

TWENTY FOURTH ANNUAL REPORT 2010 - 2011



Chirag

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group



Go to the people,  
Live among them,  
Learn from them,  
Love them.  
Start with what they know.  
Build on what they have.  
But of the best leaders,  
When their task is accomplished,  
Their work is done,  
The people all remark,  
'We have done it ourselves'.

Chinese proverb



## **Our vision**

To be a catalyst for the creation of a society rooted firmly in the principles of dignity, justice and solidarity.

## **Our mission**

Chirag's mission is to improve the quality of life of rural people - especially the poor and women - in the Central Himalaya. We try to do this through interventions in health, education and natural resource management, and by providing access to diversified livelihood options. We promote the sustainable ownership and management of common resources by the community.

For several years now, we have wondered whether the changes in the micro-climate we have been witness to, are a temporary blip or an indicator of a long-term change. In other words, is climate change a real and present danger? The annual (average) cumulative rainfall for Nainital district between 1901 and 2000 was 1,072 mm. In September 2010 alone we received 416 mm, half of which we received on one day. In August, it became clear that we were witness to a particularly wet spell and the onslaught in September exposed the frailty of our infrastructure and more importantly, caused loss to life, livestock, homes and agricultural fields. Is climate change real? We don't know. We can anticipate what may happen and prepare for it and for the rest just accept that there are limits to our knowledge at this point of time.

The flash-floods, land-slides and the force of water seeking to forge new paths led to traditional water mills being washed away; modern construction's underbelly being exposed in the form of deep fissures and cracks in floors, walls and ceilings in homes; homes being buried under mud; and terraces of homesteads and agricultural fields simply collapsing. Several of our teams volunteered for one day each week through the month of October in the homes of families unable to repair the damage on their own, helping to remove rubble and to repair walls.

Two new initiatives that were initiated in the preceding years have commenced demonstrating results. Interestingly, both are results of collaboration. The effort to recharge thirty springs using the principles of hydro-geology with technical guidance from ACWADAM, Pune thus far seems to justify our belief that springs can indeed be recharged through such action. The search for employment opportunities for young people from the area and the partnership with B2R has led to over 100 young people being employed in the area. More than half of these are women. Who would have predicted a few years ago, that we would have a cadre of barefoot geologists amidst us or that confident young women from our villages would walk each day to work with computers?

After two decades of varied efforts to improve rural livelihoods - access to micro-credit, animal husbandry, agriculture, value-addition in fruits, micro-enterprises and market access - we have launched a new rural livelihood strategy. A strategy that builds on the experiences of the past but with poor women producers at the centre. In the coming years, we shall be creating institutions of poor women producers at the village level, with another institution owned by them at the federal level to provide them with access to common services. In addition to investing in the capacity of women to manage their own institutions, Chirag shall focus on providing women with diversified livelihood choices and the requisite skills and inputs to adopt them.

There is a growing sense that the space for voluntary action is actually diminishing. Historically, one of the responses of the state in such times has been to inhibit access to resources. We will need to diversify our support base - with multiple institutions, individual donors and a greater proportion of our funds from within the country.

The coming year promises to be a significant landmark. It will mark twenty-five years of operations. An opportune moment to look back, take stock and plan for the future.

V K Madhavan  
September 2011

Twenty-four years can be a long time. A long time for relationships to foster, a familiarity and comfort to set in, and for habits to form. Often, institutions like ours can become entrapped by time and our own relationships. When we commenced work in the late 1980s, infrastructure in the region was relatively poor and the presence of the state, voluntary action and enterprise was limited. All of this has altered. More importantly, families have changed. Several of the low-income families of the time aren't poor any more. Larger families have splintered into smaller units and in the process some families are worse off than they were before.



Each time we commenced work in a village, there were some families willing to engage with us and to participate in our efforts. For a few years, the number of such families would grow. But once work commenced in earnest and self-help groups (SHGs) or other community-based institutions were formed, the entry barriers into these groups would become high. Further, our own relationships with families and the fear of jeopardising these established relationships would inhibit our ability to reach out to those on the fringe.

This reality was driven home when we started identifying who the poorest in some of our villages were and mapped the extent of our involvement with these families. We picked villages where a significant proportion of our activities had been implemented and where we had worked for at least a decade, if not more. In each hamlet, a wealth ranking exercise was undertaken with a representative sample of families. After the exercise was completed in each hamlet, a general body meeting of the village was called and the groups presented their wealth ranking. These general body meetings were amongst the best attended meetings we have observed in the recent past. Heated discussions ensued with families disputing the ranking or seeking to alter the ranking. At the end of this process, when a consensus was reached, the ranking was finalised and a resolution passed documenting the process and ranking. Interestingly, the transparent nature of this process of identifying who the poorest are has led to several requests from *Gram Panchayats* to use this information to identify families below the poverty line.

We then sought to map the extent of involvement of the poorest families today, in diverse activities that we undertook in these villages. We discovered that in each of these villages, there were several families that had in some sense been left out. Not necessarily by design but nevertheless left out.

Recognition of the fact that (a) changes in income can be quite dramatic over two decades with families moving out of and into poverty and (b) that we can become prisoners in some sense of our own structures and relationships, has led to a renewed emphasis and sensitivity to the needs of the poor. This is best reflected in the subsequent efforts to form cooperatives in several of these villages where a concerted effort has been made to include the majority of the poorest. A commitment to ensure that our efforts particularly with regard to improving rural livelihoods, community health care, education, access to and management of common resources, include the poorest.

Our challenge would be to revisit this periodically and to repeat the process at least once every five years to make sure that we do not lose sight of those who need our assistance the most.

The process of formation of cooperatives of women producers - with an emphasis on the poorest - has presented us with several challenges. If families do not have adequate land or if they do not have adequate able-bodied members to cultivate their land - what options can be created? It is clear that the livelihood strategy for small and marginal farmers is never exclusively dependent on only agriculture or horticulture but is actually a complex strategy that depends on access to common lands, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry and labour.

When we commenced the recharge of springs, we had assumed that a significant portion of the recharge zone would fall in common lands. We were wrong. Detailed mapping of the first twenty springs revealed that almost half the recharge zones lay in private lands. In the private lands we encountered two new challenges. Firstly, if the lands are under cultivation, then investing in increasing recharge i.e. through increased infiltration, could have an adverse impact on the productivity of crops. Secondly, in several villages we found the private land to be barren since the owners had moved out of the village and were loath to permit any developmental activity on their lands for fear of losing possession.

In the coming year, our senior batch of children at the Chirag School will move from class four and commence the fifth. The Chirag School must get recognition or else these children will find it difficult to seek admission in other schools in the sixth. We applied for recognition and hit a wall. A school management plan is an essential pre-requisite for recognition. The document has been designed for government schools but the education department will not accept any modifications. Signing the plan in its current form will in effect take away all flexibility that the school has with regard to curriculum, pedagogy and in the hiring of teachers independently. With the Right to Education Act due to come into force in the coming year, we await the framing of rules for the state with some trepidation. Will the independence and flexibility that is essential for the Chirag School to provide an environment conducive to learning and exploration be lost?

One of the features of the Right to Education Act passed by the central government is the important role of the School Management Committee. Interestingly, no formal relationship of the *Gram Panchayat* has been visualised with this committee. Given Chirag's experience over the past three years of engaging with *Panchayats* to create health plans based on the needs of their villages and to use these to leverage services from the government, should we be attempting a similar exercise in the context of creation of school management plans?

An independent external review of Chirag's efforts with regard to preventive and promotive health during the year pointed out the following: (a) the scale that we were operating at was sub-optimal to have an impact on government policies; (b) a very narrow interpretation of health was being considered by the health committees with a tendency to focus on aspects of health with a simple curative solution; (c) there was a need for Chirag to look at a partnership with government to be able to influence its policies based on its experience; and (d) there was a need to enlarge the focus of the health committees to include the *anganwadi* centres, mid-day meal scheme and even the public distribution system. Our challenges in the coming year are to increase the scale of our efforts, to ensure that the health plans take a broader view of public health needs and to encourage monitoring of existing social security schemes.

Chirag currently works with nearly 3,000 women in 224 SHGs. A potent force! There is an urgent need to strengthen these, to improve their systems and to facilitate greater off-take of credit. We need to assess the extent of dependence of these members on informal channels of credit and the terms of such loans. Based on this we need to evolve a strategy

to facilitate a gradual replacement of informal channels with funds available with the SHG.

While the partnership with Business to Rural Technologies (B2R) has been a fruitful one with tremendous potential for expansion in the region, there is a growing concern as to whether those who are able to clear the test and interviews are in some sense from the 'creamy layer' within rural areas. To try and see if we could improve access of young women from disadvantaged backgrounds to employment within the region, we commenced a residential training for young women on computer literacy, English and analytical skills. Though it is too early for the impact of the training to be felt, preliminary indications are mixed. However, what has become very clear is that even our earlier attempts at creating a new generation of leaders has significantly altered the confidence of young women, several of whom have found employment in B2R. In other words the horizon to seek returns on an investment in young girls has to be a long one.

At a time when, within the country and globally, the quality of leadership across sectors is a matter of growing concern, the emphasis in rural areas seems to have shifted from investing in leadership at the village level to economic activities. While economic empowerment is crucial, all public investment - including our own - in commons or through *Panchayats* require vibrant community-based institutions. Despite the obvious desire to see immediate results and more importantly results that are easily measurable, there is an urgent need to invest in the leadership of women in particular in rural institutions. In some sense, our programme with young women in the future will also have to strike a balance between activities that seek to increase employment opportunities with broad leadership skills that can have a long-term impact on families and communities.

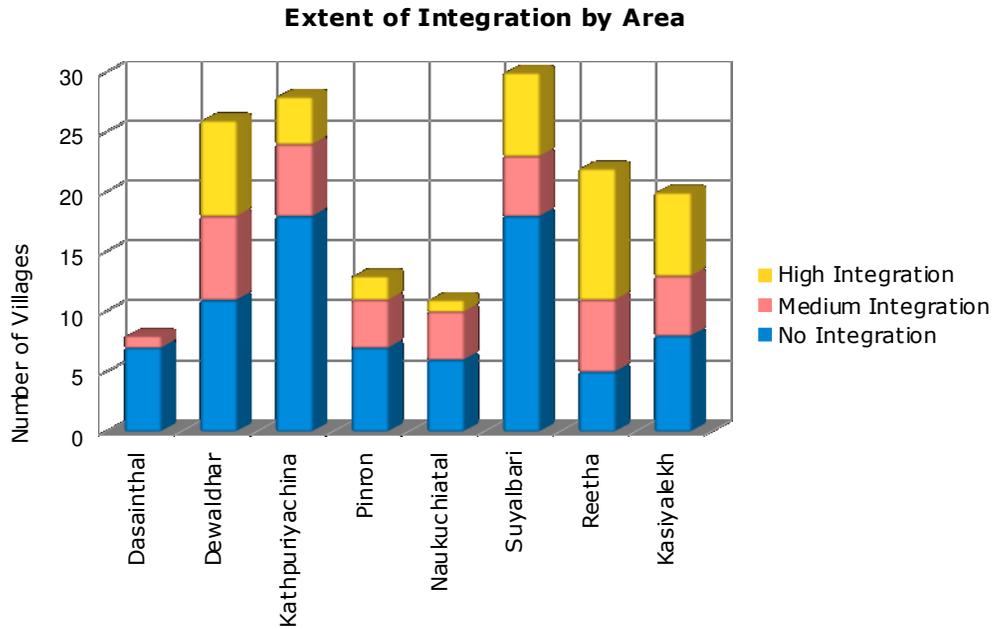
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and the National Rural Livelihood Mission have increased public investment in rural areas dramatically. Both these programmes - if planned for well, with transparent and broad-based participation - could lead to a paradigm shift in the role of organisations like Chirag. In the coming years, we will need to evolve a strategy in the light of these programmes.

## Where we work & the structure

There are eight decentralised teams - referred to as Area Teams - that have the responsibility of planning and managing all our efforts in the villages we work in. Each Area Team is headed by a Coordinator and consists of individuals with specialisations. The size of the teams can vary depending on the number of villages that they work in. The Area Team is supported by a Programme Team that consists of people with sectoral specialisation and an Administration and Finance Team based at Simayal. Each Programme Team, in turn, is headed by a Team Leader with responsibility to oversee a programme across the organisation. Team Leaders also support specific Area Teams. This ensures that the Team Leaders are aware of details pertaining to other programmes and more importantly provides the Area Teams with access to decision making within the organisation.

<b>Area</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Block</b>	<b>Number of Villages</b>
Dasainthal	Pithoragarh	Berinag	8
Dewaldhar	Bageshwar	Bageshwar	25
Kathpuriyachina	Bageshwar	Bageshwar	23
Pinron	Nainital	Bhimtal	13
Naukuchiatal	Nainital	Bhimtal	11
Suyalbari	Nainital, Almora	Ramgarh, Betalghat Hawalbagh, Tarikhet	28
Reetha	Nainital	Ramgarh	22
Kasiyalekh	Nainital	Ramgarh, Dhari	20
<b>Total</b>			<b>150</b>

We currently work in 150 villages in eight blocks and four districts of the region. The number of villages we work in has decreased consistently over the past few years. Since Chirag adopts and promotes an integrated approach to development, we have consciously been attempting to provide multiple opportunities in the villages we work in, rather than to have a larger geographical focus with less integration. Each village, based on its need, would require a specific focus. However, we would like to provide each village with a mix of options that would include at least three out of the following: health care, education, natural resource management, rural livelihoods, agriculture and animal husbandry.



Currently, only a third of the 150 villages we work in has a high degree of integrated choices being provided. Leaving aside Dasainthal, where a pilot was being attempted, Naukuchiatal, Pinron and Kathpuriyachina areas have the least integration. Reetha, Kasiyalekh and Dewaldhar areas have relatively higher degrees of integration. All three areas have been host in the past to integrated programmes while the other areas have had to impose integration given multiple programmes and village needs.

## EDUCATION

Our education programme seeks to achieve the following:

- To improve the quality of education in 60 primary schools of the government.
- To foster the habit of reading in children in primary schools.
- To ensure that girls from disadvantaged backgrounds have an opportunity to complete their schooling.
- To demonstrate that quality education can be provided to rural children. Education that is a consequence of exploration and fun. To disseminate the learning amongst other schools and teachers.



### Highlights

- We work with 60 primary schools and 3,132 children.
- On an average a child in class 5 borrows 19 books in a year.
- Scholarships are being provided to 135 girls to enable them to complete their schooling.
- There are 73 children in six learning groups at the Chirag School.

### Community-based Primary School Support

Chirag works with 60 primary schools of the government in Nainital and Bageshwar districts and attempts to improve the quality of education in these schools. Currently, two strategies are adopted. In all the schools there is a *Balshikshak*/Librarian who is selected by the School Management Committee. In 53 schools the *Balshikshak* works with children in class 1 and 2 till the break and then manages a library that all the children in the school can use. These schools have an adverse teacher:pupil ratio. In 7 schools with adequate government school teachers, the *Balshikshaks*/Librarians visit the school after the break and manage a library. After school hours, they work with the slow learners in class 1 and 2 for an hour and in effect are providing remedial education.

In schools where remedial education is the strategy there are currently 500 titles each and 650 titles each in the remaining schools.

**Primary School Support**

	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Children Girls</b>	<b>Total</b>
Regular	53	1,285	1,445	2,730
Remedial	7	136	266	402
<b>Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>1,421</b>	<b>1,711</b>	<b>3,132</b>

**Details of *Balshikshaks*/Librarians**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Total</b>
Dewaldhar	3	4	7
Reetha	10	3	13
Naukuchiatal	5	1	6
Pinron	2	2	4
Kathpuriyachina	7	5	12
Suyalbari	5	3	8
Kasiyalekh	8	2	10
	<b>40</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>60</b>

Of the 60 *Balshikshaks*/Librarians, 40 are women. This has posed a problem in the past and the turn-over of *Balshikshaks* is relatively high.

