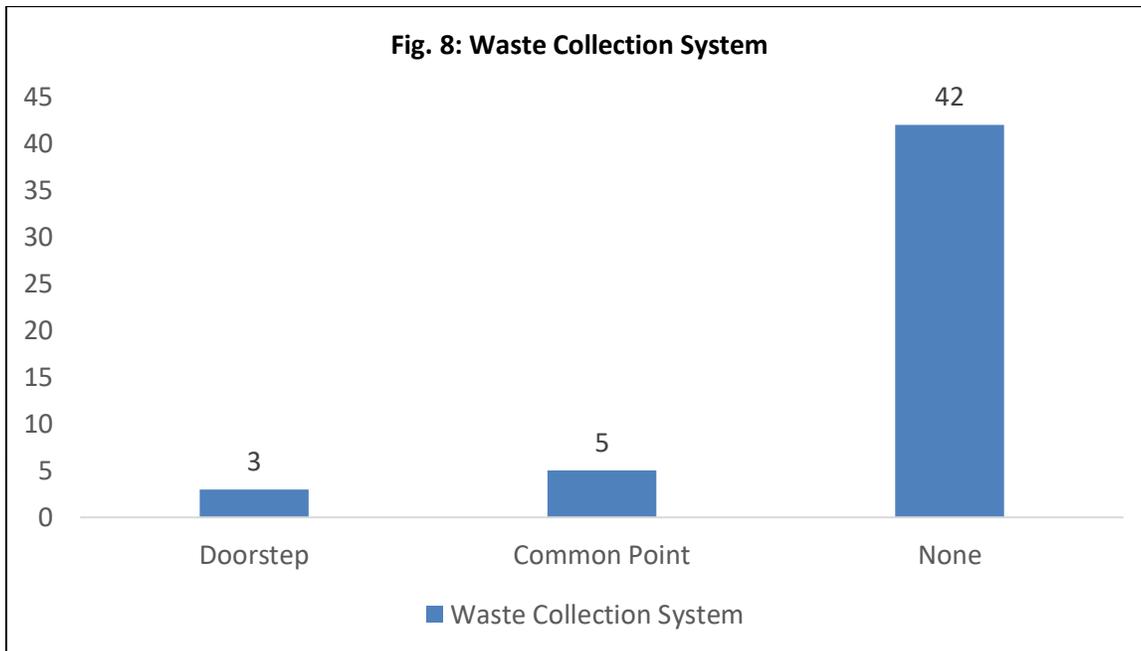
varying levels of housing quality among the respondents. A notable minority (6) of the respondents are homeless, highlighting a segment of the population that lacks stable housing.



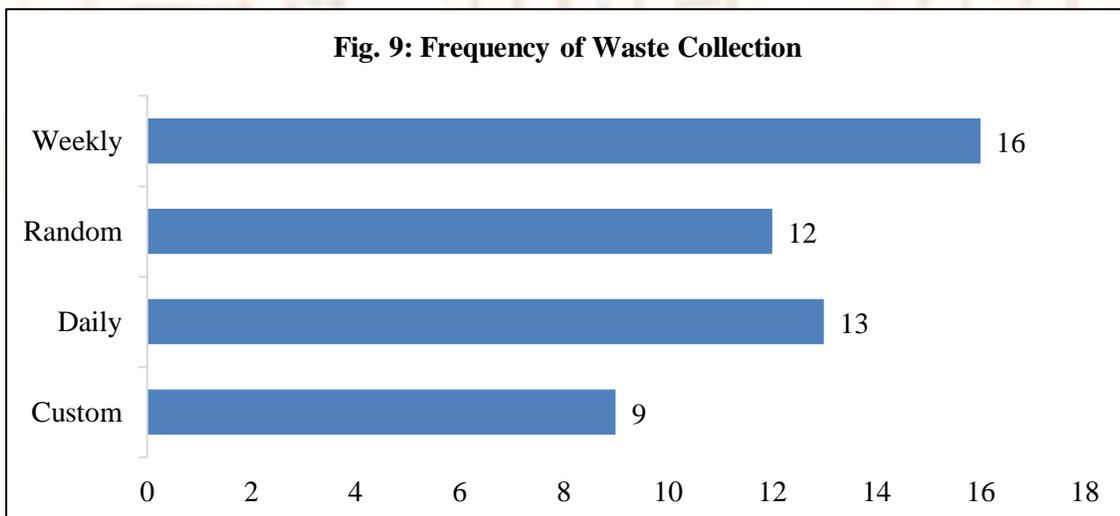
- g. Toilet** - In this sample of 50 respondents, nearly all individuals (49) have access to private toilets, while a very small minority (1) practice open defecation. This indicates a very high level of access to private sanitation facilities among the respondents, suggesting good sanitation infrastructure and possibly higher standards of living within this group.
- h. Drainage** - In the sample of 50 respondents, the majority (30) have covered drainage system linked to the house, while significant portion (18) still rely on open drainage, and a very small minority (2) lack any drainage system linked to the house (Fig. 7).

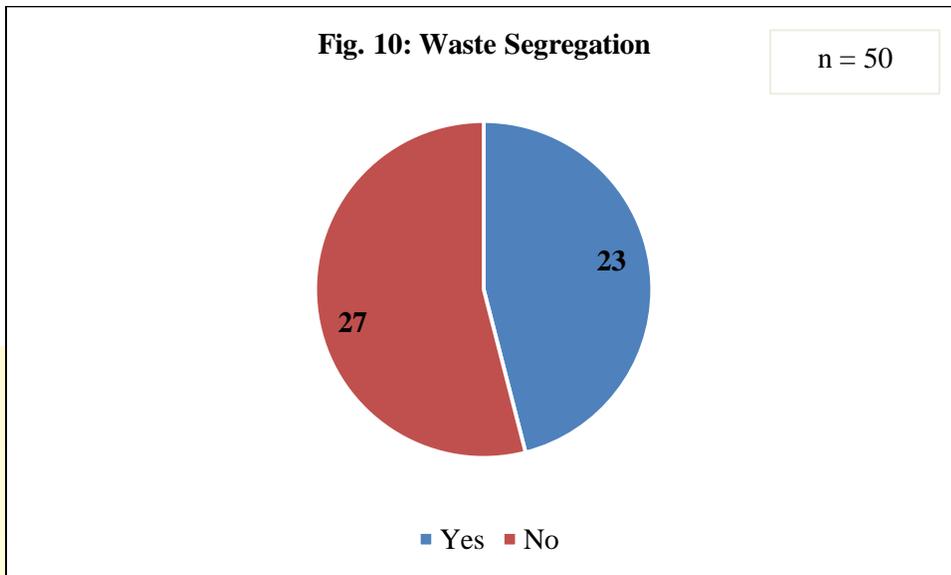


- i. Waste collection system** - In the sample of 50 respondents, the majority (42) do not have any formal waste collection system. A smaller portion of the respondents (5) have a common point collection system, and an even smaller segment (3) have a doorstep collection system(Fig. 8).



