

Shodhene

Youth Action Research on
Gender, Education, Skills and
Empowerment in India

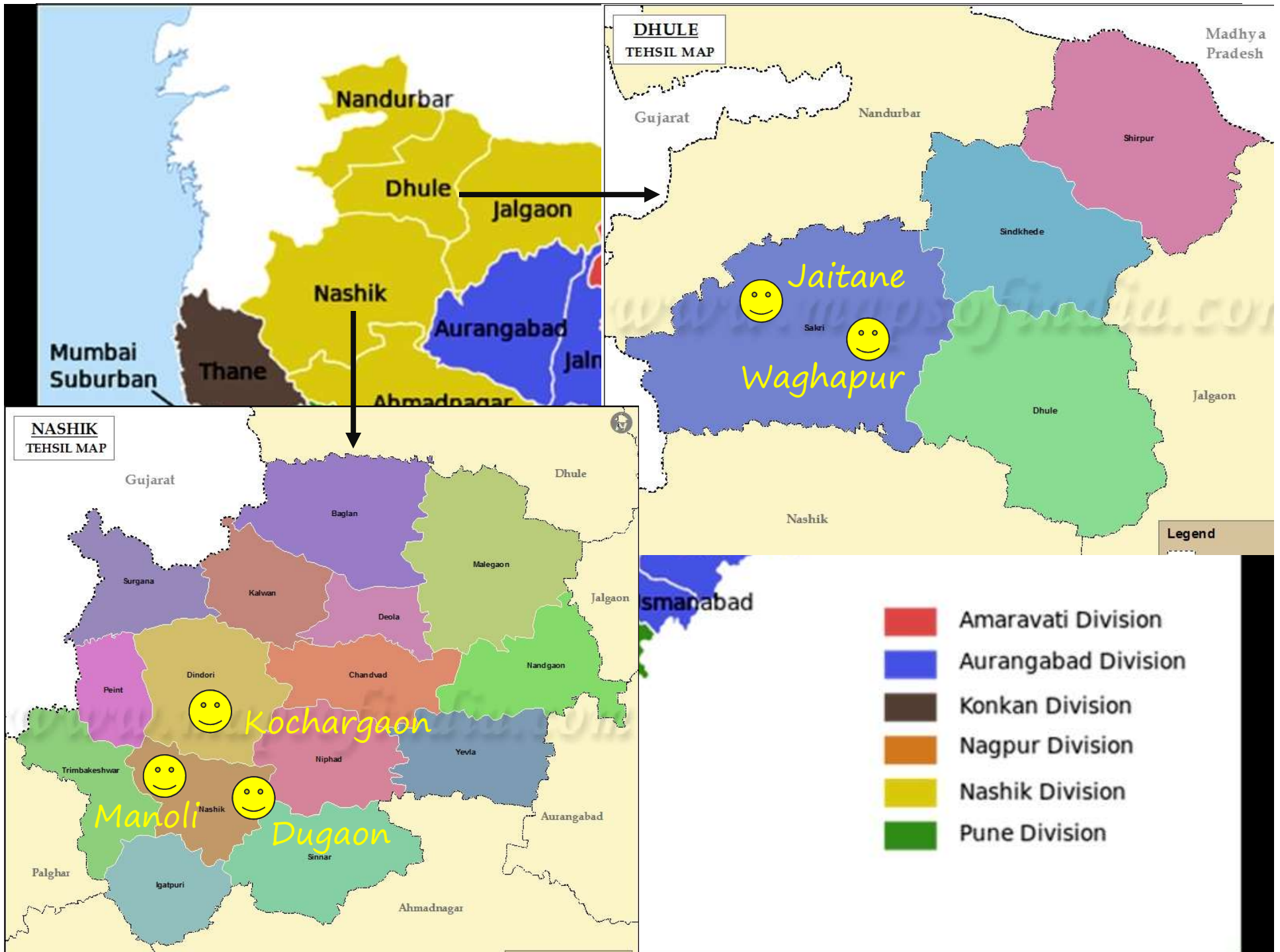
**Abhivyakti Media for
Development
Nashik, India**