The School Management Committee pays a stipend each month to the *Balshikshak*/ Librarian, that Chirag contributes towards. In nearly half the schools, parents contribute between Rs 501 and 700 per month towards the stipend of the *Balshikshak*. In another 42% of the schools between Rs 250 and 500 are contributed.

**Contribution per month (in Rs)**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Number of Schools</b>	<b>less than 250</b>	<b>251-500</b>	<b>501-700</b>	<b>701-1000</b>	<b>more than 1000</b>
Dewaldhar	7	0	0	7	0	0
Reetha	13	0	10	0	3	0
Naukuchiatal	6	1	4	1	0	0
Pinron	4	0	1	2	0	1
Kathpuriyachina	12	0	1	11	0	0
Suyalbari	8	1	2	5	0	0
Kasiyalekh	10	0	7	2	1	0
	<b>60</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>

The following activities were undertaken in the year :

Monthly meetings - Monthly meetings are held with the *Balshikshaks*/librarians in each area. These meetings provide a forum for the *Balshikshaks* to share their experiences and for problem solving. During the year, special emphasis was given to language teaching, continuous comprehensive evaluation, ways of making libraries effective, and planning.

School based support - Each month the schools are visited by our education team. In addition to addressing specific issues raised by the teachers, *Balshikshaks* or parents, our team focused on story-telling and activity-based learning during the year.

School Management Committees - Monthly meetings of the School Management Committees are held to review the situation in the school and the performance of the *Balshikshak*. Area level meetings of the committees are also held at least twice a year to create plans and to review them.

Workshop with Government School teachers - In November 2010, workshops were held with government school teachers. 56 teachers participated in these workshops. The workshops were opportunities for Chirag to share its strategy in a formal setting and to help address problems and to incorporate suggestions made by the teachers.

Each year, the impact of our programme is assessed and reviewed in the following ways:

Class 1 and 2 - A test is administered to children in schools that Chirag works with and control schools where there is no *Balshikshak* to assess the levels of learning of children.

Class 5 - In September each year, a test is administered to children in class 5 based on the competency that they should have possessed at the end of class 3. The tests are administered in schools with *Balshikshaks* and in control schools where there are none.

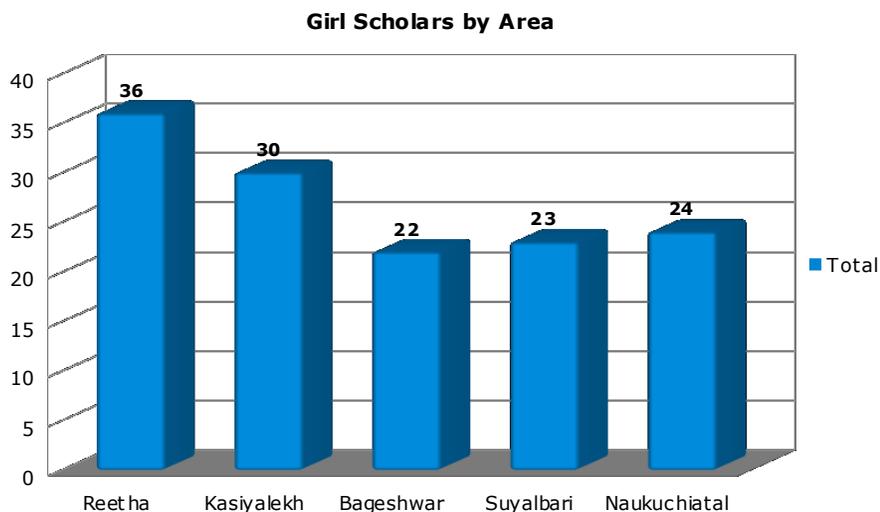
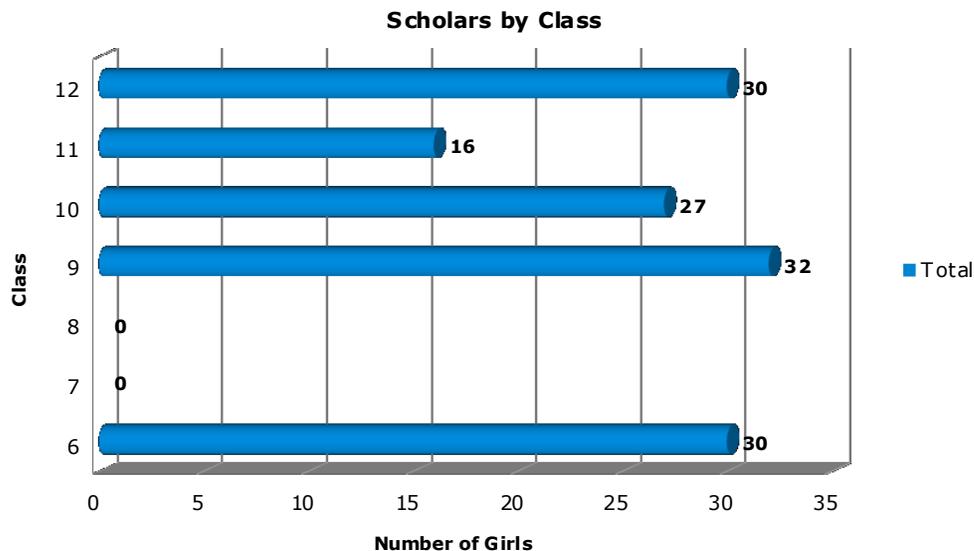
Libraries - The pattern of lending of each library is tracked and analysed on a monthly basis.

In the past year, on an average, a child in class 5 borrowed 19 books during the year. A child in class 1 borrowed 4 books on an average in the year. In schools where the emphasis is on remedial education, a child in class 5 borrowed 14 books and a child in class 1, three books.

## Scholarships for Girls

We currently provide scholarships to 135 girls to enable them to complete their schooling. The girls are selected when in class 6 and support is provided to them till they graduate from school. Competition is fierce and scholarships are awarded to girls who despite socio-economic disadvantages have demonstrated academic ability. Each scholar receives a set of uniform, socks and shoes, stationery and text books. Fees, if any, are covered and the girls receive a medical check-up twice each year in addition to weekly tutorial support as well as tutorial support through a residential camp once a year.

A new batch of girl scholars was added in the year and there are 30 girls in class 6. There are no scholars in classes 7 and 8 at the moment.



The following activities were undertaken during the year:

Monthly visits - Each month the girl scholars are visited and their parents are also met and spoken to. The monthly visits help us find out if the girls are encountering any difficulties or whether they require any specific support. Feedback from the parents is sought on the girls and how they are faring in school. This is also an opportunity to ensure that the girls are not overburdened by the expectations at home and that the time and space to devote to their education too is available to them.

Quarterly meetings - At the area level, the girls are met once every quarter. Common problems are addressed in these meetings and these meetings ensure that there is transparency with regard to the programme and the facilities being provided to the girls.

Quarterly life skills workshops - Once each quarter, girls participate in a workshop where topics pertaining to diet, financial literacy, problem solving and understanding emotions/feelings are discussed.

Workshop on entrepreneurship - In January, the girls in classes 9 and 11 attended a three-day workshop on entrepreneurship.

Life skills workshop - Girls in class 10 and 12 attended a three-day workshop on gender, goal setting and the importance of communication within the family.

Bi-annual health check-ups - All the girls receive a medical check-up once every six months. Their haemoglobin levels, height and weight are monitored and a general check-up ensures that those with substantial ailments are identified for follow-up. Fifty-nine girls are currently anaemic.

Meetings with school teachers - Thrice a year, our team visits the teachers in the school to share the activities being undertaken with the scholars and to seek their support.

Exposure visit - In December, 25 girls and 9 members of our education team visited Bodh Shikshan Sansthan in Jaipur. This was a memorable experience for the girls.

Eighty-five girls decided to gift their text-books at the end of the academic session to other girls who were in need. Thirty seven girls secured a first division in their examinations.

## Chirag School

The Chirag School seeks to demonstrate that learning can be fun and a consequence of exploration and, more importantly, that quality education can be provided to children in a rural area at a reasonable cost.

The school has completed five years. There are 73 children, including 37 girls in six groups two pre-school groups, and classes 1 to 4. There are ten teachers, a remarkable ratio of 7 children per teacher. Six girls and five boys received scholarships. The scholarship is based on need and can cover the monthly fee, annual stationery fee, cost of uniform and the cost of using the school bus.

### Events at the Chirag School

- August 2010 - Kumauni Day
- October 2010 - Jujja Weislander (author of Kajri Gaay books, Sweden) interacted with children. Arundhati Deosthale read out a new story. Children gave feedback on her stories through reviews and drawings.
- January 2011 - Barbara Scharioth (Director, International Jugend Bibliothek, Munich), Arvind Kumar and Arundhati (A&A Book Trust) had an interactive session with teachers on the role of books, libraries and the importance of reading for a child's development.
- March 2011 - Students in classes 6 to 8 from Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi spent time with children at the school exchanging songs and games and went on a nature walk to identify birds and trees.

During the year, efforts were made to share the learning with others. Teachers undergoing training to become nursery teachers at Faizabad visited the school. A two-day workshop was held for nursery teachers from Jan Shikshan Sansthan on curriculum planning, school environment, classroom management and teaching language and mathematics.

The school was also fortunate to host numerous resource persons who conducted workshops with the children and teachers. Arko Mukhopadhyaya from New Delhi conducted a theatre workshop with children. Nalini Jayaram from the Valley School,

Bengaluru worked on art and craft with the children. Vishaka and Lalita from the Centre for Learning, Bengaluru focused on music, art and craft.

Ms QA Hashmi and Sabiha Hashmi from the Poorna Learning Centre, Bengaluru shared their experiences in teaching pre-school children and on making teaching aids from household objects. Usha Menon and Shaji from Jodo Gyan, Delhi spent time exploring issues pertaining to mathematics at the primary school level. Dinesh and Ruth Rastogi, Bhimtal conducted a workshop for parents on the use of television and on the importance of their interactions with their children. Siddhartha Menon of Rishi Valley in his annual visits to the school contributes to specific elements during each visit and also to the broader plan and vision of the school.

The teachers from the Chirag School visited Jodo Gyan in Delhi over a three-day period to observe their activities and workshop. The emphasis was on mathematics.

In 2010-11, computers were introduced for supplementary learning. The process of evaluation and reporting has been reviewed and a significant emphasis is being placed on daily observation and assessment and interactions with parents. Key concepts pertaining to number sense for mathematics have been resolved. There is clarity on the plans up to class 3 with the introduction of new concepts and teaching methods.

The School's primary challenge is to get recognition from the government. This will ease the pressure on parents and the teachers and facilitate movement of children freely from the Chirag School to other schools. Teachers and parents continue to be concerned about the decision to remain a primary school. For the teachers, the concern is with regard to how well the children will be able to adjust to the transition to government schools. There is also a sadness that in a year the children they have grown to love will be moving out and away, in some sense, from the security that the school offers. Each year, new teachers are added and there is a constant need to train new teachers. Yet, there is also the need to ensure that the existing teachers are constantly challenged and do not get into a rut. We have as yet been unable to create a playground for children.

## INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Our future depends on the investment we make in the young today. Our programme with young people - in particular young women - seeks to invest in them by providing them with access to information, knowledge, skills and opportunities. Broadly, three major thrusts exist - creation of a new generation of leadership, facilitating employment of youth and Swades ki Khoj, an opportunity for young graduates to spend a year discovering themselves and India.



### Highlights

- A batch of 26 adolescent girls participated in a 20 day residential programme in the Kishori Shikshan Kendra.
- A new initiative to improve the employment prospects of girls from disadvantaged backgrounds commenced. Out of 46 girls who participated in the programme 10 have subsequently found employment.
- Floriculture and rural marketing are being attempted by a total of 39 young girls.
- Our partner B2R hired 72 young people in the year for their rural BPOs.
- The fourth cohort of Swades ki Khoj commenced with 20 young people but only 15 will graduate.

### Creating a New Generation of Leadership

Our flagship programme to create a new generation of leaders for the region by investing in adolescent girls has been the Kishori Shikshan Kendra. We last conducted this residential programme in 2008-09. From the 10th to the 29th of May 2010, we held a 20 day residential camp for 26 adolescent girls. We decided to reduce the duration from 36 to 20 days by removing the specialised two-week modules on agriculture, animal husbandry and health that the girls had to choose one of.

Twenty-six girls between the ages of 15 and 23 years from six of our areas participated in the programme. Three-fifths of the girls had only studied till class 10. The core modules of vision and goal setting, communication, health care, governance, legal literacy, agriculture, animal husbandry and water conservation were provided in an intensive manner.

### **Facilitating Employment of Youth**

Our previous efforts at facilitating the employment of young people had met with limited success. We did not have scale and the options that were being provided were largely for young men. Our partnership with B2R Technologies was promising and was creating opportunities for young men and women. Yet, we felt that those from relatively better socio-economic backgrounds were finding it easier to avail of this opportunity. Given the historical correlation between poor socio-economic status and access to education, we decided to focus on girls from disadvantaged backgrounds during the year.

The plan was to offer a residential programme for girls from disadvantaged backgrounds with an emphasis on computer literacy and English. During the camp, in sessions each evening we incorporated the core elements of the Kishori Shikshan Kendra as well.

Two 45 day trainings were conducted during the year. The first, from the 9th of November to the 23rd of December 2010 and the second from the 7th of February to the 24th of March 2011. In the first batch, 22 girls between the ages of 18 and 23 participated from the Kasiyalekh and Dewaldhar areas. Two of these girls had dropped-out of school after class 8, three had completed class 10, six were completing their schooling and the remainder were enrolled for Bachelor's degrees. As of date, five of these girls have found employment after the training - four in B2R and one as a school teacher. Probably equally important is the fact that the two girls who had dropped out of school have convinced their families to permit them to complete their schooling.

In the second batch, there were 24 women between the ages of 17 and 35 years from Kasiyalekh, Suyalbari and Reetha areas. Except for one woman who was 35 years old, all the others were under 22 years of age. Two-thirds of these women were from low-income families. All of them had completed class 10 but ten of them had discontinued their schooling and were assisting at home. Mothers' of a third of these women were illiterate.

The fathers of 16 of the girls had not studied beyond class 8 - including two who were not literate. Four of these girls have been selected by B2R, three girls have joined Kumaun Grameen Udyog's knitting groups and one girl has been selected as a teacher for the Chirag School.

The basic course design included conversational English, computer literacy, mathematics and life skills. Mathematics was introduced based on our experience with girl scholars, where we had discovered that this was one of the weakest subjects. The components pertaining to life skills included village level institutions, micro-credit, health and specifically reproductive health, legal rights, Panchayati Raj, water, agriculture and financial management. Subsequently, preparing a curriculum vitae and mock interviews were added to the course. The course commenced with a pre-test and a test was administered at the end of the training to assess the learning.

At the end of the first batch, a review by the trainers/instructors led to some changes being introduced in the second batch. Soil health, nursery management and written and not just conversational English were introduced. The focus also shifted from mathematics to analytical reasoning. Weekly film screenings and discussions were held and exposure visits organised within the region.

English and computer skills quite clearly cannot be taught in a 45 day period, given the poor base. In effect, what these camps seek to do is to increase the confidence of the girls, help them shed their inhibitions and to lose the fear of technology. The experience of living together with other girls in a residential camp, free from household chores and with access to regular meals, is a life transforming event in itself. In conversations with the girls after the training, their memories of the training itself are utopian.