- j. Compost pit**-In the sample of 50 respondents, the distribution of having an individual compost pit is evenly split. Half of the respondents (25) have individual compost pits, while the other half (25) do not.
- k. Biogas plant**- In the sample of 50 respondents, the vast majority (48) do not have access to any biogas plant, while a very small fraction (1) has an individual biogas plant and another small fraction (1) has access to a community biogas plant.
- l.** Frequencies at which waste is collected, with a considerable proportion of households choosing weekly collecting schedules (Fig. 9). In terms of waste segregation, while the majority of families (n = 23) do segregate, many of them (n = 27) do not (Fig. 10).





m. Migration status - In the sample of 50 respondents, the vast majority (42) did not migrate from their hometown for work, while a very small fraction (8) migrates for work where 1-2 members of the household migrate either every day or 2-3 days or in a span of 15 days.

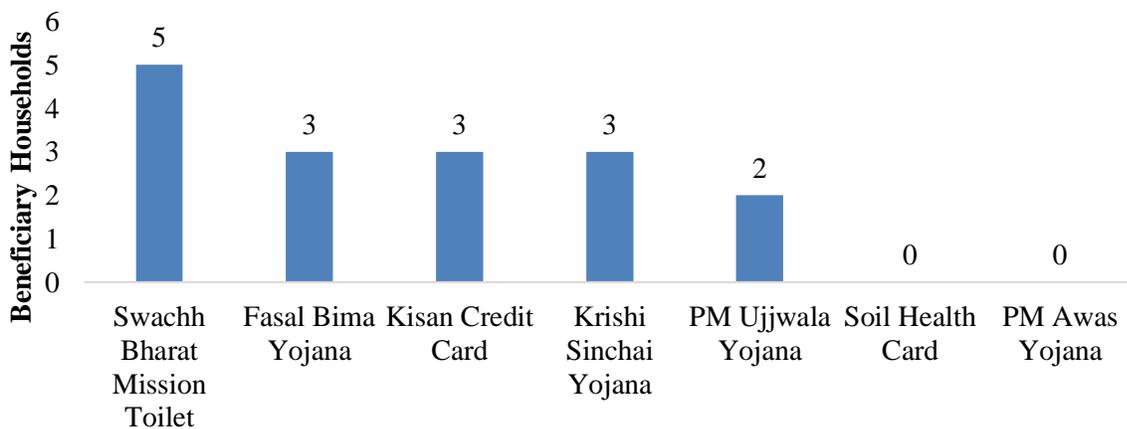
n. Information on Government Schemes

- With the number of surveyed households with a total population of 253 of these households, only a negligible number are individuals are benefitted i.e., 36 individuals or are aware of these schemes as represented in graph below (Fig. 11). Additionally, the number of beneficiary households is also very less i.e., 16 of the mentioned schemes as shown in the graph (Fig. 12).
- This suggest that there is a need to focus on improving the accessibility and awareness of these schemes, and making sure they are implemented well in order to have the maximum possible beneficial impacts on their socio-economic development.

Fig. 11: Information of Government Schemes

es
14
12

Fig. 12: Information of Government Schemes



Government Schemes

o. Source of water

- In a survey of 50 people, almost everyone (49 out of 50) had piped water, with only one person lacking it. Government or PHE supplied water to 34 respondents, while 16 did not receive water this way.
 - Community water was a source for 19 people, but 31 didn't use it. Most participants (46) didn't rely on hand pumps, with just 4 using them.
 - Similarly, 46 respondents did not use open wells, whereas 4 did.
 - Lastly, 42 respondents stored water individually, and only 8 used community storage methods.

p. Problems Identified - The Villagers were surveyed regarding the main difficulties they face, and the following list (Table 1) outlines the major problems reported by them-