‘शोधिनी’

A Marathi word denoting
women seekers





About Our Villages

- Tribal population
- Beautiful natural surroundings
- Each village has a unique feature
- Removed from cities
- Limited facilities
- Lack of public transportation
- Government schools only until Std. 7
- Lack of healthcare provision
- Poverty



...being girls in our villages

- Unhealthy environment for girls education
- Gender inequality in village
- Girls not seen as priority
- Lack of livelihood opportunities
- Girls drop out to work at home or as farm labour
- Anxiety regarding girls' mobility
- Fear of sexual harassment



We The Shodhinis

- 22 girls from 5 villages
- 15-25 years
- School-going as well as drop outs
- Most from 'Adivasi' (tribal) communities

Research Process

Steps of the action research:

1. Learning concepts of Action Research
2. Understanding the local context
3. Co-creating data collection tools
4. Doing a Girls' Census
5. Mapping our village
6. In-depth interviews
7. Analysis of data
8. Compilation of findings
9. Report writing



Research Process

Data collection tools used in the action research:

- 1. Girls' Census in 5 villages*
- 2. Map-making*
- 3. In-depth interviews*



Girls' Census

A preliminary census of around 100 girls in each village was done to find the profile of the girls and the extent of their education.

- Findings

- Age range
- Marital status
- Current education status

मुर्लीची गणना

नाव : भारस्कर सोनाली कचरु

जन्मतारीख : 1 जाने 2002 वय : 14

विभाग : कोचरगाव (वजारभाळी)

शिक्षण : 9 वी

सध्या काय करते ?

- शिकते ✓
- घरी असते
- मजुरी / नोकरी / व्यवसाय (नमूद करा)

वैवाहिक स्थिती :

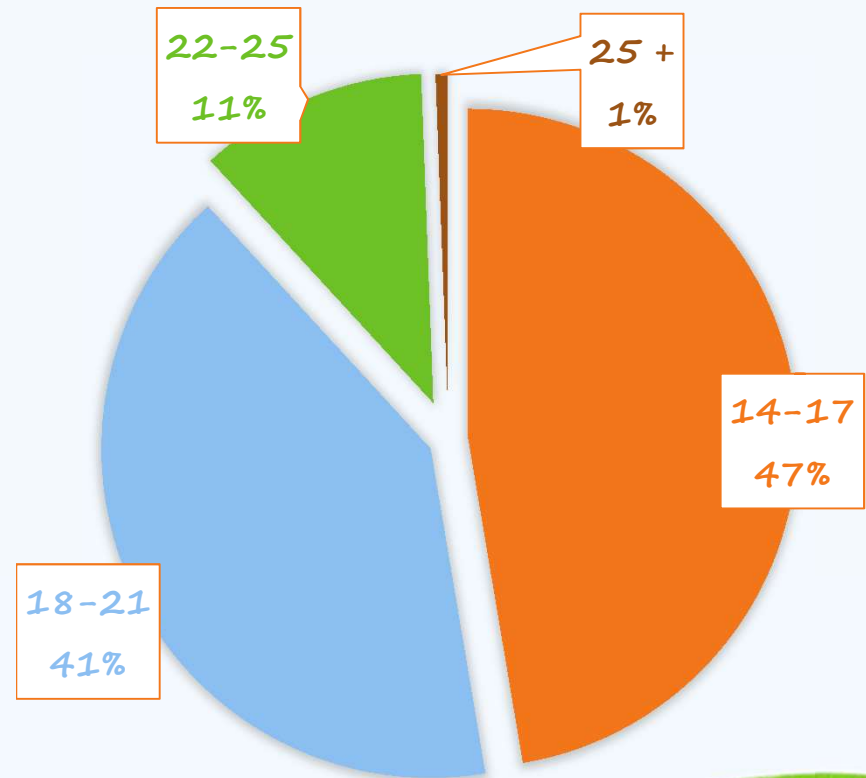
- अविवाहित ✓
- विवाहित
- इतर (नमूद करा)