Two other initiatives to facilitate employment have been attempted during the year. The first, to encourage young women to attempt innovations in agriculture. 19 girls from Dhura undertook cultivation of gladioli in September last year. Excessive rains damaged their crop quite badly. While the production of flowers was low - only 1,509 spikes were produced - adequate bulbs have been produced to attempt this again next year.

Twenty girls were selected in July 2010 and trained as rural sales-persons who could focus on produce that would be of particular value to women. These girls were provided a training on how to maintain accounts and are currently attempting to market energy efficient devices, sanitary pads and a water purification solution. Currently, only twelve of

the girls are continuing to attempt this and their cumulative sales are just in excess of Rs 50,000 - a modest beginning.

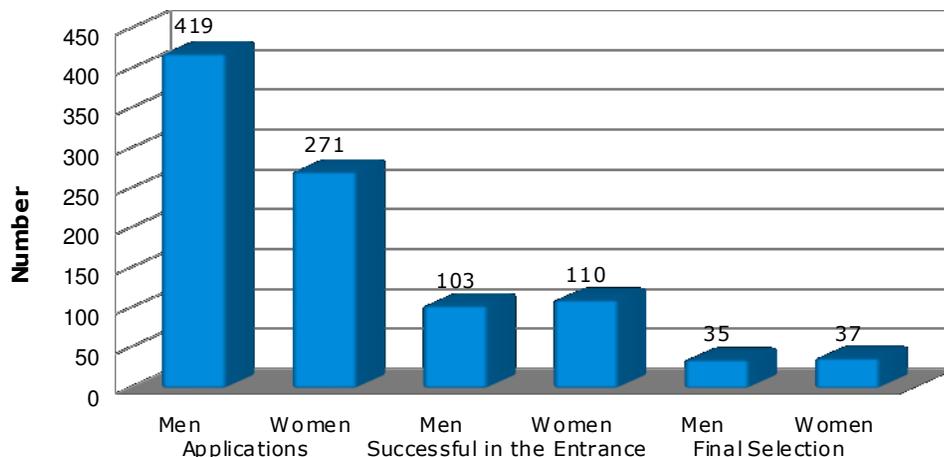
We continued to facilitate recruitment by companies. Parle held two rounds of interviews in the region during the year. A total of 101 young men were interviewed and 61 were selected. Only 41 of them subsequently joined Parle. Of the number who joined, 13 have subsequently quit their jobs. The pity is that when the young people return, it is often with horror stories - most of which are unsubstantiated. Often the primary reason for returning is merely the fact that it is tough work and not necessarily something that everyone can do. To address some of the concerns, we encouraged parents of 16 youth from Suyalbari and Dewaldhar to visit the factory to understand the work and the working conditions.

### Partnership with B2R Technologies

Two batches were hired in 2009-10 by B2R and during the past year, four more batches were hired by them to meet the requirements of the two additional units that commenced - at Letibunga and Chimi. 693 young men and women appeared for the written tests in these four rounds of hiring. Only 223 were able to meet the minimum cut-off set by B2R and were invited for interviews. Of those interviewed, 72 were hired during the year - including 37 women.

Chirag's role is clearly that of a back-office for B2R. We assist them in the hiring of young people and in identifying new locations. Once a young person is selected by them they undertake the responsibility to train them and to employ them.

**B2R Technologies - Hiring**



## Swades ki Khoj

This initiative seeks to invest in young people between the ages of 21 and 28 by providing them with the opportunity to spend a year living and working in rural areas. The underlying assumption is that this year will instill in them a sensitivity towards rural realities, a sensitivity that would find reflection in their actions at some point of time in their lives. The programme seeks to create a cadre of people who will reside most probably in cities, and will yet be sympathetic to issues that affect the lives of others.

We had initially planned for three cohorts but since the total number we were able to attract in each batch was lower than the original plan, we extended the programme for a year to accommodate a fourth cohort. Three cohorts have completed the programme and the fourth and final cohort has one quarter left to finish the year.

The programme has led to a significant change in a majority of these young people. An increase in sensitivity, an interest in issues that they were hitherto not exposed to, an increase in self-confidence and in several cases an acute sensitivity and desire to help the poor.

The number of organisations willing to host these youth has increased and has often surpassed the number of youth selected. Five host organisations from the past continue to employ graduates from the programme and two others had employed these youth for at least a year.

In the first three years, the proportion of women in the programme was relatively low but in the final cohort this has been rectified. Similarly, in the first two years the proportion of young people from large metropolitan cities was relatively low but that altered in the last two cohorts. Quite clearly, there is a minimum amount of time that needs to be invested - in the absence of high expenditure on publicity - before a programme like this gains popularity amongst young people.

The third cohort graduated at the end of June 2010 after a three day debriefing. Each young person made a presentation on their host organisation, the area and the work that they undertook. One day was set aside for counselling, to enable the young people to discuss their plans and to seek advice and assistance. The transformation in the young people from cities was more noticeable. It was also heartening to see a frank appraisal of their own experiences and abilities at the end of the year.

For the fourth cohort, 121 applications were received and 20 young people were selected. The foundation course for the fourth cohort was held from the 1st to the 15th of July at the Chirag Training Centre. This was the largest batch, and more than half of it comprised of young women. Twelve of these were from other parts of the country with Diu in the west, Kerala in the South and Mizoram in the North-East represented. All the resource persons in the workshop were drawn from Chirag and one representative from a host organisation spent a few days at the foundation course. The proportion of time spent in villages was increased and specific tasks based on interests of the young people were allocated to them to enable them to gain a better understanding of the issues that they would focus on during the year.

The interests of the young people and their profiles were shared with the host organisations in advance. A few host organisations from the last year were dropped, a few organisations from the first and second cohorts were considered again and a few new organisations were added.

Information about their host organisations was provided to the youth prior to the commencement of the foundation course so that they could be prepared for the work that they would undertake. The host organisations for the fourth cohort were located in Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. Within three months of the cohort commencing its stint, one person dropped out since she had received admission to a PhD programme and two others dropped out because of their inability to withstand the pressures.

In December 2010, the young people from the fourth cohort spent two days at Chirag to share their experiences and to plan out the remaining six months in their host organisations. Interestingly, the workshop revealed a critical analysis of the relative strengths and process of functioning of organisations that the young people were located in.

The programme did not seek to create a cadre for the voluntary sector - though not an undesirable consequence. Out of 37 young people who graduated in the first three cohorts, 18 or almost half, have chosen to remain in the voluntary sector. Some of these young people have now worked for nearly three years.

**Status of Swades ki Khoj Graduates - March 2011**

	<b>Voluntary Sector</b>	<b>Private Sector</b>	<b>MFI</b>	<b>Rural BPO</b>	<b>Academics</b>	<b>Government</b>	<b>No Information</b>	<b>Total</b>
Men	8	2	1	2		1	9	23
Women	10	1		1	1		1	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>37</b>

Our challenge today is on how to continue the programme. The cost per person is high and it is impossible in the short-run to attempt to quantify a return on the investment or the long-term benefits.

**Other Activities**

Four issues of Yuva Sansar - the newsletter written, edited and published by young people - were produced during the year. The editorial committee consists of between 10-12 young people and alters for each issue. The first issue was on water scarcity, the second on increased migration amongst young people and the third and fourth on the importance of education. 1,000 copies of each newsletter are published and distributed amongst young people in our villages.

The annual *Chail-Chailiya Utsav* was held on the 6th and 7th of January 2011 at Sunkiya. 570 youth participated in the event. The activities included races, cultural programmes, drawing, a quiz and an *aipan* competition. The programme is organised and conducted by young people who raise a bulk of the resources required to host the event.

## HEALTH CARE

Our efforts with regard to community health include an emphasis on both curative health and preventive and promotive health. We seek through our health initiative to achieve the following:



- To provide through the Chirag Hospital access to quality health care at an affordable price.
- The Chirag Hospital seeks to provide out-patient facilities and emergency services - to stabilise a patient adequately for their referral and transport to other specialised facilities of their choice.
- To strengthen the statutory health committees of 40 *Gram Panchayats* and to facilitate the creation of annual health plans by them which can serve as the basis to leverage services from the government.
- To support and strengthen the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) in her efforts to provide community health care.

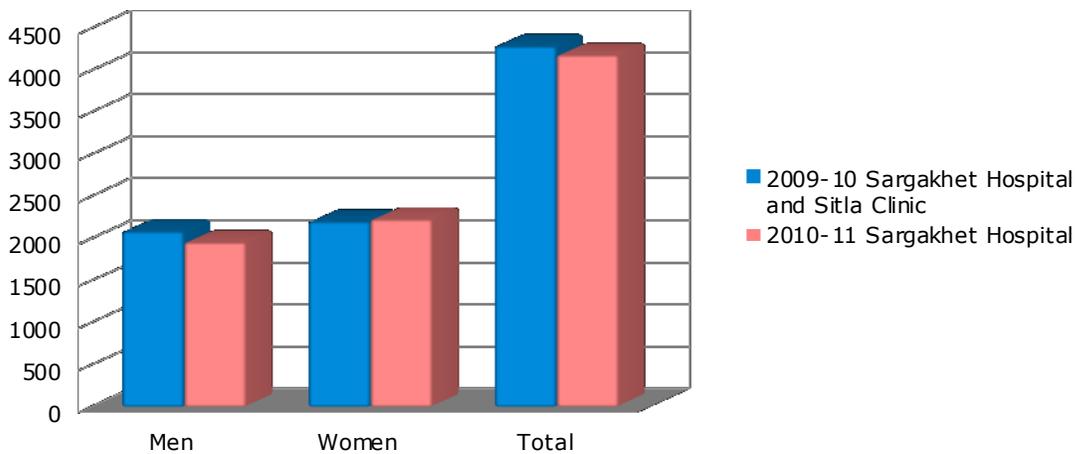
### Highlights

- The Sitla clinic was shut down and the facilities and team integrated into the Chirag Hospital
- 4,182 people accessed the out-patient facility at the Chirag Hospital. More than half of them were women.
- For the third year, annual health plans have been created by the health committees of 40 *Gram Panchayats*.
- An independent evaluation of Chirag's preventive and promotive health efforts urges Chirag to expand the scale of its operations, to partner with government and to influence government policy based on the learnings.

## Curative Health-care

The Chirag Hospital is slowly establishing itself. Despite the fact that we shut the Sitla clinic and concentrated our efforts on the Hospital, the number of out-patients has not decreased substantially. In fact, the proportion of women has increased. If we were to consider the change in patients accessing our facilities in Sargakhet alone over the past year, there has been a 67% increase. In 2010-11, 4,182 patients were treated in the hospital and 53% of them were women. One significant reason for the number of women using the facilities is the fact that Dr Ruma Mukherjee has been visiting the hospital twice a week. It would seem that the decision to shut the Sitla clinic has not been a bad one.

**Comparison of Outpatient Details**



In the absence of at least two full-time doctors, in-patient facilities are not being offered yet. However, during the year 52 patients had to be admitted as compared to 10 in the preceding year. Ante-natal care was provided to 130 women and seven deliveries were conducted in the hospital and another five deliveries assisted in homes. A total of 56 minor procedures were conducted at the hospital.

Given the poor dental hygiene in the area, Dr Narendra Kumar Joshi from Bageshwar has been visiting the hospital for two days each month. The regularity of the visits promises to lead to larger numbers of patients accessing his services. In the course of Dr Joshi's visits, 228 patients have been treated. Surprisingly, women comprise 68% of the total.

Dr Mahendra Bisht, our full-time doctor, has been visiting the clinic at the Indian Veterinary Research Institute at Mukteshwar for three half-days each week. Further, given his own training in Ayurveda we continue to provide patients with a choice. In the past year, 748 patients have been treated based on Ayurveda.

Minor improvements in the facilities at the laboratory and the increased case-load at Sargakhet have led to a substantial increase in the number of pathology tests. 3,447 tests were performed in the year, a significant increase from the 2,365 tests in the preceding year. Similarly, 405 X-Rays were carried out, an increase from 237 of the previous year.

The team from the hospital also supported health camps based on demand at the village level. 174 patients were seen during health camps and 48 during a NSS camp.

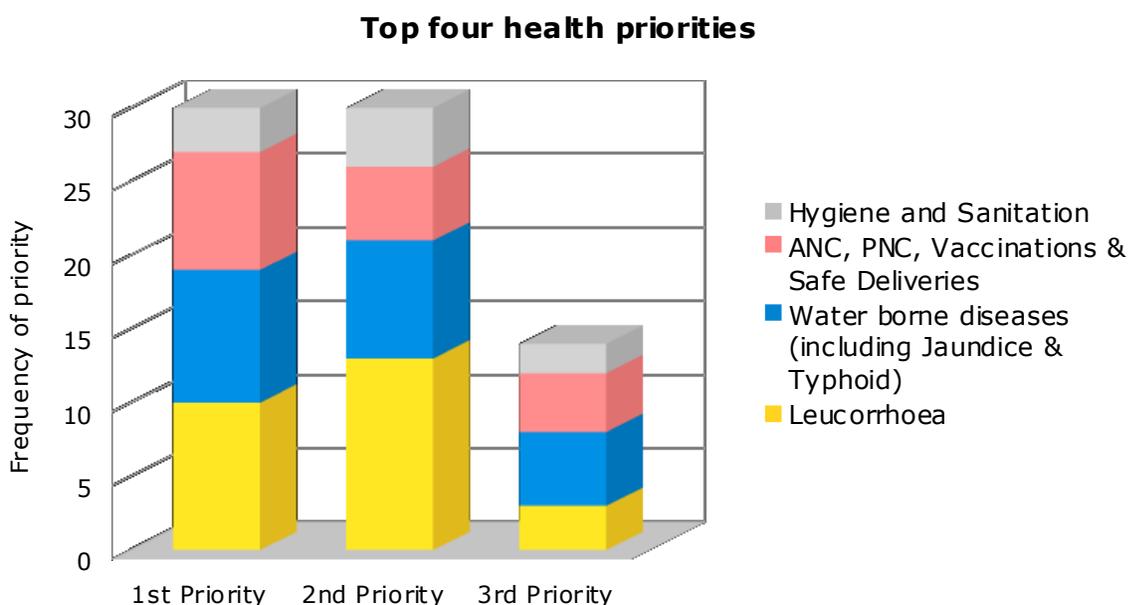
### Preventive and Promotive Health

We work with 40 *Gram Panchayats* serving a population of just over 30,000 people as part of our preventive and promotive health work. The fulcrum of our efforts are the Village Health and Sanitation Committees or VHSCs. There are 662 members in the VHSCs and over half of the members are women. The VHSCs are chaired by the *Gram Pradhan*.

#### Basic Information

Area	Gram Panchayats	Population	Village Health and Sanitation Committees (VHSCs)	Health and Sanitation Committee members		
				F	M	Total
Dewaldhar	6	3,110	6	22	42	64
Naukuchiatal	7	6,023	7	37	52	89
Suyalbari	8	5,605	8	42	72	114
Kasiyalekh	8	9,240	8	131	83	214
Reetha	11	6,272	11	110	71	181
	<b>40</b>	<b>30,250</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>662</b>

For the third year, each *Gram Panchayat* created a health plan based on needs. These plans were created in a participatory manner and progress against these plans were reviewed periodically. Chirag helps facilitate this process and provides the members of the VHSCs with access to information and training. The top three priorities from 39 plans were collated and the four issues that emerged the most frequently across these *Gram Panchayats* identified. The list is interesting.