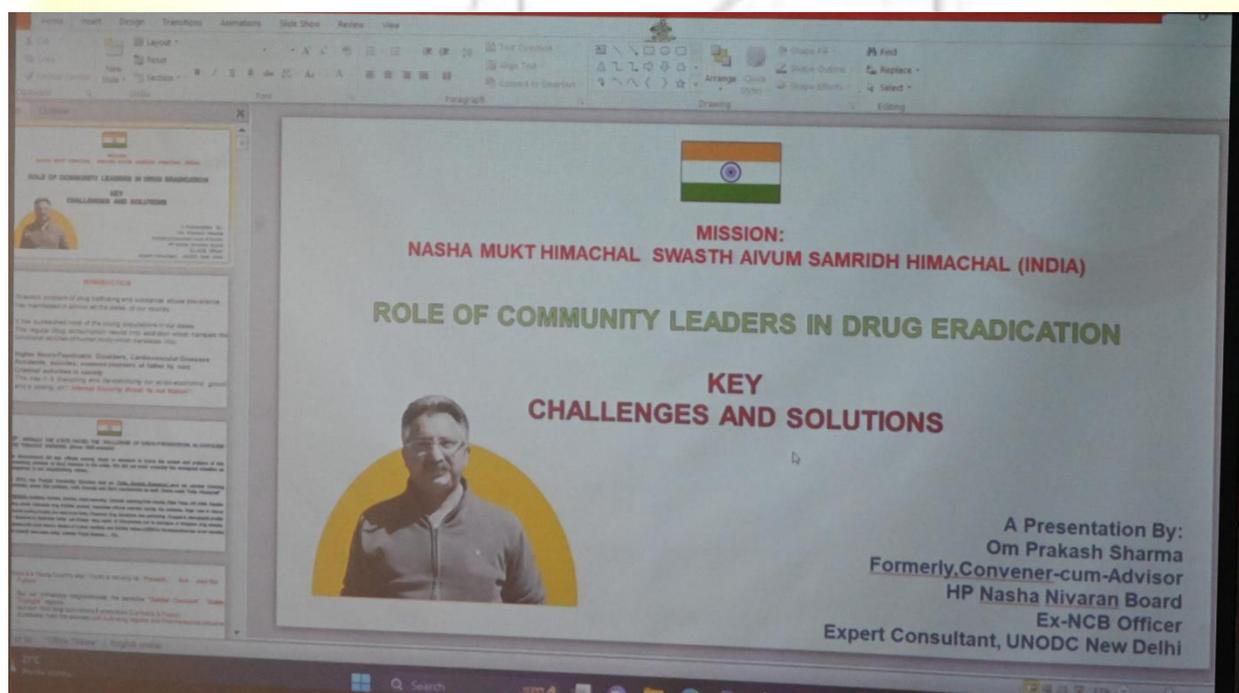
Problem	Number of Households
Water Scarcity	11
Road Facilities	10
Irrigation	5
Road Connectivity	5
Waste Collection/Waste Management	5
Firewood Problem	3
Transportation	3
No Awareness of Schemes	3
Market	1
Education	1
Lack of Knowledge in Agriculture	1
Grazing Animals	1
Wild Creatures	1

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WORKSHOPS/TRAININGS/CAMPAIGNS

Sensitization and Awareness Campaign and Workshop on Drug Abuse

Witnessing the rapid increase of drug abuse among the youth of Himachal Pradesh and its adverse consequences not only on the individual but society as a whole the workshop was organized on 23rd September, 2023 by the UBA cell through financial assistance of IDP NAHEP for **Sensitizing the rural youth through ‘Nukkad Natak’** and awareness campaign in adopted panchayat Shamrod and nearby schools depicting the consequences of Drug Abuse.



Capacity building Workshop of farmers of Village Bada Kamba (Nihar Block), Distt Kinnaur for Sustainable Farming

The workshop consisted of demonstrations and expert lectures to equip the farmers in organic farming techniques such as soil fertility management, organic soil management technologies like compost production and management, mulching, soil erosion control, preparation of liquid fertilizer, organic input production, technologies, etc.



Workshops on Agripreneurship Opportunities for Rural Youth were being organised in village panchayats Oacghat and Sanhol

Cleanliness Drive Conducted by UBA and NSS volunteers in Village Kotla Panjola

The cleanliness drive was being conducted in village Kotla Panjola by UBA and NSS volunteers under the guidance of Dr Meenu Gupta, Dr Anita Kumari and Dr Rohit Verma, on January 4, 2025.





PROJECTS SUBMITTED UNDER SEG

Three projects were submitted under the SEG

SEG Name: Capacity Building, Strategy for Convergence and Implementation (Rural Health)

Title of the Project: Sensitizing and Preventing Rural Youth of Hilly State from Drug Abuse

SEG Name: Rural Livelihood and Entrepreneurship Development

Title of the Project: Empowering Rural Youth through Agri-entrepreneurship Development SEG

SEG Name: Organic agriculture, cow-centric Bio-Economy Development

Title of the Project- Natural Farming: A Holistic Approach for Sustainable Agriculture Development
Protecting Human, Soil and Environmental Health

GRAM SABHA MEETINGS



02/10/2024

PEOPLE'S PLAN CAMPAIGN (PPC) FOR GRAM PANCHAYAT DEVELOPMENT PLAN (GPDP)

An UBA Initiative

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Co-ordinator, UBA Cell
Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry
Solan, Himachal Pradesh

People's Plan Campaign for Gram Panchayat Development Plan

As part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) initiative, students of the UBA Cell of Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, gathered information to assist **Gram Panchayat Sanhol** in the preparation of the GPDP

1. Introduction

The gram panchayat, as a fundamental unit of the three tier Panchayati Raj system, plays an important role in rural governance and development of India. This system was institutionalized under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment act of 1992, which aims to promote participatory democracy in rural areas. It is the representative face of a collection of villages and wards which is looked upon not only for performing basic functions and development of the areas under them but also to take part in their personal life in the form of conflict resolution, community meetings, general trials, well-being and other functions.

As the members from their own locality, community looks further at the panchayat to be inclusive of the rural community and expects that their problems are heard and actions are taken seriously.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is a program launched by the Union Ministry of Education to leverage the knowledge and skills of these institutions to enhance the effectiveness of Government programs. To enhance the impact of UBA, IIT Delhi and the Ministry of Panchayat Raj are collaborating to involve students in the planning processes at the grassroot level. This initiative will help in engaging students to actively participate in People's Plan Campaign (PPC), being launched on 2nd October, 2024, and support Gram Panchayats (GPs) in preparation of their Gram Panchayat Development plan.

As a part of this initiative, students have been allotted to different panchayats to gather the data to assist GPs for the same. We, Antorik Goswami, Naikoti Ragini, Shyna Choudhary, and Srushti Kamble, the students of UBA cell of Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh visited the Gram Panchayat Sanhol, on 2nd October, 2024, to gather necessary information to assist Gram Panchayat Sanhol in the preparation of its Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) during the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) launched on 2nd October 2024.

Gram Panchayat Sanhol is a faculty situated near Jatoli having a one storey building as office, where general functions are carried out and a meeting room where meetings are held. The panchayat currently occupies 1 Pradhan and 7 ward members who actively participate in the village development duties and keep a track of their assigned work respectively. Sanhol is a rural body of the Solan Zila Parishad inclusive of 21 villages who are actively looked upon by the panchayat. The Pradhan being Kusum Thakur is the head of the faculty and works with determination for the benefit of the villages and ensures the proper working of the facility.

The Panchayat actively performs all the functions which are assigned and also follow all the governmental norms that are induced for the panchayat. The panchayat also received Rashtrapati award for its good functioning.