Our Census form

Census Findings – Age Range

Of the 338 girls surveyed in the census, almost half were between the ages of 14 to 17 years, while 41% were between 18 to 21. Relatively fewer girls were surveyed in the older age brackets, as they were less accessible. Girls from the village were married off into other villages, and girls who came as wives in our villages were not given permission to be participants in the survey.

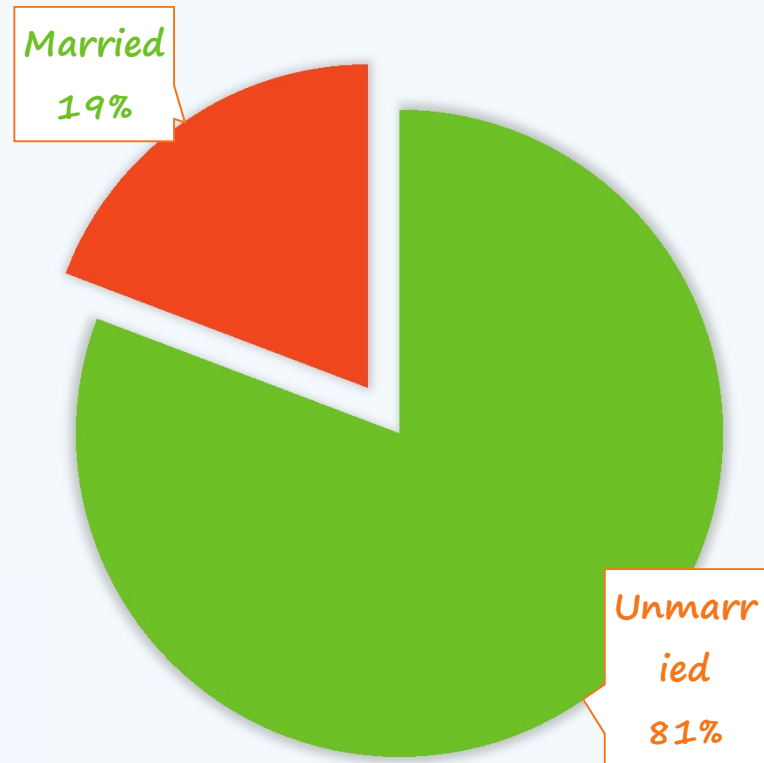
Age Range	Number of Girls	Percent of Girls
14-17	160	47%
18-21	138	41%
22-25	38	11%
Above 25	2	1%
Total	338	100%



Census Findings – Marital Status

Of the girls surveyed, only 19% were married, the rest were unmarried. This is because more girls were in younger age brackets and also because reaching married girls was more challenging. We could not get access to girls who were widowed or separated.