Interestingly, leucorrhoea was either the first or second priority in a little over half the *Gram Panchayats*. Water quality and water borne diseases were the second major concern followed by the need for safe deliveries, ante-natal care, post-natal care and vaccinations. The fact that leucorrhoea and ante-natal care, post-natal care and safe deliveries feature so prominently in the health plans is either testimony to the role being played by women in these health committees or a growing acceptance in the community of the importance of investing in the health of women.

Diverse activities have been undertaken in each *Gram Panchayat* during the course of the year in pursuance of the objectives. The activities include:

- Meetings at the village level with the VHSCs and with community members as part of the process of creation of plans, to monitor the progress and to disseminate information and create awareness.
- Awareness workshops were held in 20 villages and 715 people participated in them.
- 19 VHSCs financed rallies and competitions in the schools in their villages around themes that included jaundice, anaemia, hygiene and polio.
- A two day training of 26 *dais* was held on safe deliveries and care of new-born infants.
- The VHSC of Chopra visited the Mauna VHSC and the Buribana VHSC visited Pandeygaon.

- Trainings of ASHAs were held in each area on a broad set of issues that included vaccination, safe delivery, the NRHM, importance of constant communication with community members and on the process of filing their monthly progress reports.
- Three federations of ASHAs have been formed which have adopted the model of self-help groups. These SHGs of the ASHAs exist in the Suyalbari, Kasiyalekh and Naukuchiatal areas. The ASHAs meet once a quarter and discuss issues that effect their functioning that can subsequently be raised with the health department.
- Based on demands of the VHSCs, health camps have been held. The camps have either been general health camps or around specific themes such as anaemia or leucorrhoea.
- Visits to the sub-centres are undertaken by the VHSCs once every year to monitor the availability of services according to the Indian Public Health Standards.

Initially we had hoped on creating a *Panchayat* based health care system that the VHSCs could use to monitor progress against the plan. Given the fact that the ANMs and the ASHAs have their own reporting formats and are already collating information, we decided to focus on a few key indicators that could be reviewed every quarter by us and the VHSCs. The indicators that we are tracking include - incidence of jaundice and diarrhoea, complete immunisation, complete ANC, birth and death registration, whether deliveries have been at home or in institutions and the income of ASHAs.

An independent evaluation of our preventive and promotive health efforts was carried out between December and March this year by Mr Biraj Patnaik. After reviewing our proposal, plan and discussions with our health team, villages in Dewaldhar, Suyalbari and Naukuchiatal areas were visited and community members, ASHAs and VHSC members were spoken to. The evaluation did recognise that our efforts had a positive impact particularly with regard to levels of awareness regarding the National Rural Health Mission, the roles and responsibilities of the VHSCs and the ASHAs, the health plans that were created and on transparency particularly with regard to utilisation of the untied funds. Building on the premise that the current effort needed to be strengthened and expanded, the following key recommendations were made:

- Chirag's efforts need to be shared with government and used as a basis for influencing government policy.

- The operations need to be at an optimum scale that can attract the attention of government and have a significant impact in each block or district that Chirag seeks to work in.
- There is a likelihood that the plans that are created by the *Gram Panchayats* can start following a template i.e. start to resemble each other. Rather than encourage uniformity, the plans should necessarily focus on the specific needs of each *Gram Panchayat*.
- The understanding of public health should be widened to include other socio-economic determinants of health. The focus should not be on diseases/ailments for which there is a simple solution that curative health care can provide.
- The *Panchayats* should be encouraged to monitor the functioning and performance of key health and social security schemes of the government and in particular the mid-day meal, the *anganwadis* and the public distribution system.

We have chosen a difficult strategy. The effectiveness of the VHSCs is determined by the interest taken by *Panchayats* in social development issues. The interest and enthusiasm of the VHSCs is also determined by the policies of the state government. There is concern about the future of the ASHAs. The decline in earnings through incentives over the past year would suggest that the space for them is shrinking. Finally, the success of our efforts depends on the effectiveness of our mobilisation of communities around health care and in demanding services from the government.

## NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Our integrated efforts to regenerate and manage common lands seek to achieve the following:

- Conservation, development and management of common lands to ensure sustained availability of leaf litter, fodder and fuel wood and for their hydrological services.
- Recharge of springs.
- Adoption of the watershed development approach to treat micro-watersheds.
- Support and strengthening of village level institutions for sustainable management of forests.



To the extent possible, we undertake all of the above in an integrated manner bearing in mind their inter-relationships. None of this would be possible without the collective action of families dependent on these resources and vibrant institutions. In other words, despite the relevance and importance of appropriate technical choices and strategies, in the absence of a sense of ownership by communities, none of this could be possible.

### Highlights

- 1,69,201 saplings planted or 82% of the target for the year.
- Nursery stacking for 2011-12 - 2,17,023 on 178 hectares of land.
- Leaf litter collection from forest sites - 4,24,155 kg.
- Natural regeneration of fodder from managed plots - 7,501.97 quintals.
- Implementation of recharge efforts have commenced in 29 springs.
- 50 village level institutions are involved in management of community forestry efforts with 534 members.

## Soil & Water Conservation

The timing and quality of engineering measures for soil and water conservation are crucial for the success of all our efforts on common lands. Our efforts commence with attempts to reduce soil erosion, to increase moisture levels and to enhance infiltration. Ideally, we like to complete these efforts in winter, in months when significant precipitation is not anticipated and when people are not busy with agricultural operations.

In 2010-11, the following activities were completed:

Land clearing in 152 hectares

Contour terraces - 43,645 running metres (rmt)

Contour trenches - 14,571 rmt

Construction of *khals* or percolation tanks - 1,706.8 cubic metres (cum)

Gabion check-dams - 162.7 rmt

Loose boulder check dams - 762 rmt

Gully plugs - 246.6 rmt

Percolation pits - 7,028

Terrace levelling - 22,954 square metres

Terrace bunding - 1,350 rmt

Drainage for *khals* - 1,266.9 rmt

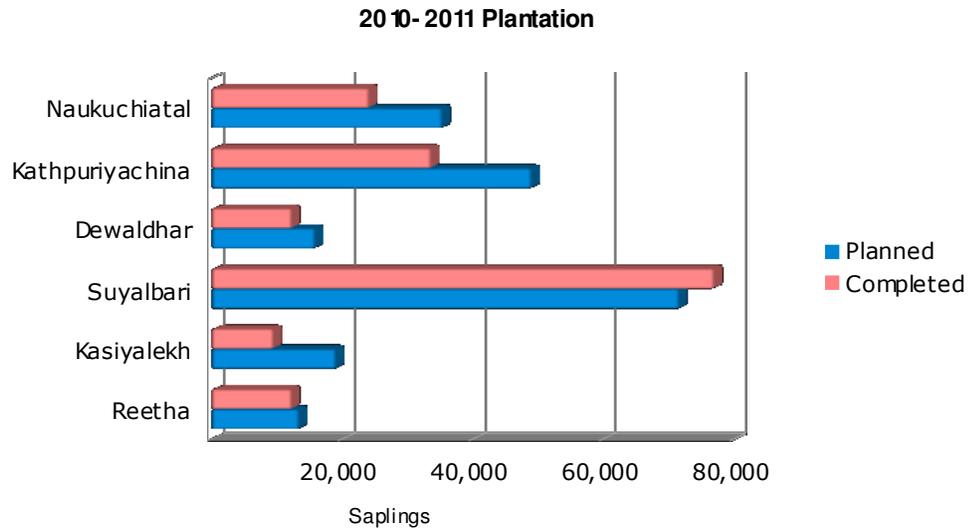
Sub-surface check-dams - 77.27 rmt

These activities were undertaken to support our efforts pertaining to community forestry, enhancement of fodder production from common lands, to recharge springs and as part of our watershed development work.

## Community Forestry

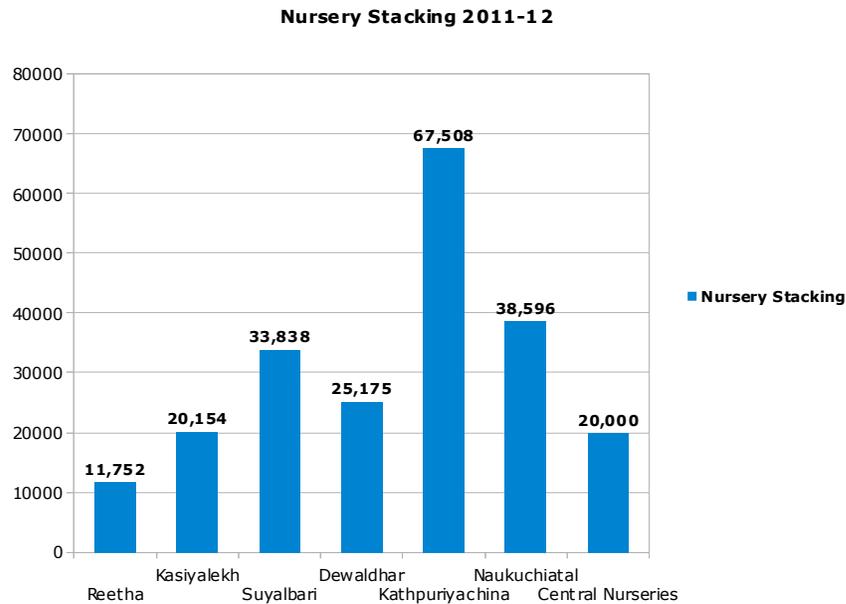
In 2010-11, we sought to protect and regenerate 155 hectares of common lands. 1,69,201 saplings were planted against the target of 2,04, 501 saplings - or 82% of our plan. The plan for Suyalbari area accounted for nearly 46% of the total plantation target and, remarkably, they exceeded it. On the other hand, the Kasiyalekh area with only 6% of the total target still managed to achieve only half of it. In both Kasiyalekh and Reetha areas, the extent of new plantations has decreased dramatically given our investment here in the

past. Plantation in these areas is undertaken symbolically to aid protection and in some cases for gap-filling.

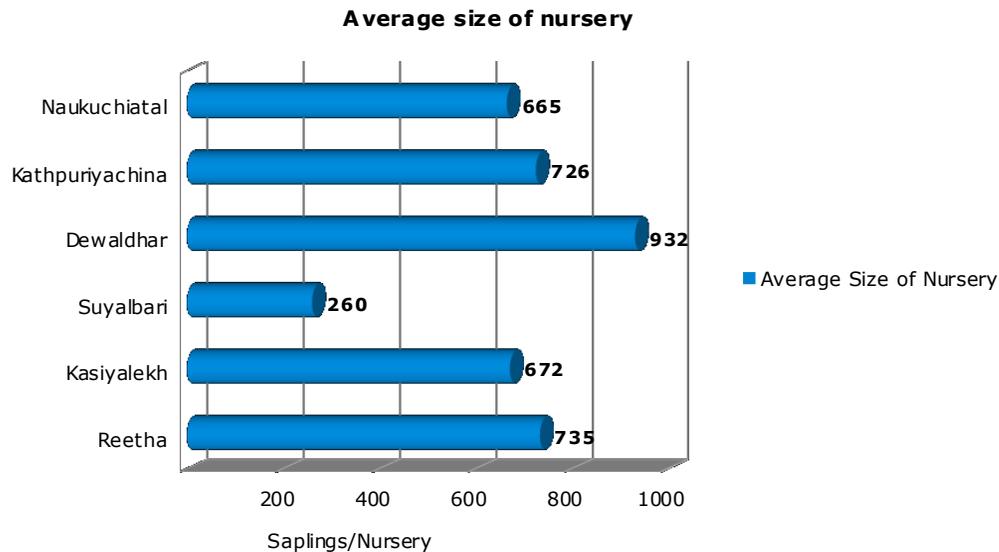


Just three species, *Banj*, *Bakain* and *Kanaul* accounted for a little over 50% of the plantation.

The plan for 2011-12 is to plant 2,17,023 saplings on 178 hectares of land. This plan includes a balance of 44,973 saplings - the short-fall against the target from the current year. These saplings will be raised by 354 nursery persons - including 229 women. To ensure that we do not lose the opportunity to plant on time because of a high mortality in these nurseries or a poor growth-rate, nearly 10% of our total plan or 20,000 saplings will be raised in three central nurseries.



In the coming year, Kathpuriyachina and Naukuchiatal areas (inclusive of Pinron) have the most ambitious targets.



Currently, the average size of a nursery is 613 saplings. This is in marked contrast to the nursery size when our forestry programme began. The average size of a nursery is the smallest in Suyalbari area with 260 saplings and the largest in Dewaldhar with 932 saplings. The purpose of encouraging a larger number of decentralised nurseries is to try and include as many people as possible in the raising of saplings, plantation and protection.

Villages are provided with relative flexibility in choosing the method of protection of their common lands. Some groups opt to completely close access to the plots while others permit the collection of grass and leaf litter during specific times of the year. Similarly, social fencing is the norm but in some plots a guard is hired by the group and entrusted with the responsibility to protect their plot. By and large, social fencing is encouraged unless specific circumstances warrant a wire fence. New stone walls 4,424 running metres (rmt) long and 5,120 rmt of wire fencing were invested in during the year. This was in addition to repairs to existing stone walls in 2,815 rmt. This year 39.5 rmt of retaining walls had to be constructed to safe-guard a section of a plot from caving in. We have been fortunate not to have had forest fires in the past year but, to ensure that we are prepared, 2,823 rmt of fire-lines were laid.

Some of the groups that manage the forests levy a charge per sickle for lopping and by head-load for leaf litter that is collected from the plots. A total of 20,610 kilogrammes (kgs)

of material was lopped from the plots and 4,24,155 kgs of leaf litter collected. The total revenue from these two amounted to just over Rs 1,10,000. Inter-cultural operations including hoeing were undertaken in 165 hectares of land and mulching of 1,19,591 plants was completed. 231 compost pits have been made in the plots and 544 quintals of compost were available during the year.

Our ambitious effort to systematically document the impact of our efforts on common lands using data collected annually from 187 permanent quadrats has had a minor set-back. We have not been able to compare data from 2008-09 with data from 2009-10 because of a simple error. In the first instance, when the quadrats were created, we did not give them permanent numbers. Added to this, was the fact that the team which collected the information in the second year was different. We therefore have two sets of data that cannot be compared. We are now using the data from the year 2009-10 as the baseline data and all our quadrats now have permanent numbers! In 13 locations, the plots have been mapped using a GPS device and maps recording the situation at a particular point of time have been downloaded and are stored for comparison in the future. Similarly, we have systematically commenced the process of taking photographs over different periods of time from the same location.

### **Fodder Development**

Nurseries to increase the availability of Cocksfoot, Tall Fescue, Brome, Perennial Rye, Napier and *Auns* were established in five areas. 473 nurseries were established on 18,794 square metres of land. 120.42 quintals of root-stock or seeds were produced during the year and an income of Rs 25,092 generated for the nursery persons. Given the demand for planting material, root-stock from common lands, private lands and even private nurseries had to be purchased. Just over 1,000 quintals of root-stock were purchased for nearly Rs 2,25,000.