2. General Functioning of the Gram Panchayat

The gram panchayat plays a crucial role in rural governance and development of village and its residents. They work upon a variety of local issues and perform functions aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the village. The faculty here takes strict actions upon all the functions and ensures proper working of the Body. The panchayat works upon all the given norms by the state government and the central government and stands firmly with all the villages and their residents.

The Head of the Gram Panchayat is known as the Sarpanch, while the members are referred to as Panchs. The key elements of the Gram Panchayat's structure include–

- a) Sarpanch – The elected head responsible for leading the Panchayat in and implementing decisions.
- b) Panchs – Elected representatives who assist in decision-making and program implementation.
- c) Gram Sabha – The village assembly comprising all adult members of the village, which holds regular meetings to discuss issues and approve plans.

The functioning involves the assignment of the ward members and looking after their working, monitoring their attendance, look after difficulties and challenges, conducting Gram Sabha which are conducted 4 throughout the years which depicts each a particular theme which are given as follows–

- 1) January Gram Sabha – Parivar Vibhajan (Family Division)
- 2) April Gram Sabha – BPL (Below Poverty Line)
- 3) July Gram Sabha – Swachhata (Cleanliness)
- 4) October Gram Sabha – MNREGA Job Card (Approx. 300 villages have the cards)

These Gram Sabha are conducted with the presence of all ward members and the village residents explaining to them the grave matters, what measures can be taken, welcoming their opinions and assisting people if there are any problems faced.

Panchayat ensures that every facility is reached to the villagers and constantly look for any new requirements which are required or are forwarded by the villagers, which includes the following facilities–

- 1) Cow shed
- 2) Tanks
- 3) Road maintenance
- 4) Accommodation (having kutcha house and needs a pucca house)
- 5) Assisting the BPL residents and their children
- 6) Financially aiding single mothers and their children

Gram Panchayat performs a variety of functions aimed at improving the living standards and infrastructure of rural areas. The Panchayat Development Program enhances the capabilities through funding and schemes targeted at rural development.

3. The Functioning of Gram Panchayat under each Area

The development approach for the Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) has been structured using a multipronged strategy, encompassing nine key themes. Information has been gathered based on the current state of development, ongoing programs, and future plans of the Panchayat, and organized under these themes as follows.

3.1. Poverty Free and Enhanced Livelihood

Poverty free village is a global mission indicating no family has to struggle for livelihood for which the primary focus is the betterment of the families that fall under BPL. the Panchayat takes active action upon this function from conducting Gram Sabha upon BPL to providing help and basic aid for betterment of their livelihood which includes–

- 1) Providing the families a Pucca house under CM Aawas Yojna or Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojna
- 2) Providing scholarships to the children who are studying from BPL families
- 3) Providing free Tuition for the students in private institutes.
- 4) Providing aid with the basic expenses of the child regarding school uniform books and other stationery items necessary for education.
- 5) Providing free education to the children of BPL families in private as well as government schools leaving only the transport expenses that are to be paid by the family.
- 6) Providing Job cards and promoting women skill development programs for such women so they can support their families.

The panchayat aims for the poverty free village and provides opportunity to the children and aid to the families to have their own strong house to live and better opportunity for a livelihood

3.2. Healthy Village

- Under Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan (UBA), the theme of a healthy village focuses on improving the overall health and well-being of rural communities. The objective is to ensure that villages have access to essential healthcare services, sanitation, hygiene, and nutrition, thereby enhancing the quality of life and preventing common health problems that afflict rural populations.
- The Sanhol consists of 21 villages under 7 wards. For accessing the healthcare services there is a healthcare center called dispensary for the village members to have basic medical facilities which ensure availability of essential medicines, vaccinations and maternal-child healthcare services. The panchayat employs 2 ASHA workers for community-level health interventions, campaigning and bringing awareness to the villagers in terms of health care schemes, basic treatments and Mother-Child well-being.
- There are no hospitals in the villages and ambulance facilities can be contacted in emergencies which are provided by the hospitals. Fortunately, no serious health emergencies have occurred thus far, and other health issues are managed at the local dispensary.
- While ambulance services are available upon emergency contact, there is a lack of immediate medical facilities, necessitating travel to Solan for any serious health issues.

3.3. Water Sufficient Village

- Basic to life for all people, prosperity and the planet is water. No water, no life. The “water sufficient village” theme under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan emphasizes creating villages that

can sustainably manage their water resources to ensure water availability for agriculture, domestic use, and other essential purposes.

- The main source of water is the Giri River and the water is supplied throughout via pipes and water connection lines in the district.
- Talking about the water availability for village, it is available for three days a week due to the leakages in the main supply from the source. However, the functionaries of the village took action to increase the water availability to 6 days a week to the village members which shows they are working actively to provide the benefits to the villagers. In addition, the functionaries of the panchayat said water availability is free of cost for now and charges might be applicable in the future.
- When water becomes chargeable, the BPL population may face affordability issues, highlighting the need for government support in ensuring accessible water resources for all villagers.

3.4. Clean and Green Village

- Currently, there is no segregation of waste or community compost pit. The Panchayat has plans to implement these initiatives, but as of now, waste management relies on individual efforts.
- The plantation drive occurs each year during monsoons and they are well managed by the panchayat by watering them at regular intervals.

3.5. Child Friendly Village

- The Gram Panchayat provides BPL (Below Poverty Line) certificates to students/children under the BPL category, enabling them to access scholarships from schools providing scholarships to children who excel in academics and sports gets scholarships, which are 2 academic toppers and 2 sports toppers, to which this year an exception has been made which was 3 sports toppers got the scholarship. The scholarship amounts are given as follows–

- 1) Class 1-5 = Rs. 750 annual scholarship
- 2) Class 5-9 = Rs. 900 annual scholarship
- 3) Class 10-11 = Rs. 1200 annual scholarship
- 4) Class 12 = Rs. 1800 annual scholarship

- Anganwadi centers provide nutrition for children, ensuring their dietary needs are met.
- There are no recreational facilities for children in the villages, such as parks or playgrounds; the nearest facility is around 10 km away, limiting opportunities for play and physical activity.