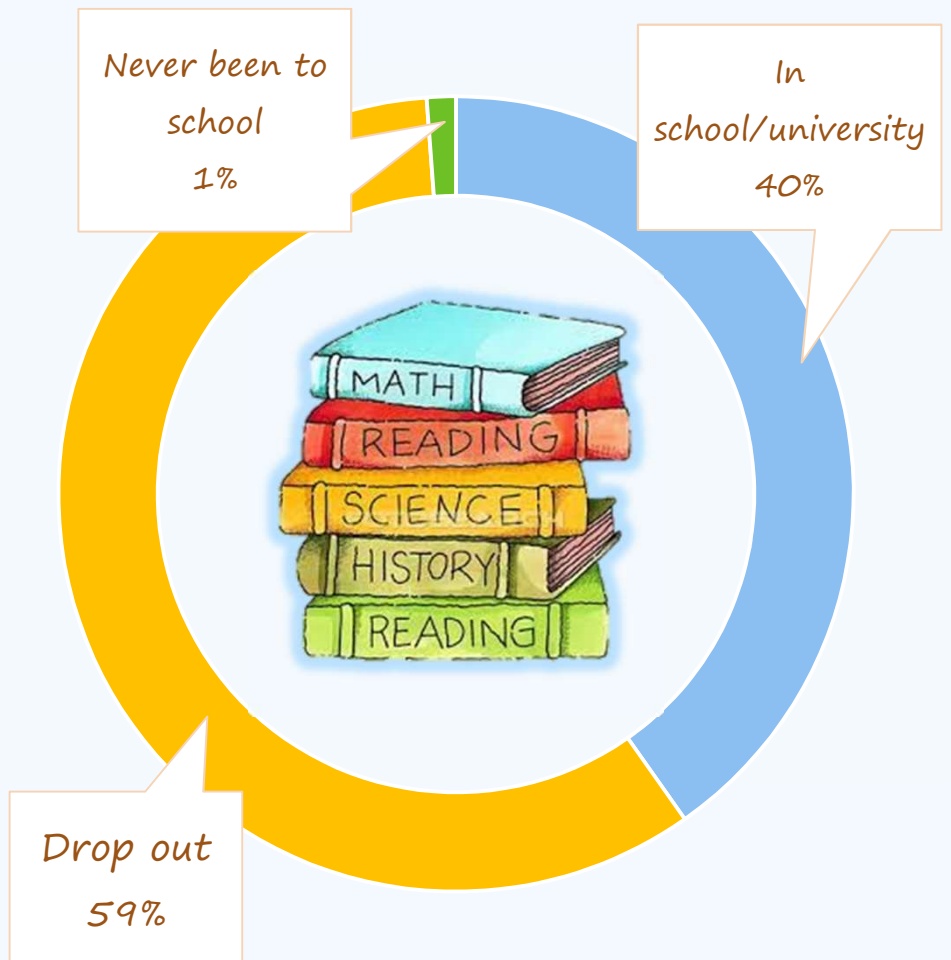
Marital Status	Number of Girls	Percent of Girls
Unmarried	273	81%
Married	65	19%
Separated/Widowed/Divorced	0	
Total	338	100%



Census Findings – Educational Status

A disturbingly high number of girls (59%) were drop outs from school. Only 40% girls are attending formal education. The number of girls who had never been to school was very marginal (1%).

Current Education Status	Number of Girls	Percent of Girls
In school/university	136	40%
Drop out	198	59%
Never been to school	4	1%
Total	338	100%



Census Findings – Status of Out of School Girls

Out of the 198 girls who had dropped out from school, nearly half are engaged in agricultural or other kinds of labour out of home, while the other half is also engaged in labour but within the home. Only 1 girls runs her own business.

Status of out of school girls	Number of Girls	Percent of Girls
At home	96	48%
Labourer	105	51%
Job	0	0
Business	1	0.5%
Total	338	100%