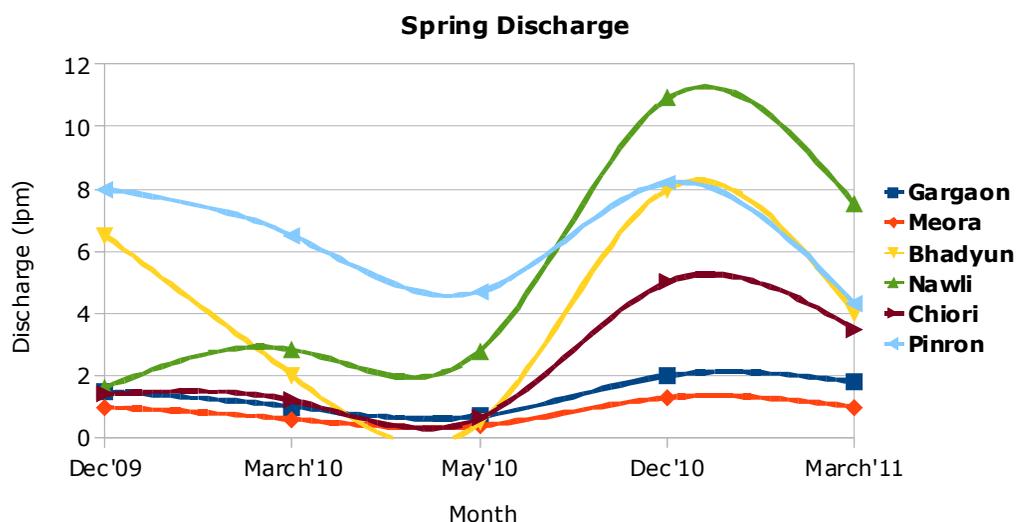
Plantation of 749.83 quintals of fodder was undertaken in 89 *nalis* or 1.78 hectares of common lands. Over a three year period, 2008-11, 673 households have benefited from increased fodder availability from 213 hectares of land. Fodder production as a consequence of planting has been 430.51 quintals. In the same period, natural regeneration - primarily as a consequence of improved protection has yielded 7,501.97 quintals of fodder. Yields from plantation of fodder are still an insignificant proportion of

the total fodder produced. The yields per hectare were the highest in Dewaldhar area at 63 quintals per hectare and the lowest in Naukuchiatal at 1.6 quintals per hectare.

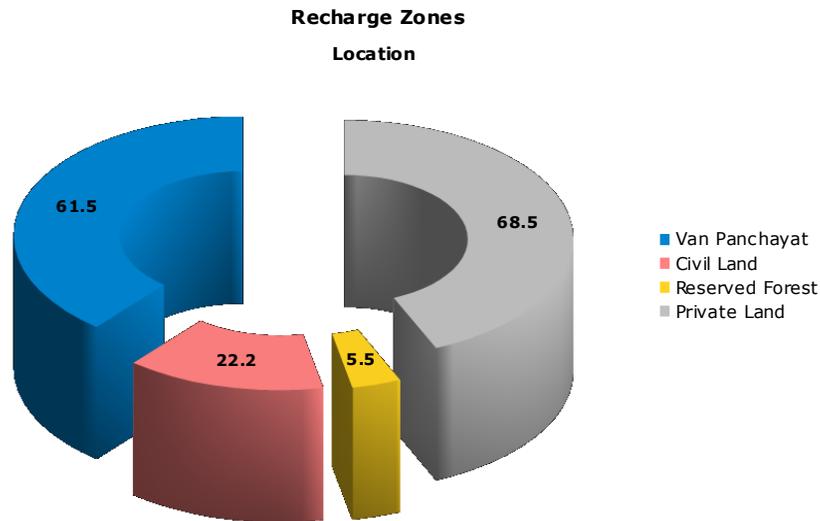
## Spring Recharge

We had commenced our efforts to recharge 30 springs using the principles of hydrogeology in the past year. By the end of March, work had commenced in earnest in 29 springs. The details of the soil and water conservation and community forestry efforts in the recharge zones as well, have been shared in the preceding sections. To facilitate implementation and management, 170 meetings were held in the year and 2,316 people participated in these meetings. Further, area level meetings were held with 153 people for detailed discussions on the plans, process and progress. The discharge of these springs is recorded on a monthly basis and water quality tested on an average once a quarter.

The discharge of six springs between December 2009 and March 2011 reveals a huge increase between May and December 2010. This was a direct consequence of the substantial rainfall during the monsoon. In the Gargaon and Meora springs, the discharge in March 2011 was only marginally higher than the previous year whereas in all the other springs the discharge nearly six months after the monsoon was substantially higher. The preliminary trends are promising but we will need to monitor this discharge over a longer period of time for significant inferences to be drawn regarding the behaviour of these springs after treatment. Further, the behaviour of these springs in years with relatively lower rainfall will be crucial for us and for families dependent on them.



In March 2011, our natural resource management team collated and reviewed the data from the mapping and survey of 20 of these springs. Here are some of the interesting insights. We had assumed - for no logical reason in retrospect - that a bulk of the recharge zones would actually fall in common lands. The reality is that a bulk actually falls in private lands. Further, the average size of a recharge area is 5.2 ha. The average population dependent on a spring is only 229.



There are four challenges that we are currently faced with:

- The low population dependent per spring may deter public investment. If the downstream benefits of these springs could be collated then the case would be stronger.
- In many instances, the spring is found on one slope of a hill whereas the recharge zone lies on the other side of the hill. In other words, those dependent on the spring and the families that must support recharge efforts are not the same.
- Water quality is, by and large, poor. In particular we are concerned about faecal contamination. Given the reality of sub-surface movement of water, if the recharge zone is above or close to a habitation and the spring lower, then will the water carry contaminants from septic tanks? Will the design of toilets need to be altered?
- Significant investments through the MGNREGS are being made in common lands. Often, the pressure to utilise those resources can lead to poor structures being constructed in recharge zones.

## Watershed Development

The watershed development approach has been adopted by us in two micro-watersheds, the Pirna watershed in Bageshwar district and the Chiori watershed in Nainital district. The efforts in common lands with regard to forestry, soil and water conservation, the recharge of springs (in Pirna) and inter-cultural operations have been mentioned earlier.

In the Chiori watershed, 1 *naula* was repaired and a 279 rmt long pipeline for irrigation was repaired. The repair of the irrigation pipeline will benefit 30 households. In the Pirna watershed, a new drinking water line 825 rmt long has been constructed for 34 households. Four rain-water harvesting tanks each of 5,000 litre capacity were constructed and efforts to recharge a spring are underway.

In the Pirna watershed, veterinary camps during the year benefited 609 livestock from 201 households. Similarly, activities for individual benefit included construction of a silo for fodder storage, 5 chaff cutters, 4 cattle-troughs, the renovation of 4 cattle-sheds, 1 biogas plant, 45 compost pits, distribution of 730 fruit plants and 262 kg of seed, and the supply of 296 chicks. Awareness activities pertaining to health, environmental education, forestry with a special focus on children were also undertaken during the year.

The watershed development works in the Pirna watershed have generated 1,290 person-days of work during the year.

## Strengthening Village Level Institutions

Fifty village level institutions - *van panchayats*, *van suraksha samitis* and SHGs are involved in managing and implementing our efforts with regard to forestry and fodder on common lands. There are 534 members in these groups including 361 women. In the Chiori watershed, there are 5 Village Development Committees and one watershed committee with a total membership of 26 members. In the Pirna watershed, there are 47 members in five Village Development Committees and one watershed committee.

To ensure that communities have a sense of ownership they are expected to contribute at least a fifth of the total cost of the efforts on common lands and half the cost of individual benefits. The total community contribution during the year has been as follows:

Fodder development - Rs 3,40,403.50

Pirna Watershed - Rs 2,61,458.00

Chiori Watershed (contribution held by VDCs) - Rs 60,521.00

Spring Recharge - Rs 2,70,230.62

In other words, communities contributed nearly Rs 9,50,000 during the year.

A modest beginning to assist communities to create plans to raise resources from MGNREGS has been made. Percolation tanks worth Rs 1 lakh were constructed in two villages in the Dewaldhar area and Rs 1.5 lakhs were spent on check-dams in the Reetha area.

## LIVELIHOOD SUPPORT

While recognising the relationship between agriculture and animal husbandry with other natural resource management efforts, for strategic clarity, they are being considered independently. The purpose of our efforts with regard to agriculture and animal husbandry are to strengthen the production base of families and to help contribute to sustained and increased incomes.



Our current programmes on agriculture and animal husbandry focus on the following:

- Promotion of sustainable agriculture and in particular non-pesticide management through farmer led trials, experiments and demonstrations and crop diversification.
- Promotion of community-based animal husbandry through better management practices, access and availability of improved nutrition, community-based care of livestock, breed improvement and risk mitigation.

### Highlights

- In the *Kharif* crop, 526 farmers carried out trials and 412 farmers in the *Rabi* crop.
- Trials on the experimental farm in Dewaldhar reveal an increase in production through use of vermi-compost in onion, *haldi* and peas. Similarly, a replication of the trials undertaken by farmers with ginger and garlic also recorded an increase in production.
- 278 farmers are cultivating herbs for supply to Kumaun Grameen Udyog.
- 2,137 livestock were treated in 86 camps.
- 450 quintals of fodder and 444 quintals of forage crops were produced on private lands.

## Agriculture and Horticulture

### Farmer-led trials

Trials on farmers fields have been supported for two years now. The trials focus on four basic elements: improving soil health through compost preparation; seed treatment; improved quality of planting material from nurseries through solarisation, seed treatment, provision of better compost and organic pest and disease control of the seedlings and, finally, simple organic methods to control pest and disease in crops. In *Kharif* 2010, 526 farmers attempted trials on their fields and in *Rabi* 2010-11, 412 farmers attempted these trials.

**Farmer-led trials in 2010-11**

Area	Kharif 10						Rabi 10-11					
	Total Farmers	Pulses	Compost	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains	Total Farmers	Pulses	Compost	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains
Reetha	79	15	51	60	0	4	55	1	23	27	0	4
Dewaldhar	58	9	1	31	0	15	70	11	0	40	0	19
Naukuchiatal	62	4	0	52	0	4	35	2	0	23	0	10
Pinron	207	0	40	132	0	35	147	2	29	12	0	104
Kathpuriyachina	22	2	0	10	0	10	29	6	0	10	0	13
Kasiyalekh	32	14	10	6	2	0	43	0	17	15	7	4
Suyalbari	66	1	38	26	0	1	33	0	7	16	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>526</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>317</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>412</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>164</b>

To facilitate these trials, 22 workshops at the area level were conducted and 471 farmers participated in them. The workshops covered the use of bio-inputs, the principles and process of solarisation, improved nursery raising and organic pest and disease management.

Two broad strategies were adopted. In Pinron and Naukuchiatal saturation was attempted. In other words, as many farmers as were interested were encouraged to attempt these methods. In the other areas, a few interested farmers in each hamlet were encouraged to

try these methods out. The objective is to identify an appropriate strategy based on impact. Documentation of the impact was a weak link. Further, since the size of the plot for the trials and control (where traditional methods were being adopted) varied, comparison was difficult. This was solved by measuring both the plots in each farmer's field. The quality of data has improved and the current trends clearly indicate the following:

- Compost preparation is popular and, in a shorter time, better quality compost is available.
- The cost of inputs for innovation are deemed high by most farmers since in comparison they do not use any other inputs for most of their crops.
- Production across areas and crops in *Rabi* 2010 was marginally higher in most of the trial plots as compared to the traditional ones. More importantly farmers observed a difference in the quality of the produce - colour/shine, keeping quality and taste.

The geographical expansion of land under these methods by those undertaking the trials and adoption by others are the two major indicators of success. Unfortunately, we are no closer to judging the success than we were a year ago.

A second element of this strategy of extension was to identify farmers who were convinced of the methods and to encourage them to turn into entrepreneurs who could become the source of inputs for these methods at the village level. The belief was that an incentive to earn a modest income from sale of inputs could provide an impetus to dissemination of these methods. There were 36 innovators but sadly their cumulative income through incentives was only Rs 12,432. This strategy needs to be reviewed and either improved upon or eschewed in the future.

### Experimental Farms

The experimental farms seek to undertake trials of practices that are relatively risky but which could be promoted in the future, to propagate 'quality' planting material and to supply produce for Chirag's facilities. There are two experimental farms, at Simayal - which is certified organic - and at Dewaldhar which is organic, though not certified.

The key activities at the Simayal farm during the year are as follows:

- Provision of inputs for trials by farmers - Activated Effective Micro-organisms (EM) and Nature Vel AG, Pant Bio-agent 3, Beauvaria bassiana, Neem Oil, vermicompost, Phosphorus solubilising bacteria and Azotobacter.
- Plant propagation and provision of planting material - 4,802 seedlings of 12 varieties of herbs, 1,000 seedlings of tomato, brinjal and chilly.
- Production - 330 litres of milk; vegetables for the Chirag training centre - marrow, capsicum, spinach, radish, cabbage, tomato, bean and lettuce; and 1,315 kg of fruits.

The Dewaldhar farm on the other hand was a little more adventurous and innovative during the year. Their key activities during the year included:

- Production - 8.5 kg of herbs; fruits - peach and kiwi (138 kg); capsicum, marrow, coriander, pea, garlic and onion for the Dewaldhar and Simayal training centres.
- Planting material - seedlings of brinjal, capsicum, pumpkin and fruit trees.
- Nursery - A nursery with 550 plants of peach and malta has been prepared.

At the Dewaldhar farm the following trials were attempted. The plot size between the traditional and trial plot, sowing date, seed-rate, spacing and date of sowing were identical.

- Use of quality vermi-compost on 1 square metre plots and a comparison with traditional compost
  - Onion - an increase in production of 500 gms
  - Haldi* - an increase in production of 300 gms
  - Pea - an increase in production of 1.3 kgs
- We decided to replicate two trials being conducted by farmers on their fields and compare them with traditional practices.
  - Ginger - 11 sq mtr plots - an increase in production of 6 kgs
  - Garlic - 50 sq mtr plots - an increase in production of 50 kgs

#### Crop Diversification

The cultivation of culinary herbs is being promoted on marginal lands as a crop diversification strategy. Initially, women were encouraged to cultivate herbs only on small plots of land. In the past few years, an increase in demand from Kumaun Grameen Udyog has led to more farmers cultivating herbs. In 2010-11, 278 farmers sold 222 kg of dried

herbs and 588 kg of green herbs. In the coming years, rather than expand the number of farmers, the scale of production of the existing farmers must be increased to ensure that their incomes grow. In the past year, only 3 farmers earned more than Rs 2,700 through the sale of herbs.

### Community-Based Animal Husbandry

We seek to promote better management practices, provide access to veterinary care through a cadre of community-based para-vets and improve access to better feed and fodder.

Eighty-six animal health camps were held in the year in which 2,137 livestock from 912 households were vaccinated. Goats and cows comprised almost 40% each, of the livestock that were vaccinated. Artificial insemination was provided to 566 cows and 256 buffaloes. The current success rate is 58%.

There are currently five community-based para-vets. These para-vets attended a five day refresher course organised by the Uttarakhand Livestock Development Board at Rishikesh. In addition to seeking to solve problems encountered during artificial insemination (AI) the para-vets were provided information about balanced diet for cattle, hay-stacking and storage of fodder in silage pits. These five para-vets currently provide services in nearly 50 villages. These para-vets charge for services that they provide at fixed rates. During the year, their cumulative income was Rs 126,102 with the para-vet from Simayal alone earning almost half this amount.

To improve fodder storage and management 17 silo towers, 63 chaff cutters and 203 cattle troughs were added during the year. 68 cattle sheds were renovated. 10 bio-gas plants were installed in the year. Three methods for preservation of fodder are being adopted; the use of Effective Micro-organisms (EM), silage pits and urea-molasses treatment. In 70 locations EM was used to treat 39 quintals of fodder and silage was used to store 28 quintals of fodder.

To increase production of fodder from private lands, grass was planted on 503.4 *nalis* of land. 468 farmers planted almost 200 quintals of grass on their land and the total production of fodder during the year was nearly 450 quintals. Similarly, forage crops - Maize, *Jai* and *Barsim* were cultivated on 268 *nalis* of land. The total production of forage crops was 444 quintals.

## RURAL LIVELIHOODS

In the recent past our livelihood efforts have focused on finance for development; the creation of market access for producers of agricultural and horticultural crops; and in the past two years on the formation of federations of self-help groups in Bageshwar district.