3.6. Villages with Self-sufficient Infrastructure

- Connectivity issues between villages persist, with residents relying on private cabs for travel.
- There are kutchra (unpaved) roads, highlighting the need for improved infrastructure to facilitate better connectivity.
- Network issues occasionally arise in the villages, complicating day-to-day management and agricultural activities for villagers and the Panchayat.
- While some infrastructure exists, there is still a significant need for improvement, particularly in emergency healthcare facilities.

3.7. Socially Just and Socially Secured Village

- The Panchayat illustrated no discrimination has ever been done or said by anyone in the village and the problems are usually sorted at the ground level.
- Conflict resolution is the prime motive of the Panchayat to ensure harmony and peace in the village.
- Gram Sabha is held according to the yearly plans made by the Panchayat to discuss necessary issues and provide a platform for problem-solving.

3.8. Villages with Good Governance

- The Panchayat actively supports SHGs in the villages, promoting women's empowerment and providing them with resources to address their issues at the community level.
- The Panchayat engages villagers in discussions about government schemes and benefits, promoting awareness and understanding among the community.
- The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), which is a specialized disaster response agency, while having a discussion we come to know NDRF helped the villagers at the time of natural and man-made disasters. Amount of Rs. 70,000 to Rs. 80,000 was being funded to the panchayat during the natural casualty which occurred last year.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MGNREGA), plays a significant role in the lives of the people residing in a village, guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment.

3.9. Women Friendly Village

- The Panchayat plays a crucial role in addressing women's issues at the local level. Women are encouraged to bring their concerns to the Panchayat, which aims to resolve them first. If necessary, the police are involved to ensure that issues are addressed effectively, which is again forwarded to them by the panchayat itself.
- The Panchayat provides essential support for women's development, focusing on key areas such as sanitation, discrimination, and gender equality, thereby fostering a more inclusive environment for women in the village.

4. Major Problems of the Villages

- 1) The village faces several major problems. First, there's no hospital, so people have to travel to Solan for healthcare. There is an ambulance service available for emergencies by hospital, but it's not always accessible. Minor health issues are dealt with at local dispensaries, but emergency care is quite limited.

- 2) Commuting is also a big issue. Villagers rely on private cabs to get between villages, and many roads are in poor condition. This makes it hard for people to travel and can be a problem, especially for farmers who need to manage their work efficiently. On top of that, there are sometimes network issues that complicate communication and daily tasks.
- 3) Connectivity of internet and mobile services are also a problem which usually creates a problem for the panchayat as they have to mark attendance online which leads to absence in the central records.
- 4) Water supply is another concern, due to the leakages in the main pipe and hard maintenance from the main body the water supply is limited to only 3 days a week which is very low considering the daily requirement of water both for usage and consumption for which major actions are needed to be taken.
- 5) When it comes to waste management, there's currently no organized system in place. There's no waste segregation or community composting; people are left to manage waste individually, the compostable wastes or the biodegradable wastes are generally fed to the livestock but the non-biodegradable ones even if they are disposed off, it isn't very effective.
- 6) For children, there aren't any parks or playgrounds in the village. The closest recreational facilities are about 10 km away, limiting their opportunities for physical activities for children which is now essential for their growth and development.
- 7) Social discrimination might be present at an individual level. Although no such incidents are informed or recorded till now but a close monitoring can be done, also maintaining peace and harmony is their vision and Panchayat actively participate in conflict resolution by conducting meetings and exchanging opinions
- 8) While the Panchayat does talk to villagers about government schemes and benefits, many people still lack awareness about what's available to them.
- 9) Community work is also another difficulty were coming together for work and performing duties is also a great task. Although initiatives are taken by panchayat but actions are to be taken for this matter.

5. Proposed Solutions

This section outlines actionable solutions designed to address key challenges faced by rural communities, as observed by us, the students during visit under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan are as follows–

- Support to establish a local hospital to provide emergency and regular healthcare services, reducing the need for travel to Solan.
- Better roads and reliable transportation options to enhance connectivity between villages and ease travel for daily activities.
- Ensuring that clean and affordable water is accessible to all families, particularly those from the BPL population.
- A structured waste management system, including waste segregation and community composting facilities to improve cleanliness and sustainability.
- the development of parks and playgrounds to provide safe recreational spaces for children and elderly population of the village.
- Initiatives that support women's development, focusing on equality, sanitation, and addressing issues of discrimination effectively.

- Promote community involvement and training to help residents understand and effectively utilize available resources and support systems.

6. Areas of Improvement (in brief)

- Healthcare Access
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Water Supply
- Waste Management
- Recreational Facilities
- Awareness of Government Schemes
- Women's Empowerment
- Community Engagement

7. Key Learnings

During a gram panchayat visit as an initiative of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), which is focusing on the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), several key learnings have emerged that are vital for understanding grassroots development, participatory governance, and rural transformation. The key learnings by us, the students are as follows–

- Gained insights into- how the Gram Panchayat operates, including decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of local development initiatives.
- Observed how villagers seek support from the Gram Panchayat for various issues and the significance of local leadership in advocating for their needs
- Developed a deeper understanding of the specific problems faced by villagers, such as healthcare access, transportation issues, and lack of infrastructure.
- Learned the importance of conducting thorough assessments to identify villagers needs and priorities, which can inform effective planning and support.
- Recognized the significant role that students from higher education institutions can play in grassroots development, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to local challenges.
- Gained a sense of empowerment through understanding local governance and community challenges, encouraging us to remain engaged in social initiatives.
- Cultivated a strong sense of social responsibility, inspiring us to actively participate in community development efforts even after this project concludes.
- By pledging for 'Swachata' (cleanliness) alongside the villagers during the Gram Sabha meeting, we developed a deeper sense of responsibility toward maintaining a clean and healthy environment. Individual practices for sustaining a clean and hygienic surrounding are crucial in today's time to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for generations to come.

Photographs documenting information-gathering process at Gram Panchayat Sanhol





People's Plan Campaign for Gram Panchayat Development Plan

As part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) initiative, students of the UBA Cell at Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, gathered information to assist **Gram Panchayat Oachghat** in the preparation of the GPDP

1. Introduction

The gram panchayat, as a fundamental unit of the three tier Panchayati Raj system, plays an important role in rural governance and development of India. This system was institutionalized under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment act of 1992, which aims to promote participatory democracy in rural areas. It is the representative face of a collection of villages and wards which is looked upon not only for performing basic functions and development of the areas under them but also to take part in their personal life in the form of conflict resolution, community meetings, general trials, wellbeing and other functions.

As the members from their own locality, community looks further at the panchayat to be inclusive of the rural community and expects that their problems are heard and actions are taken seriously.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is a program launched by the Union Ministry of Education to leverage the knowledge and skills of these institutions to enhance the effectiveness of Government programs. To enhance the impact of UBA, IIT Delhi and the Ministry of Panchayat Raj are collaborating to involve students in the planning processes at the grassroots level. This initiative will help in engaging students to actively participate in People's Plan Campaign (PPC), being launched on 2nd October, 2024, and support Gram Panchayats (GPs) in preparation of their Gram Panchayat Development plan.

As a part of this initiative, students have been allotted to different panchayats to gather the data to assist GPs for the same. We, Deepika Bhagat, Mridul Dhiman and Shwetha; are the students of UBA cell of Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh visited the Gram Panchayat Oachghat, on 2nd October, 2024, to gather necessary information to assist Gram Panchayat Oachghat in the preparation of its Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) during the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) launched on 2nd October 2024.

2. General Functioning of the Gram Panchayat

The gram panchayat plays a crucial role in rural governance and development. They work upon a variety of local issues and perform functions aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of the village. The faculty here takes strict actions upon all the functions and ensures proper working of the Body. The panchayat works upon all the given norms by the state government as well as the central government and stands firmly with all the villages and their residents.

The Head of the Gram Panchayat is known as the Sarpanch, while the members are referred to as Panchs. The key elements of the Gram Panchayat's structure include–

- a) Sarpanch – The elected head responsible for leading the Panchayat in and implementing decisions.
- b) Panchs – Elected representatives who assist in decision-making and program implementation.

- c) Gram Sabha – The village assembly comprising all adult members of the village, which holds regular meetings to discuss issues and approve plans.

The functioning involves the assignment of the ward members and looking after their working, monitoring their attendance, look after difficulties and challenges, conducting Gram Sabha which are conducted 4 throughout the years which depicts each a particular theme which are given as follows–

- 1) January Gram Sabha – Parivar Vibhajan (Family Division)
- 2) April Gram Sabha – BPL (Below Poverty Line)
- 3) July Gram Sabha – Swachhata (Cleanliness)
- 4) October Gram Sabha – MNREGA Job Card (Approx. 300 villages have the cards)

These Gram Sabha are conducted with the presence of all ward members and the village residents explaining to them the grave matters, what measures can be taken, welcoming their opinions and assisting people if there are any problems faced.

Panchayat ensures that every facility is reached to the villagers and constantly look for any new requirements which are required or are forwarded by the villagers, which includes the following facilities–

- 1) Cow shed
- 2) Tanks
- 3) Road maintenance
- 4) Accommodation (having kutcha house and needs a pucca house)
- 5) Assisting the BPL residents and their children
- 6) Financially aiding single mothers and their children

Gram Panchayat performs a variety of functions aimed at improving the living standards and infrastructure of rural areas. The Panchayat Development Program enhances the capabilities through funding and schemes targeted at rural development.

3. The Functioning of Gram Panchayat under each Area

The development approach for the Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) has been structured using a multipronged strategy, encompassing nine key themes. Information has been gathered based on the current state of development, ongoing programs, and future plans of the Panchayat, and organized under these themes as follows.

Theme 1: Poverty Free & Enhanced Livelihood village

There are many government schemes aim to eliminate poverty and improve livelihoods. Some of the key Initiatives we got to know about Mukhyamantri Swavalamban Yojana, PradhanMantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Mukhyamantri Grameen Rojgar Yojana.

- Providing the families a pucca house under CM Aawas Yojna or Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojna.
- Providing scholarships to the children who are studying from BPL families.

- Providing aid with the basic expenses of the child regarding school uniform books and other stationery items necessary for education.
- Providing free education to the children of BPL families in private as well as government schools leaving only the transport expenses that are to be paid by the family.
- Providing Job cards and promoting women skill development programs for such women so they can support their families.

Theme 2: Healthy Village

Elimination of any sort of diseases from the village and maintain a healthy population and providing adequate healthcare solution to the needy. The aim is to provide healthcare at the doorstep of rural citizens by deploying mobile health vans. Regular health checkups, vaccination drives, and early diagnosis of diseases are offered, especially for maternal and child healthcare. Ensures cleaner environments, reducing the spread of infectious diseases, and improving overall public health. Providing required nutrition to kids at anganwadi centre to eliminate stunting growth.

- Region has a dispensary for basic treatment.
- A regional hospital at a distance of 10 km takes care of major health problems.
- Emphasis on providing clean and hygienic environment to prevent any disease spread.
- Water control unit to keep water-based disease spread in check.
- Timely training and knowledge about the spread and control of diseases.
- Anganwadi providing nourishment to small children to maintain a healthy mind and body.

Theme 3: Child Friendly Village:

Children have access to essential services like education, healthcare, sanitation, and opportunities for personal development. The government of Himachal Pradesh, along with national initiatives, has introduced several schemes aimed at creating child-friendly villages by focusing on education, nutrition, health, safety, and overall well-being.

- Special attention on health, safety, and education for girls, including campaigns against child marriage and ensuring their enrollment in schools.
- Anganwadi Services under ICDS (Integrated Child Development Services).
 - Provide early childhood care, education, and nutrition to children aged 0-6 years.
 - Mission Indradhanush - Ensures full immunization for children under the age of two and pregnant women.
 - Prevents life-threatening diseases like polio, measles, and hepatitis by providing timely vaccinations.
 - A senior secondary school for the education of students.
 - Availability of books, library and computer access have improved knowledge of students a lot.

3.3. Theme 4: Water Sufficient Village

- Talking about the village availability for water is for three days in a week due to the leakages in the main supply from the source. However, the functionaries of the village took action to increase the water availability to 6 days a week to the village members

which shows they are working actively to provide the benefits to the villagers. In addition, the functionaries of the panchayat said water availability is free of cost for now and charges might be applicable in the future.