Over the past year a livelihood strategy has emerged. The key elements of the strategy are:

- A focus on poor women producers.
- A recognition that the poor, in particular, require an integrated livelihood strategy that includes agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, non-timber forest produce and other off-farm activities. Therefore the emphasis will not be exclusively on a single commodity or a single value chain but on all livelihood activities that necessitate an interface with the market.
- The identification, mobilisation and organisation of poor women producers into primary cooperatives at the village level. The primary roles of these cooperatives will be to facilitate access to inputs and credit for members and to facilitate marketing of the produce of the members.
- The creation of a company owned by the producers that will focus on six major elements: input supply, common logistical services, information provision, financial services, value addition and branding.
- To extend services, strengthen and facilitate the integration of the two federations of self-help groups (SHGs) in Bageshwar into the producer company.
- To strengthen existing SHGs of women to make them more efficient institutions and to reduce the dependence of members on informal sources of credit.
- To support existing micro-enterprises and to enable them to emerge as independent and viable institutions.
- To facilitate - with the aid of technology if necessary - the trading and exchange of produce amongst cooperatives and SHGs within the region.

- To facilitate product research, development and value addition. To ensure that the benefits of value addition in terms of a higher price realisation accrue to producers as well.

We have commenced rolling out this strategy and hope to have the key institutional elements in place in the next two years. The emergence and development of each of these cooperatives and the producer company as viable and independent entities may take a while longer.

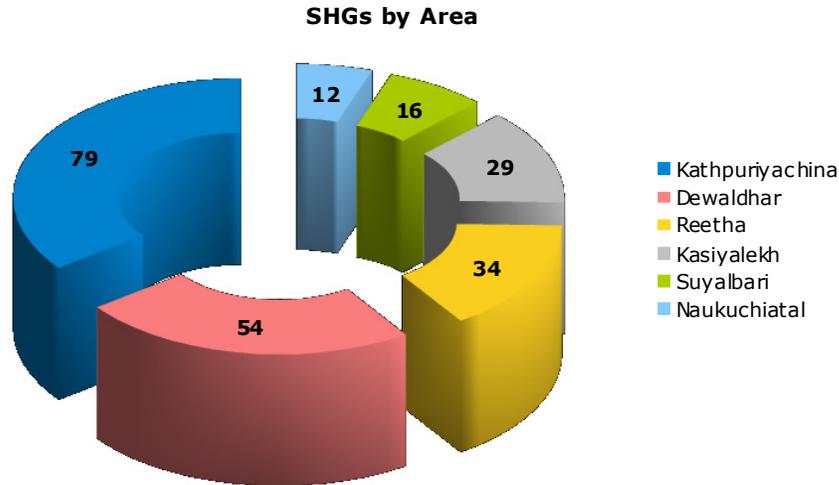
### Highlights

- 2,795 women in 224 SHGs with a cumulative saving of over Rs.55 lakhs.
- Two cooperatives - federations of SHGs in Bageshwar - have become operational with a combined membership of 1,504 women. The sales of both these cooperatives during the year was nearly Rs 4,00,000.
- Seven new cooperatives with a membership of 710 are being formed in Nainital district. 83% of the members belong to families that were identified as the poorest in their villages.
- Since 2007, marketing support to small and marginal farmers has facilitated procurement of 347 metric tons (MT) of fresh fruits and vegetables at a value of Rs 33,40,000.
- Three livestock based micro-enterprises have been formed which undertake value addition in milk-products, produce cattle feed and home-based remedies for livestock care.
- Sales of our partner Kumaun Grameen Udyog were nearly Rs 93 lakhs during the year.

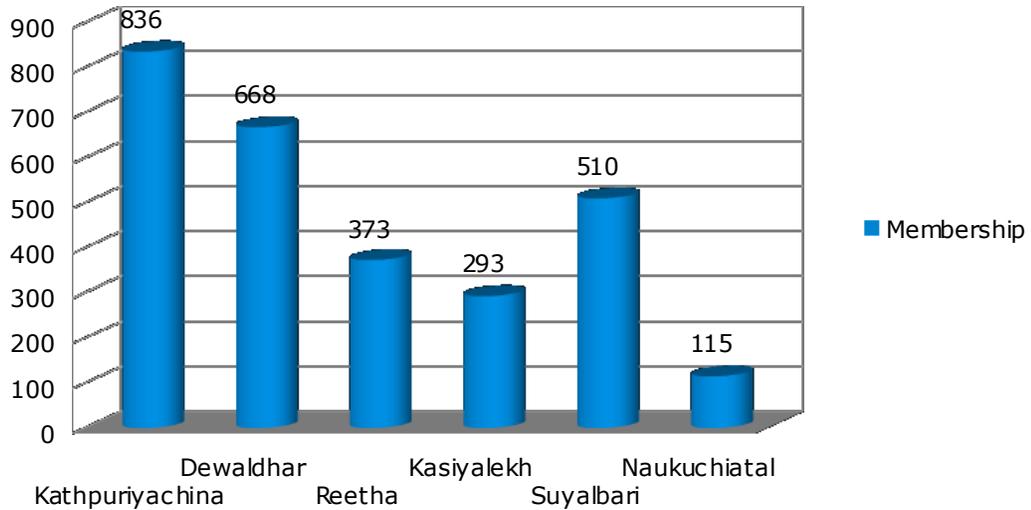
### Finance for Development

We currently work with 224 SHGs. These SHGs have a total membership of 2,795. The average membership per SHG is twelve. The SHGs in Suyalbari are an outlier with an average membership of 32. Of the total SHGs, 35% are based in Kathpuriyachina and these account for a third of the total membership. The total savings available with these

224 SHGs is just over Rs 55 lakhs. However, the average saving per member is rather low at Rs 1,981 per member. The average saving in the older groups is above Rs 3,500 whereas the groups in Kathpuriyachina, Suyalbari and Dewaldhar have a saving of less than Rs 1,400 per person.

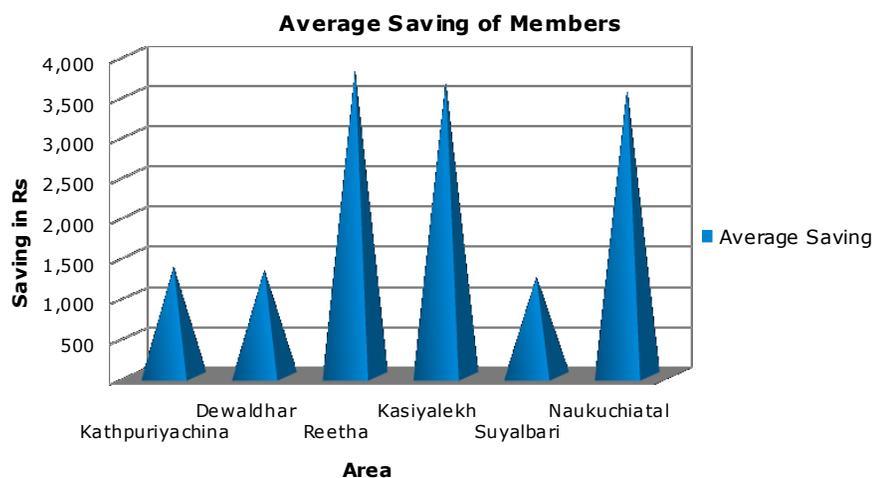


Membership of SHGs



While the habit of saving is in itself good, the savings need to grow. A bulk of the groups continue to save the same amount that they started with, whereas the amount saved per month should logically grow over time. We continue to wonder whether the primary motivation for women to join a group is access to credit or merely an opportunity to interact with other women in a formal setting. If we were to analyse the loans taken on an average per member from the savings, the amount is Rs 1,166. The average loans outstanding per group are Rs 14,500 and only 59% of the savings available with the women have been utilised. If credit is the primary reason for the membership in a SHG

not just must their savings increase but the value of the loans too should grow. Ideally, the SHGs should be borrowing at least three times their savings, not 3/5th of it.



## Producer Institutions

The SHGs created in Bageshwar district were federated in Dewaldhar and Kathpuriyachina areas into two cooperatives. Shri Mahadev Swayatt Sahkarita was created by 54 SHGs and 668 members. Shri Jagannath Sahkarita in Kathpuriyachina was created by 79 SHGs and 836 members. Mahadev Sahkarita used to run a Sunday *haat* and now runs a store in the Kafligair market where they sell agricultural produce, inputs and products specifically of value to women. Jagannath also runs a store in Kathpuriyachina. In addition to these small enterprises which also stock and sell produce from their members, these cooperatives with the support of the Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas focus on activities that reduce drudgery and promote livelihood options amongst their members. In the past year, they have focused on provision of seeds and agricultural implements, promotion of poultry, water tanks, sanitation, the cultivation of fodder, compost pits, knitting and nursery raising. Mahadev Sahkarita's sales in the past year were Rs 1,90,501 and Jagannath Sahkarita's sale was Rs 2,05,452.

Each cooperative has a governing body consisting of 11 members and in the past year has attempted to increase the membership and ownership of shares in their cooperatives.

There is enormous potential for enhancing the production base of the members of these cooperatives and in linking them to markets. In the coming year, we need to integrate their efforts into the efforts underway in other areas that Chirag works in.

The process of forming seven cooperatives in 13 villages in Reetha, Kasiyalekh, Suyalbari and Naukuchiatal areas has commenced. Based on the wealth ranking that was undertaken, 825 eligible families were identified in these villages. The emphasis was on ensuring that (a) ownership of the cooperatives rests with the poor women and (b) to include them in the process. 84% of the families that were identified were poor as per the wealth ranking. By the end of March, 710 women producers had become members of these seven cooperatives an average of 101 women per cooperative. Of the members, 83% are from poor households.

The meetings and training that have supported this process have led not just to membership but to the memorandum and articles of association of each cooperative being approved and the board of directors being identified. Pragati Swayatt Sahkarita comprising of members from Gargaon, Meora and Simayal was registered in February 2011 and in the coming months we hope that the other cooperatives will also get registered. The membership fee for the poor is Rs 25 and for members from middle-income families Rs 50. A share is for Rs 250.

In the coming year, each of these cooperatives will commence operations. Systems for management of the cooperatives, dissemination of cooperative principles, skills to plan and to manage finances will all have to be developed. More importantly, new initiatives to enhance the incomes and to strengthen the production base of these families will need to be invested in.

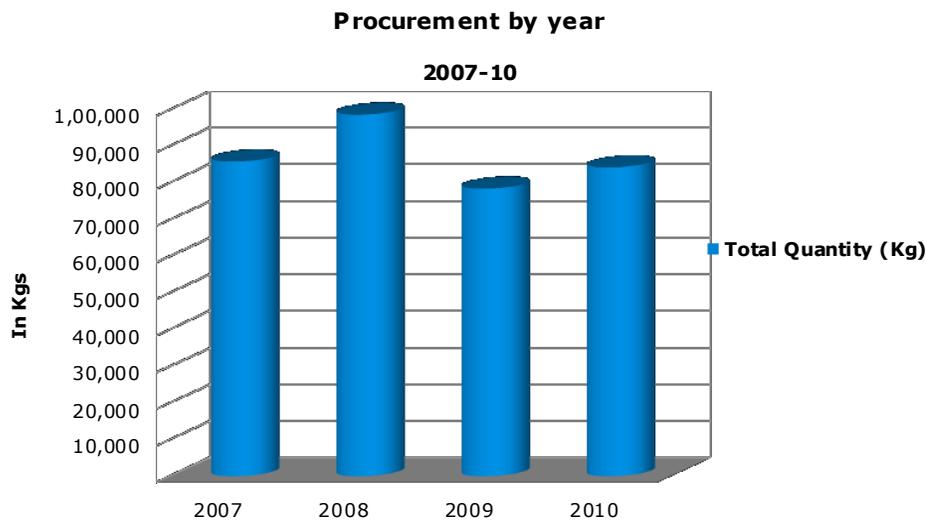
These cooperatives in principle have agreed to form a producer company with equity contributions of Rs 10,000 from each cooperative. Some of the cooperatives have identified a person to serve as the Director in the producer company. The memorandum and articles of association of the producer company have been formulated and the process of registering the company should be completed in the coming months.

### **Market Access for Farmers**

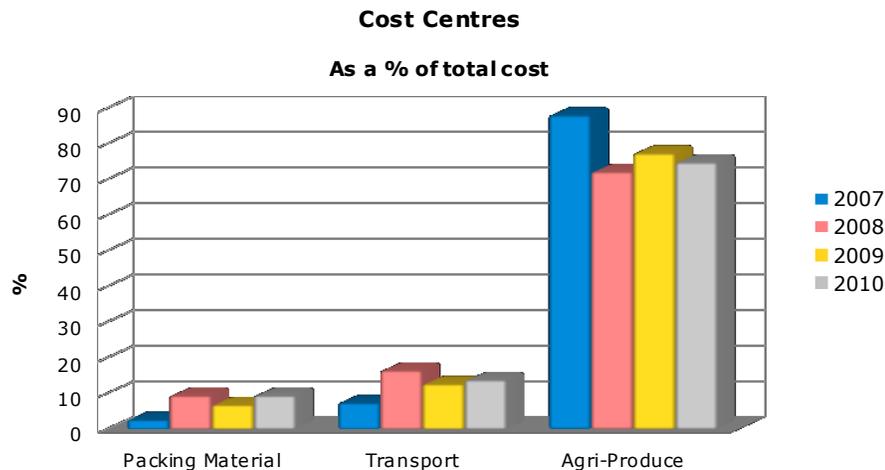
In 2007, we decided to provide small and marginal farmers with access to markets, in particular for their fresh fruits and vegetables. Collectives at the village level were formed to facilitate this. It was clear at the outset that once the viability of such an enterprise was established an independent institution to facilitate this would be created. The genesis for the formation of cooperatives lies in this experience.

A simple arrangement was evolved. A forward price was announced once every three days during the season. The collectives were to provide the produce, packed and graded. The cost of packing material would not be borne by the producers. By selling to organised retail and *mandis* elsewhere this cost would be recovered.

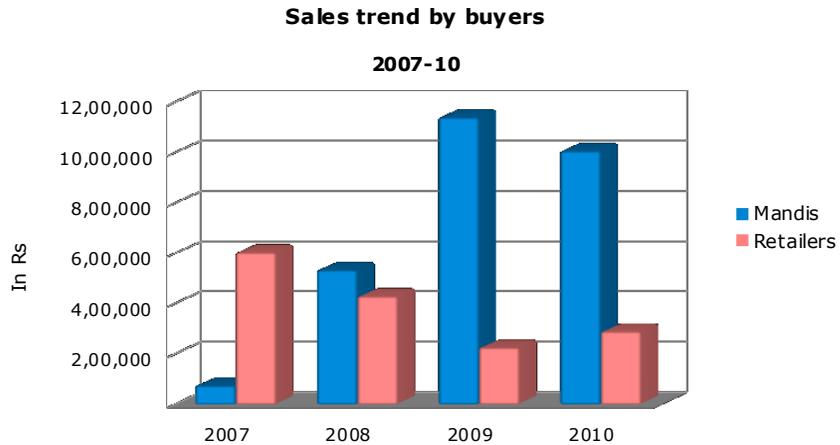
In 2010, fresh produce was procured from 272 farmers, up from 188 in 2007. A total of 347 metric tons (MT) of fresh produce was procured at a cost of nearly Rs 33,40,000. Over the four year period the direct costs of the operation were covered though the sale of the produce. In other words, even at this relatively small scale it was possible to cover direct costs.