- When water becomes chargeable, the BPL population may face affordability issues, highlighting the need for government support in ensuring accessible water resources for all villagers.

Theme 5: Clean and Green Village

The Clean and Green Village initiative focuses on creating healthier, more sustainable communities by promoting cleanliness and environmental care. One worker has been hired to maintain the cleanliness of the village, earning a monthly salary of 10,000. The funding for this salary comes from contributions made by local residents and shopkeepers.

Theme 6: Village with Self Sufficient Infrastructure

- Village has a very sufficient infrastructure. It has a government school,
- It has a fully functioning panchayat
- It consists of anganwadi that educates children and provide them food.
- It also constitutes of the asha workers that provide care to pregnant ladies and children visiting from door to door.
- It has MNREGA operating at highest capacity.
- It has cleanliness worker and a cart is provided to him to collect waste from the locality.
- The water facility was sufficient earlier when the block came under DIVISION 3, but after it changed to DIVISION 1, the area started facing water shortage.
- Agriculture is being practised along with some local business by households.

Theme 7: Socially Just and Socially Secured Village

- There are approximately 500 families in the arena.
- To serve justice in case of any fraud or crime becomes the responsibility of the panchayat.
- When such cases are taken to the higher court, they send it back to the Panchayats for the purpose of providing justice and resolving the issue.
- Panchayat has judicial powers as it can act and apply 52 CRPC sections.
- It is responsible to give the justice in 90 days i.e., a period of 3 months.

Theme 8: Village with Good Governance

- 157 tasks completed in the financial year 2023-2024.
- Planning is done to achieve a higher number in the upcoming financial year.
- Meetings are organised by the gram panchayat and everyone is invited to discuss the ongoing problems.
- Meetings are also done when a new scheme is launched and extension to those schemes has to be provided to the community.
- Women empowerment is highly practised as when we were attending the meet, majority of the population was constituting of females.
- Cleanliness was highly maintained in the area.

- Problems raised by the villagers were taken forward by the officials demanding corrective measures from the concerned authorities.
E.g. Krishi karyalaya has been shut for 4 years and the sarpanch is trying to resolve this issue and took it to higher authorities last year.

Theme 9: Women Friendly Village

Asha workers assigned for pregnant ladies. Asha workers play a crucial role in the rural healthcare system in India, especially in villages.

- Encourage pregnant women to register at healthcare centers, ensure timely check-ups, and promote institutional deliveries.
- Monitor the health of the mother and newborn after delivery, provide advice on breastfeeding, immunization, and newborn care.
- Help villagers access public health services, especially for maternal and child health services.
- Mother and child protection card.
- Providing sanitary napkins for 10-19 years girls.
- Pregnant ladies test - HB, sugar, BP.
- To promote better health in rural areas, free medicines like Iron and Calcium supplements will be distributed to villagers.
- Organizing a health camp in villages - Raise awareness about personal hygiene, disease prevention, and proper nutrition. Focus on women's health, maternal care, and child health, providing information on prenatal care, breastfeeding, and vaccinations.

10. Areas of Improvement (in brief)

- Healthcare Access
- Infrastructure and Transportation
- Water Supply
- Waste Management
- Recreational Facilities
- Awareness of Government Schemes
- Women's Empowerment
- Community Engagement

11. Major Problems of the Villages

- Water supply is another concern, due to the leakages in the main pipe and hard maintenance from the main body the water supply is limited to only 3 days a week which is very low considering the daily requirement of water both for usage and consumption for which major actions are needed to be taken.
- When it comes to waste management, there's currently no organized system in place. There's no waste segregation or community composting; people are left to manage waste individually, the compostable wastes or the biodegradable wastes are generally fed to the livestock but the non-biodegradable ones even if they are disposed off, it isn't very effective.

- Community work is also another difficulty were coming together for work and performing duties is also a great task. Although initiatives are taken by panchayat but actions are to be taken for this matter.

12. Key Learnings

During a gram panchayat visit as an initiative of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), which is focusing on the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), several key learnings have emerged that are vital for understanding grassroots development, participatory governance, and rural transformation. The key learnings by us, the students are as follows–

- Gained insights into- how the Gram Panchayat operates, including decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of local development initiatives.
- Observed how villagers seek support from the Gram Panchayat for various issues and the significance of local leadership in advocating for their needs
- Developed a deeper understanding of the specific problems faced by villagers, such as healthcare access, transportation issues, and lack of infrastructure.
- Learned the importance of conducting thorough assessments to identify villagers needs and priorities, which can inform effective planning and support.
- Recognized the significant role that students from higher education institutions can play in grassroots development, bringing fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to local challenges.
- Gained a sense of empowerment through understanding local governance and community challenges, encouraging us to remain engaged in social initiatives.
- Cultivated a strong sense of social responsibility, inspiring us to actively participate in community development efforts even after this project concludes.
- By pledging for 'Swachata' (cleanliness) alongside the villagers during the Gram Sabha meeting, we developed a deeper sense of responsibility toward maintaining a clean and healthy environment. Individual practices for sustaining a clean and hygienic surrounding are crucial in today's time to ensure a healthy and sustainable future for generations to come.

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Photographs documenting information-gathering process at Gram Panchayat Oachghat





As part of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) initiative, we, as members of the UBA Cell of Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, gathered information to assist Gram Panchayat Shamrod in the preparation GPDP

Introduction

A Gram Panchayat is the basic unit of local self-governance in rural India, functioning as the grassroots administrative body in the Panchayati Raj system. It operates at the village level and plays a crucial role in the decentralized governance structure, ensuring the participation of rural communities in decision-making processes. Each Gram Panchayat typically covers a village or a group of small villages and is responsible for implementing government schemes, managing local resources, and addressing the needs of the community, such as infrastructure, sanitation, education, and healthcare. It is composed of elected representatives, including a Sarpanch (head), and works towards fostering development, promoting welfare programs, and facilitating sustainable rural development by engaging with local citizens. The Gram Panchayat serves as an essential link between the rural population and higher levels of governance, empowering villagers through direct participation in the planning and implementation of development initiatives. This decentralized governance system was institutionalized under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992, with the goal of promoting participatory democracy in rural areas.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is a flagship program launched by the Government of India, aimed at connecting institutions of higher education with rural communities to address the development challenges faced by these areas. The initiative seeks to harness the knowledge, expertise, and technological innovations of institutions like IITs, NITs, and other universities to find sustainable solutions for rural development.