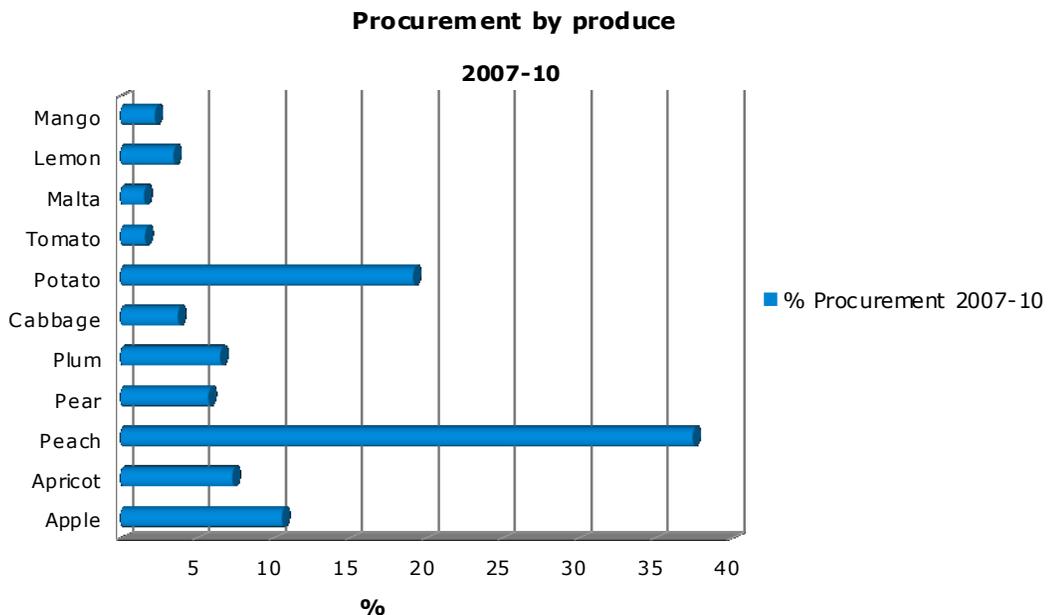
Given the vagaries of nature, the total volume of produce could vary. In terms of volume of procurement, 2008 was the best year.



An analysis of the major cost centres reveals that packing material alone accounted for 7.5% of the total cost of procurement, and transportation another 13.08%. In other words, a fifth of the procurement cost. After 2007, as the fuel prices increased, the expenditure on transport also rose but since the sale prices were also relatively higher the proportionate expenditure on transport remained more or less the same. In 2010, the average cost per kg - across all fruits and vegetables - of transportation was Rs 1.98 and packing material cost Rs 1.35 per kg.



In the first two years, a bulk of the produce was sold to retail buyers. In the last two years, *mandi's* in Delhi and elsewhere accounted for a bulk of the sales. There are primarily three reasons for this. Firstly, the *mandis* are able to absorb larger quantities and different qualities. Secondly, retailers require the best quality and often we were unable to supply the requisite quantity of the required quality. In cabbage for example, the variety



demanded in retail stores is very different from the quality cultivated in the area. Finally, supplying to multiple commission agents in a *mandi* is simpler and less demanding than supplying to organised retail despite the fact that the price they offer is invariably higher.

Peach and potato alone accounted for a little more than half the procurement. However, in the last two years, other commodities such as plum, apricot and lemon have started picking up.

In addition to facilitation of sale of fresh fruits and vegetables, we also assisted farmers in other areas in selling their agricultural produce and also provided potato seed. In 2010, nearly 9.5 quintals of *haldi*, red chillies, *masoor* and *rajma* were sold by farmers to Kumaun Grameen Udyog. Between 2007 and 2010 we made available almost 96 MT of potato seed that was procured from the Lahaul-Spiti Potato Growers Cooperative in Manali. In 2007 the landed price of a quintal of potato seed was Rs 1,900 but this had risen to Rs 2,700 in 2009. In 2010, while the price dipped marginally, the net benefit per quintal to farmers as compared to the price at which seed was available in Haldwani was almost Rs 1,000.

In the past four years we have demonstrated that it is indeed possible for farmers to benefit through collective efforts at marketing. The creation of decentralised institutions with common services provided through an entity owned by them will provide individual groups incentives to improve the quality of their produce, the grading and sorting and even to potentially diversify their production base.

### **Livestock Based Micro-Enterprises**

With production of fodder from common and private lands increasing and with efforts to improve the breed as well as management practices, it was clear at the outset that micro-enterprises should simultaneously be created to support these efforts.

Three livestock based micro-enterprises were created in 2009-10 and commenced their operations in earnest in the past year.

The Parvatiya Pashupalak Sangh (PPS) at Reetha is a federation of 12 SHGs from five villages. The board consists of 24 members - two from each SHG and the office-bearers have a term of one year. PPS produces cattle feed using locally available crops - maize,

soya bean, millets and wheat bran. Mineral mixture, oil cake and salt are procured from the *mandi*. The objective is to make available 'quality' cattle feed based on inputs that are locally available and appropriate for this agro-climate and to simultaneously provide an impetus for continued production of these crops. During the year 5.7MT of cattle feed was produced. Total sale of cattle feed was Rs 125,406. PPS's constraints are space for their operations and access to working capital. While a kg of PPS's feed costs more than the feed made available through the cooperative dairy, the quantity that needs to be consumed per livestock is half that of the feed supplied by the cooperative.

The Gaupalak Sangh (GPS) at Dhokane was formed by four SHGs from as many villages. GPS produces home remedies for livestock care using herbs that are available in the region. They currently produce six home remedies for livestock care. During the year they produced 158 kg of their remedies and their sale was just over Rs 50,000.

The Agar Pashudhan Vikas Sangh (APVS) at Kasiyalekh was formed by four SHGs. APVS has a large governing body consisting of 26 members. APVS procures milk and produces *desi ghee*. Initially the unit was set up in Buribana but since the availability of milk was low, they relocated their unit to Sunkiya. APVS bought 10,492 litres of milk during the year and sold milk (no-fat i.e. sans cream), 74 kg of *paneer* and 193 kg of *ghee*. Their sales were the highest at Rs 2,44,393 but they were the only micro-enterprise to record a loss during the year. While the demand for *ghee* far exceeds supply, APVS needs to find a market for the milk after the cream has been extracted. They also need to significantly increase the production of milk to benefit from economies of scale that are currently not available.

In Dewaldhar, a small collective has just been created called the Bakari Palak Samooh. Nineteen goats from Rajasthan - Sirohi and Totapari variety - were provided to the six members of this group. Members will make available the kids to other families interested in rearing goats in the area and they will also be included into the federation. The goats were introduced in recognition of the fact that goats continue to be the mainstay of poor families, and to try and improve the breed in the area.

### **Partnership with Kumaun Grameen Udyog**

Farmers that Chirag works with, produce culinary herbs and agricultural produce that Kumaun Grameen Udyog helps market. Similarly, apricot seeds are also procured from farmers that Chirag works with. Kumaun Grameen Udyog's (KGU's) core objectives

remain the provision of employment opportunities and efforts to improve the income of families in the area. In the past year, KGU has directly commenced supporting improvements in education and health care in the area through surpluses that it generates.

With a small team of 12 people, KGU's sales were Rs 92.86 lakhs during the year - a growth of nearly 19% over the preceding year. The two Kilmora shops accounted for just over 1/4th of the sales. Introduction of a facility whereby customers could pay using their credit cards contributed a fifth of the sales from the shops. In 2010-11, sale of garments, knitted products and culinary herbs marked a substantial growth over the previous year while the sale of agricultural produce and energy efficient devices was much lower than anticipated.

KGU supports 23 producers who are involved in weaving, four groups of roughly 125 women engaged in knitting, and procures from nearly 300 families in the region.

### **Pilot at Patal Bhuvaneshwar**

We commenced our efforts here to integrate sacred values, conservation and rural livelihoods. We had no prior experience of working in a place of religious significance or on the issue of tourism. The first few years were exciting as we worked with the temple committee, guides, village institutions, shop-keepers and communities in the periphery of the village of Patal Bhuvaneshwar. Soon, we became aware of our limitations and the complexity of working in a place of religious significance and more importantly the varied stakeholders in such a location.

While the limits to what could be achieved in the immediate vicinity of the temple became clear our efforts to improve rural livelihoods had started showing results. Poultry, improvements in fodder access, system of rice intensification, off-season vegetable cultivation and value addition in fruits all seemed promising.

Our activities in the past year in particular with regard to natural resource management and rural livelihoods include:

- 25 members from 8 groups planted improved varieties of fodder on 28 *nalis* of land. 25 quintals of fodder were planted during the year. Further, three decentralised individual nurseries for fodder production were set-up with four quintals of root slips

to meet the demand/requirement for fodder from other members of the community.

- Forty improved cattle-troughs to reduce wastage of fodder were constructed in 9 villages with half the cost being borne by families.
- Two farmers have commenced off-season vegetable cultivation as a livelihood activity and they sold 800 kgs of marrow and cauliflower during the year.
- Cultivation of rice using the System of Rice Intensification was attempted by 17 farmers in 2010. Quite clearly the number of shoots, stalks and grains per plant are much higher than in traditional rice-cultivation. Further, there is adequate evidence that production can on average increase by 60-70%.
- In the past few years, the efforts to promote poultry in the area have led to three large and 15 small units emerging. During the year, another 465 chicks were introduced in the region.

We may have to reconsider our decision to stay on in this area. The distance makes integration with other activities of Chirag difficult and we do not see the area as one for large scale expansion in the future.

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

In an effort to share our expertise and to increase our impact without having to do it all on our own, we have been providing technical support to other organisations in the state. In the past we have provided technical support on watershed development and catchment area protection.



In the past year, we have been supporting three organisations - including Chirag's own teams - in the cultivation of fodder on common and private lands. This technical support is being provided to the Integrated Fodder and Livestock Development Programme of the Himmotthan Society. During the year, cultivation of fodder was undertaken by these three organisations in 108 hectares (ha) of common lands and 28.8 ha of private land in 36 villages of seven blocks in four districts of the region.

Organisation	Villages	Block	District	Area Covered (ha)	
				Common	Private
Himalayan Sewa Samiti	6	Kanalichina	Pithoragarh	18	4.8
Himalayan Gram Vikas Samiti	5	Berinag Gangolihat	Pithoragarh	15	4
Chirag	25	Ramgarh, Dhari, Hawalbagh, Bageshwar	Nainital, Almora Bageshwar	75	20
	<b>36</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>28.8</b>

Whilst Chirag's own area teams had to bear the brunt of frequent visits, the other two organisations were visited four times during the course of the year. The field visits sought to accomplish the following: support the formation of livestock producer groups; provide technical support for soil and water conservation, creation of contour terraces, inter-cultural operations, mulching and compost preparation; monitoring of the progress of the federations and promotion of improved feeding practices.

Chirag's General Body comprises of thirty one members and nine of them form Chirag's Governing Body. The Governing Body consists of members with diverse backgrounds and interests.



### Chirag Governing Body

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Mr Kanai Lall	Chairperson and Founder Geologist and retired corporate executive
Dr Madan Lal Dewan	Vice-chairperson Chairperson of HIMCON, formerly chief of FAO's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
Ms Kamla Bhasin	Member Gender specialist, activist, founder-member of Jagori
Mr Morad Chowdhury	Member Architect and partner, Kanvinde Rai and Chowdhury Architects and Engineers
Prof Bhushan K Joshi	Member Political Scientist, formerly Vice-Chancellor of Kumaun University
Prof Malavika Karlekar	Member Ethnographer, formerly of Centre for Women's Development Studies
Mr Radhesh Lall	Member Engineer and entrepreneur
Dr Rajesh Thadani	Member Founder and Chief Executive of CEDAR, formerly Executive Director of Chirag, independent consultant and entrepreneur
Dr Prashant Upadhyaya	Member Paediatric Surgeon, graphic designer and formerly Executive Director of Chirag

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Mr Radhesh Lall is the son of Mr Kanai Lall. None of the other members are related to each other.

## STAFF

In March 2011, there were 153 people working full-time at Chirag. This included twelve who were on secondment to Kumaun Grameen Udyog. Chirag's strength lies in the fact that (a) 95% of the staff are from the state and, more importantly, (b) that over the past two decades it has invested in its teams. Today, a significant proportion of the leadership of the programme and area teams rests with individuals with relatively poor academic qualifications but strong experience and expertise. Professionals with diverse backgrounds - micro-biology, forestry, education, accounting, law, social work, engineering and health-care comprise only a sixth of Chirag's total staff.

Women comprise 35% of the total staff and account for nearly two-fifths of the programme team and a third of the administration and finance team. The proportion of women in the organisation has remained more or less constant over several years.

### Staff Breakup

	<b>Programmes</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Administration and Finance</b>
Women	50	-	04
Men	85	7	07
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>11</b>

## OUR PARTNERS

The following individuals and institutions have made our work possible through their support and encouragement.

### Institutions

Indian

ACWADAM

A & A Book Trust

B2R Technologies Pvt Ltd

Council for Advancement of Peoples Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)

GB Pant University of Agriculture and Technology

Himjoli Pvt Ltd

Himmotthan Society  
 Jodo Gyan  
 Kumaun Grameen Udyog  
 National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)  
 Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust  
 Sir Ratan Tata Trust  
 TARAA Human Development and Facilitation Consultants Pvt Ltd  
 Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for the Himalayas  
 Woodstock School

International

Alstom Corporate Foundation - France  
 Berkeley Reafforestation Trust - United Kingdom (UK)  
 CAF-America (Nike Foundation) - USA  
 Canada India Village Aid - Canada  
 Paul Hamlyn Foundation - UK  
 PRAYAS (Oxfam) - India  
 Room to Read - USA  
 The Ford Foundation - USA  
 University of Washington at Seattle - USA  
 Unniti Foundation - USA

### **Individuals**

From India

Ashish & Deepa Arora - Satoli	Arvind Kumar - Gurgaon
Vishaka Chanchani - Bengaluru	Lalita Manjunath - Bengaluru
Arundhati Deosthale - Gurgaon	Siddhartha Menon - Madanapalle
Yuvraj C Galada - New Delhi	Dr Ruma Mukherjee - Ramgarh
Sarath Kumar Guttikunda - New Delhi	Arko Mukhopadhyaya - New Delhi
Sabiha Hashmi - New Delhi	Dinesh Rastogi - Bhimtal
QA Hashmi - New Delhi	Ruth Rastogi - Bhimtal
Nalini Jayaram - Bengaluru	Pankaj Wadhwa - Basgaon
Atima Joshi - Singapore	Dr Mahendra C Watsa - Mumbai

From Abroad

Anita Doron & Adam Huggins - US, Canada, Israel

Sukumar Haldar - USA

Angelina Kohli and Devin Kohli - UK

Gita Krenek - New Zealand

Elia Olive O'Hara - USA

Barbara Stirk - UK

Michel Thill - Luxembourg

Ranganathan Yogeshwar - Luxembourg

### **Interns and Volunteers**

During the year, we hosted students from Tata Institute of Social Sciences - Mumbai, Nirmala Niketan - Mumbai, Ambedkar University - New Delhi, Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology - Gandhinagar, Lady Irwin College - New Delhi, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya - New Delhi, Delhi School of Economics & Sociology - Delhi, Mahindra United World College - Pune and Guelph University - Canada. Our partnerships with other institutions that facilitate volunteering led to our hosting volunteers from Grassroutes - Bengaluru, I - Volunteer - New Delhi, CAMVOL -UK, SAGE - USA, and Indicorps - Ahmedabad.

The semester abroad in partnership with the University of Washington at Seattle continues and 14 students spent the Fall 2010 semester with us. The courses were taught by Dr Tapoja Chaudhuri and Keith Goyden coordinated the programme.

In addition to these structured programmes with academic institutions or institutions promoting voluntarism, each year several individuals choose to volunteer with us for relatively short durations. During the year, we were fortunate to host Meera Chikermane (New Delhi), Arpita Tripathi (Hyderabad), Karishma Advani (Mumbai), Ishita (Bengaluru), Rishubh Dev (Lucknow), Frederic Tibbs (UK) and Samira Somany (USA).

Interns, fellows and volunteers who made Chirag and the region their home for long periods of time with us during the year included Swati Savarn (Puducherry), Natalie Campbell (USA); Digant Shah (Nagpur) and Yamini Vijayan (Bengaluru) from the Swades ki Khoj programme; Ann Rajan (USA) and Megha Mathur (USA) - Indicorps fellows; and Gita Krenek (New Zealand).

We wish to thank the following:

- The residents of villages that we work in, and in particular - the women, men, young people and children we work directly with, who continue to inspire us, tolerate us and support our efforts.
- All those individuals and institutions that have reposed their faith in us.
- Our general body and governing body who ensure that we do not deviate from the path and are a source of constant encouragement and guidance.
- Three wonderful ladies of the region - Dr Ruma Mukherjee from Ramgarh and Ann Mukerjee of Satkhol for their time, effort and enthusiasm; and the latest addition Gita Krenek, currently from Sitla.
- Anita Doron and Adam Huggins for adding to the pool of images of the region and our work.
- Puja Jawahar, Shalini Sinha and Prashant Upadhyaya who ensure that we are relatively presentable to the external world.



## TRAINING

Given the fact that the Simayal training centre was essentially constructed to support the training of young people it is not surprising that this programme led to the utilisation of the training centre for 139 days. In terms of the number of participants though, the rural livelihoods and education programmes accounted for a bulk of the participants. The occupancy of the training centres was greater during the year as compared to the preceding year while the number of participants was substantially lower.

### Training Centre Utilisation – Simayal, Dewaldhar and Dhokane

Topic	Community Members		Other Institutions		Chirag Staff		Total	
	Days	Participants	Days	Participants	Days	Participants	Days	Participants
Young People	138	306	1	7	0	41	139	354
Agriculture/Horticulture	4	86	0	0	4	48	8	134
Education	39	523	1	28	0	33	40	584
Exposure Visits	0	0	16	114	0	9	16	123
Health	7	144	0	1	7	77	14	222
Rural Livelihoods	27	494	0	11	9	117	36	622
Fodder, Forestry & NRM	3	35	2	51	14	135	19	221
Water	1	25	1	36	4	59	6	120
Chirag Staff- Miscellaneous	0	0	0	0	2	68	2	68
Miscellaneous	0	0	74	15	0	0	74	15
Watershed Dev.	2	48	4	30	1	29	7	107
Village Level Inst.	2	59	0	0	0	0	2	59
	<b>223</b>	<b>1,720</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>616</b>	<b>363</b>	<b>2,629</b>

## VOLUNTARY DISCLOSURE

Chirag seeks to voluntarily disclose the following information in the spirit of transparency.

### Governance

- At least two-thirds of the members of the Governing Body are unrelated to each other by blood or marriage.
- The Executive Director is not related to any member of the Governing Body by blood or marriage.
- Elections to the Governing Body are held as per rules of the Society. However, no policy of rotation of members of the Governing Body is followed.
- No members of the Governing Body received any remuneration or reimbursement from Chirag during the year. However, an expenditure of Rs 1,150 was incurred by us pertaining to travel of a member to attend a meeting of the Governing Body.
- The Governing Body met more than twice in the last year with the requisite quorum.
- Minutes of the meeting were documented, read out and approved in the subsequent meeting but were not circulated in advance.
- The General Body of the Society approved the Annual Report and the audited financial statements.

### Benefits to Staff

<b>Gross Salary and Benefits</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Total</b>
(Rupees per month)			
Less than 5,000	31	23	54
5,000 - 10,000	47	27	74
10,000 - 15,000	15	03	18
15,000 - 25,000	05	01	06
more than 25,000	01	-	01

Note: Gross salary includes all benefits payable by the organisation.

### Staff Remuneration (Gross monthly salary+Benefits) in Rupees per annum

Head of the organisation	Rs. NIL
Highest paid full time regular staff	Rs. 344,756/- per year
Lowest paid full time regular staff	Rs. 49,036/- per year

Note: This includes basic salary, cost of living allowance, provident fund (including Chirag's contribution), medical benefits, medical and accident insurance and scholarship. All figures are correct as on 31st March 2011.

### Cost of Travel

Total cost of international travel incurred by Chirag during the year - NIL

Total cost of national travel incurred by Chirag during the year - Rs 135,525/-

### Our Statutory Auditor

R Balasubramanian  
Partner  
S Ramanand Aiyar and Co.  
708 Surya Kiran Building,  
19 Kasturba Gandhi Marg,  
New Delhi-110001

### Our Bankers

- State Bank of India
- Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation of India Ltd.
- Nainital Almora Kshetriya Grameen Bank
- Almora District Cooperative Bank Ltd.
- Nainital District Cooperative Bank Ltd.

### Registration Details

- The Central Himalayan Rural Action Group (Chirag) is a Society registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act of 1860. Registration No. 16928, dated 29<sup>th</sup> July 1986.
- The Central Himalayan Himalayan Rural Action Group (Chirag) is authorized to receive foreign contributions as per the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act 1976. Registration No. 231650446, dated 5<sup>th</sup> July 1987.
- Chirag is registered under Sections 12A and 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961.
  - Section 12A - No. CIT-VI/TE (276)/86/1292 dated 9/1/1987
  - Section 80G-No. DIT (E) 2007-2008/C245/1918 dated 21/09/2007

## : ACCOUNTS

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group  
Balance Sheet as on 31st March 2011

	<b>Current Year (Rs)</b>	<b>Previous Year (Rs)</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Corpus Fund	47,237,178	45,806,931
Reserve Fund	2,584,166	172,613
Fixed Assets Utilisation Fund	27,124,355	27,875,648
Transport Fund	526,144	526,144
Chirag Hospital Project Fund	6,920	6,575
Reafforestation Fund	1,270,847	1,270,847
Chirag Education Fund	813,641	3,166,201
Current Liabilities	6,361,229	4,930,365
	<b>85,924,480</b>	<b>83,755,324</b>
<b>Assets</b>		
Fixed Assets	27,124,355	27,875,648
Investments	47,925,945	16,525,945
Current Assets, Loans and Advances		
Cash, Bank Balance and Term Deposit	10,405,968	38,902,901
Loans and Advances	464,212	446,830
Security Deposit (endorsed in favour of Government Authorities)	4,000	4,000
	<b>85,924,480</b>	<b>83,755,324</b>

Signed on behalf of Chirag

Chairman: Kanai Lall

Member: Morad Chowdhury

Member: Prashant Upadhyaya

Executive Director: V K Madhavan

Manager Accounts and Administration: B K Kabdwal

In terms of our report of even date annexed

For S Ramanand Aiyar and Co.

Chartered Accountant

Registration No. 000990N

R Balasubramanian

Partner

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group  
Receipts and Payments Accounts for the year ended as on 31st March 2011

<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Current Year (Rs)</b>	<b>Previous Year (Rs)</b>
Balance as on 1st April 2010	38,804,069	17,876,052
<b>Project Funding</b>		
Foreign Contribution	26,874,041	14,249,489
Local Contribution	5,210,165	4,168,386
Corpus Fund	-	30,000,000
Rural Health Services	678,550	402,867
Donations	503,440	1,732,891
Interest	2,707,970	907,077
Others	3,126,685	2,722,848
	<b>77,907,920</b>	<b>72,059,610</b>
<b>Payments</b>		
Canada India Village Aid (CIVA)	1,574,659	1,180,362
Berkeley Reafforestation Trust	1,672,671	1,977,075
Ford Foundation	12,391,469	10,042,730
Room to Read	1,539,717	1,820,408
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	703,738	1,133,632
Alstom Corporation Foundation	1,387,711	550,269
CAF America (Nike Foundation)	1,243,291	-
Unniti Foundation	334,753	56,588
PRAYAS	25,882	-
Other Payments (FCRA)	3,200,451	2,142,370
CAPART (WS)	555,289	1,886,703
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	-	852,289
Sir Ratan Tara Trust (Small Grant Programme)	346,653	-
NABARD	966,381	864,991
Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement Project for Himalayas	1,183,313	1,124,436
Peoples' Science Institute (Himmothan Cell)	-	1,012
Himmothan Society (IFLDP)	2,143,058	1,660,487
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)	-	295,744
Rajeshwar & Susheela Dayal Charitable Trust	262,765	289,017
TARAA (Human Development Facilitation Consultants Pvt.)	678,529	-
Chirag Hospital Project	20	1,550,140
Rural Health Services	621,857	405,392
Chirag School	217,002	770,824
Other Payments	36,662,087	4,651,072
Balance on 31st March 2011	10,196,623	38,804,069
	<b>77,907,920</b>	<b>72,059,610</b>

**Central Himalayan Rural Action Group**  
**Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended as on 31st March 2011**

<b>Income</b>	<b>Current Year (Rs)</b>	<b>Previous Year (Rs)</b>
<b>Project Funding</b>		
Foreign Contribution	26,874,041	11,736,228
Local Contribution	5,210,165	4,168,386
Donations	503,440	632,891
Rural Health Services	678,550	402,867
Interest	1,239,064	718,934
Others	3,024,779	1,864,099
Projects in Progress	4,927,525	11,922,772
	<b>42,457,563</b>	<b>31,446,177</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>		
Canada India Village Aid (CIVA)	1,546,659	1,180,362
Berkeley Reafforestation Trust	1,672,671	1,977,075
Ford Foundation	12,391,469	10,121,675
Room to Read	1,539,717	1,820,408
Paul Hamlyn Foundation	703,738	1,133,632
Alstom Corporation Foundation	1,354,219	503,630
CAF America (Nike Foundation)	866,732	-
Unniti Foundation	334,753	56,588
PRAYAS	25,882	-
Other Payments (FCRA)	1,485,229	503,467
CAPART (WS)	555,289	1,886,703
Sir Ratan Tata Trust (Small Grant Programme)	346,653	-
Sir Ratan Tata Trust	-	852,289
NABARD	966,381	864,991
Uttaranchal Livelihood Improvement		
Project for Himalayas	1,183,313	1,124,436
Peoples' Science Institute (Himmothan Cell)	-	1,012
Himmothan Society (IFLDP)	2,143,058	1,660,487
Sir Dorabji Tata Trust (SDTT)	-	295,744
Rajeshwar Susheela Dayal Charitable Trus	262,765	26,059
TARAA	678,529	-
CHIRAG Hospital Project	20	140
Rural Health Services	511,344	415,804
Chirag School	212,008	473,826
Other Payments	8,046,520	6,504,865
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>36,826,949</b>	<b>31,403,193</b>
Available Funds	5,630,614	42,984
	<b>42,457,563</b>	<b>31,446,177</b>

Ajay Singh Bisht  
Alka Mer  
Aloka J Hiremath  
Anand Singh Bisht  
Anil Chandra Binwal  
Anil Keshari  
Anoop Singh  
Arjun Singh  
Asha Sah  
Bahadur Singh Mehra  
Basanti Bisht  
Bhagat Singh Thapliyal  
Bharati Jalal  
Bhaskaranand Joshi  
Bhim Singh Negi  
Bhupal Singh Bisht  
Bhupal Singh Jeena  
Bhuwan Chandra Pant  
Bhuwan Singh Negi  
Bimla Bisht  
Binod Kumar Pandey  
Bipin Kumar Kabdwal  
Bipin Kumar Negi  
Champa Pandey  
Chandan Singh Bisht  
Chandan Singh Chamiyal  
Chandan Singh Mehta  
Chandrakala  
Deepa Bhagat  
Deepa Joshi  
Deepa Palariya  
Devendra Singh Nyal  
Dharmanand Kabdwal  
Dinesh Pandey  
Diwan Chandra  
Diwan Ram  
Diwan Singh  
Diwan Singh Mehta  
Dungar Singh Negi  
Durga Bisht  
Ganesh Singh  
Ganesh Singh Aswal  
Ganga Joshi  
Geeta Bisht  
Geeta Bisht Rautela  
Girish Chandra Budhani  
Govind Singh Bisht  
Harendra Singh Nayal  
Harendra Singh Sizwali  
Harish Chandra Arya  
Harish Chandra Palariya  
Hema Bisht  
Jagdish Mishra  
Janki Bisht  
Jaswant Singh Bisht

Jitendra Singh  
Kailash Chandra Joshi  
Kalawati Pandey  
Kamla Bisht  
Kanchan Arya  
Keshav Dutt Joshi  
Khasti Mer  
Khushal Singh  
Kishore Singh Negi  
Kishore Singh Rautela  
Krishan Chandra Bhandari  
Krishan Kumar Nayal  
Kuldeep Kumar Thapliyal  
Kundan Singh Latwal  
Kunti Bisht  
Kusum Rawat  
Kusum Tiwari  
Lakhan Singh  
Lal Singh Dangwal  
Lalit Mohan Tiwari  
Lalit Tiwari  
Lata Harbola  
Leela Joshi  
Leela Pandey  
Leela Raikwal  
Madhavi Dangwal  
Mahendra Singh Bisht  
Mahendra Singh Bisht (Dr)  
Mahendra Singh Raikwal  
Mamta Mer  
Manish Kumar  
Manish Kumar Singh  
Manju Rautela  
Manoj Kumar Pandey  
Manoj Mishra  
Mariam Bhatt  
Maya Bisht  
Maya Pandey  
Meera Bisht  
Mohan Singh  
Mohan Singh Bisht  
Mohan Singh Sambhal  
Mohd. Shehfar Rasool  
Munni Bisht  
Munni Tamta  
Murlidhar Bhatt  
Nandan Singh  
Naveen Bhatt  
Neema Arya  
Neetu Mehra  
Neomi Pal Singh  
Nirmala Mehra  
Om Prakash Pandey  
Pan Singh Bisht  
Pan Singh Mehta

Pankaj Singh Shahi  
Poonam Negi  
Pooran Chandra Joshi  
Pooran Singh Raikwal  
Pooran Singh Sambhal  
Prakash Chandra  
Prema Janoti  
Prema Tiwari  
Pritam Singh  
Pushpa Negi  
Rajendra Singh Bisht  
Rajendra Singh Dangwal  
Rajendra Singh Jeena  
Rajendra Singh Negi  
Rajesh Singh Nayal  
Rajni Bisht  
Ram Singh Bisht  
Ramesh Chandra Gutholia  
Ramesh Chandra Joshi  
Ramesh Chandra Palariya  
Reeta Singh  
Rekha Rani  
S Shylaja  
Sangeeta Rani  
Sanjay Joshi  
Sanjay Tiwari  
Santosh Kumar  
Santosh Singh  
Satish Kumar Tamta  
Shailesh Kumar Pant  
Shamsher Singh Mehra  
Shankar Singh  
Shubhangi Shukla  
Suman Das  
Sundar Lal  
Sundar Singh Nayal  
Sundeep Dutt Bhatt  
Sunil Kumar Tamta  
Sunita Arya  
Sunita Dighe  
Surendra Singh Negi  
Suresh Kumar  
Tej Singh  
Thakur Singh  
Trilok Singh  
Triveni Sati  
Tulsi Negi  
Umakant Sharma  
Uttam Singh  
V Rajiv  
Vijay Bhatt  
Vikas Kumar  
Vikram Kaushal  
V K Madhavan



# Chirag

Central Himalayan Rural Action Group

Village Simayal

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Nainital District

Uttarakhand

+91 5942 285738

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info@chirag.org

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