The primary goal of UBA is to improve the quality of life in villages by fostering a collaborative approach between academic institutions and local communities. It promotes the implementation of technologies, resources, and skills that can enhance areas such as water management, renewable energy, organic farming, health, and education. UBA also emphasizes empowering Gram Panchayats and strengthening the rural economy through the adoption of best practices and efficient resource management. The initiative aims to create a synergy between rural India and the knowledge base of urban educational institutions, contributing to the overall development of the country. IIT Delhi, in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayat Raj, has taken steps to involve students in grassroots planning processes as part of the People's Plan Campaign (PPC), which launched on 2nd October 2024. The campaign encourages student participation in the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs), helping to create more impactful and community-focused development strategies. As part of this initiative, we, the students of the UBA cell at Dr. Y S Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan, Himachal Pradesh—Kajal Sharma, Kartike Sharma, Fathima Rani, Joyti Poddar, and Abhishek Sharma—visited Gram Panchayat Shamrod on 2nd October 2024. Our objective was to gather essential data and information to assist the Panchayat in preparing its GPDP. This initiative will foster a deeper connection between academic institutions and rural governance while ensuring that the development plans reflect the needs and aspirations of the local communities.

General Functioning of the Gram Panchayat

The Gram Panchayat plays a pivotal role in rural governance and development, addressing a wide range of local issues and performing functions aimed at enhancing the socio-economic conditions of the village. The leadership ensures that all activities are conducted in strict adherence to the norms set by both the state and central governments, while also closely monitoring the execution of these functions. The Panchayat stands as a firm supporter of the villages and their residents, ensuring that governance is inclusive and responsive.

The structure of the Gram Panchayat comprises three key elements:

- a) Sarpanch: The elected leader responsible for guiding the Panchayat and implementing its decisions.
- b) Panchs: Elected representatives who play a role in decision-making and ensuring that programs are effectively carried out.
- c) Gram Sabha: A village assembly consisting of all adult members of the community, which convenes regularly to discuss local issues and approve development plans.

The Panchayat assigns tasks to ward members, oversees their performance, monitors attendance, and addresses any challenges or difficulties they face. Four Gram Sabha meetings are held throughout the year, each focused on a specific theme:

- 1) January Gram Sabha: Family Division
- 2) April Gram Sabha: Below Poverty Line (BPL)
- 3) July Gram Sabha: Cleanliness
- 4) October Gram Sabha: MNREGA Job Card (around 300 villages have these cards)

These Gram Sabhas are attended by ward members and village residents, where important issues are discussed, solutions proposed, and community feedback is welcomed. The Panchayat works diligently to ensure that the necessary services reach the villagers and continuously assesses any new needs brought forward by the community. These services include:

- 1) Cow sheds
- 2) Water tanks
- 3) Road maintenance
- 4) Housing (converting kutcha houses to pucca houses)
- 5) Assistance for BPL families and their children
- 6) Financial aid for single mothers and their children

The Gram Panchayat performs numerous functions aimed at improving rural infrastructure and living standards. The Panchayat Development Program strengthens its capacity through funding and schemes focused on rural development, ensuring that the village thrives and its residents' needs are met.

Key Discussions held during the Gram Sabha

1. The primary agenda of the Gram Sabha included discussions on *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan*, *MGNREGA*, and awareness on *HIV and drug-related issues*. Also, a pledge was taken by the attendees regarding *Swachh Bharat*.
2. Awareness was raised about the *Har Ghar Nal, Har Ghar Jal* scheme, ensuring that every household gets access to clean drinking water.
3. Awareness was raised about Health-related schemes such as the *Ayushman Card and HIMCARE Card*, along with information on *Tuberculosis and its prevention*, and a pledge was taken by the attendees regarding *AIDS awareness*.

4. A representative from the *Pashu Palan Vibhag* gave insights on *Azolla farming* as a sustainable practice for livestock feed.
5. Water-related concerns were discussed with a delegate from the *IPH Department* to address local water management issues.
6. Distribution of *Shudh Peyjal Hmara Sankalp* boards took place, providing them to the village residents to promote clean drinking water initiatives.

Key learnings

1. Gained valuable insights into the functioning of the Gram Panchayat, including its decision-making processes, planning, and implementation of local development initiatives.
2. Developed a deeper understanding of the specific challenges faced by villagers, such as access to healthcare, transportation difficulties, and inadequate infrastructure.
3. Recognized the importance of conducting thorough assessments to identify villagers' needs and priorities, which are crucial for effective planning and support.
4. Acknowledged the significant role students from higher education institutions can play in grassroots development by introducing fresh perspectives and innovative solutions to local challenges.
5. Cultivated a strong sense of social responsibility, motivating us to remain engaged in community development efforts even beyond this project.
6. Fostered a deeper commitment to maintaining a clean and healthy environment by pledging for *Swachhata* (cleanliness) alongside villagers during the Gram Sabha meeting. Emphasizing individual practices for cleanliness is essential for ensuring a sustainable and healthy future for the next generations.
7. Observed the farming community's growing acceptance of new agripreneurship ideas suggested by NGOs, particularly regarding cattle health. These innovations resulted in better milk quality and increased savings due to reduced cattle feed costs. The adoption of *Azolla farming* also opened opportunities for partnerships with beauty product companies.
8. Witnessed the villagers' dedication to creating a tuberculosis and AIDS-free community. Their openness in discussing health issues facilitated the early identification of symptoms and helped raise awareness.

Areas of Improvement (in brief)

- Infrastructure and transportation
- Water Supply
- Child-Centric Recreational facilities
- Women's Empowerment
- Community Engagement
- Animal Husbandry Nutrition

Photographs documenting information-gathering process at Gram Panchayat Shamrod





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