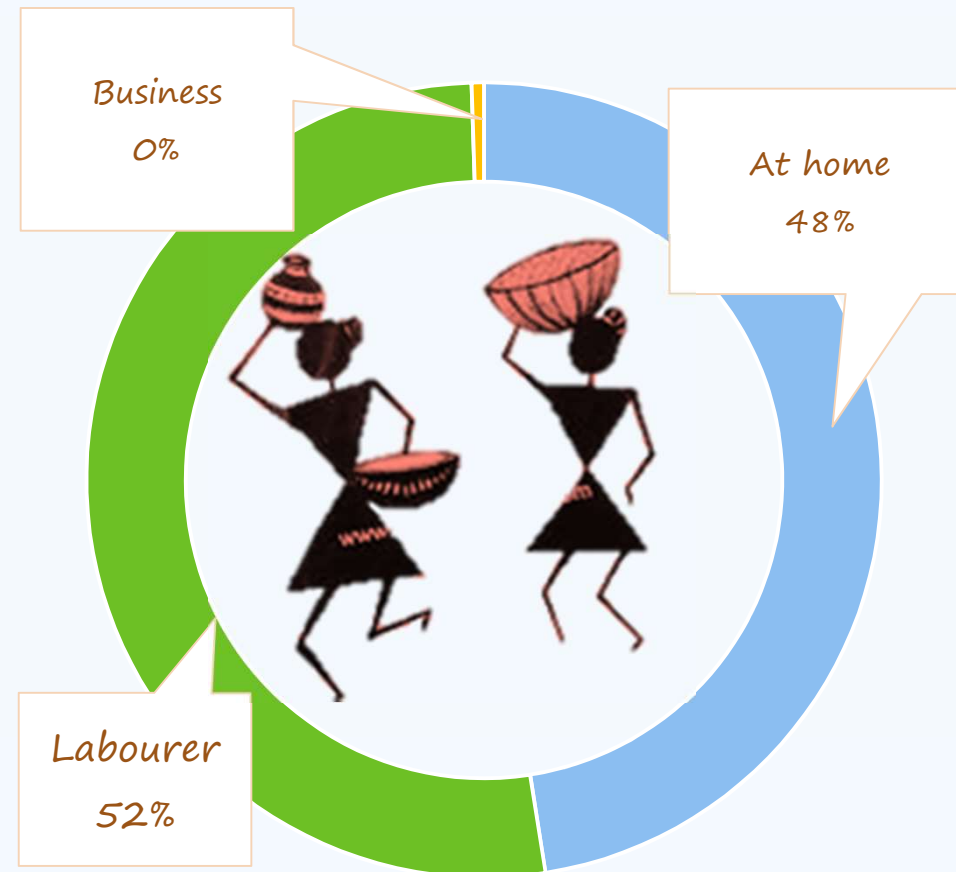


Chart Made by Shodhinis on Census Analysis

तक्ता क्र:- क शालेय शिक्षणाचा दर्जा

दर्जा	एकूण	टक्के	
शिक्षण सोडले	72	75 %	
शिकत आहे	21	22 %	
कधीच शाळेत गेली नाही	3	3 %	
एकूण	96	100 %	

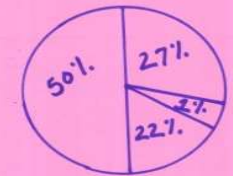
This chart of Kochargaon village shows that 75% of girls surveyed in this village have dropped out of school. This is a disturbing figure

व्यवसाय करते	0	0
शिकते + मजुरी	1	1 %
एकूण	96 %	100

वरील तक्ता जनगणना केलेल्या मुलींचा शालेय शिक्षणाचा दर्जा दर्शवतो. वरील तक्त्यात शिक्षण सोडलेल्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 75% टक्के आहे. आणि शिकत असलेल्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 22 % टक्के आहे व कधीच शाळेत न गेलेल्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 3 % टक्के आहे. यावरून असे दिसण्यात आले की शिक्षण सोडलेल्या मुलींचे प्रमाण सर्वाधिक आहे. कारण की आम्ही शाळेत न जाणाऱ्या मुलींचीच जनगणना केली.



कोचरगाव



वरील तक्ता जनगणना केलेल्या मुली सद्या काय करतात हे दर्शवतो. वरील तक्त्यात शिकत असलेल्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 22% टक्के आहे. घरी असलेल्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 27% टक्के आहे. मजुरी करणाऱ्यांचे प्रमाण 50% असून, नोकरी आणि व्यवसाय करणाऱ्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 0% आढळून आले. मजुरी करण शिकणाऱ्या मुलींचे प्रमाण 1% आहे. स्वतः जास्त प्रमाण हे मजुरी करणाऱ्या मुलींचे असून, नोकरी आणि व्यवसायातले प्रमाण हे निवुल्क आढळून आले.



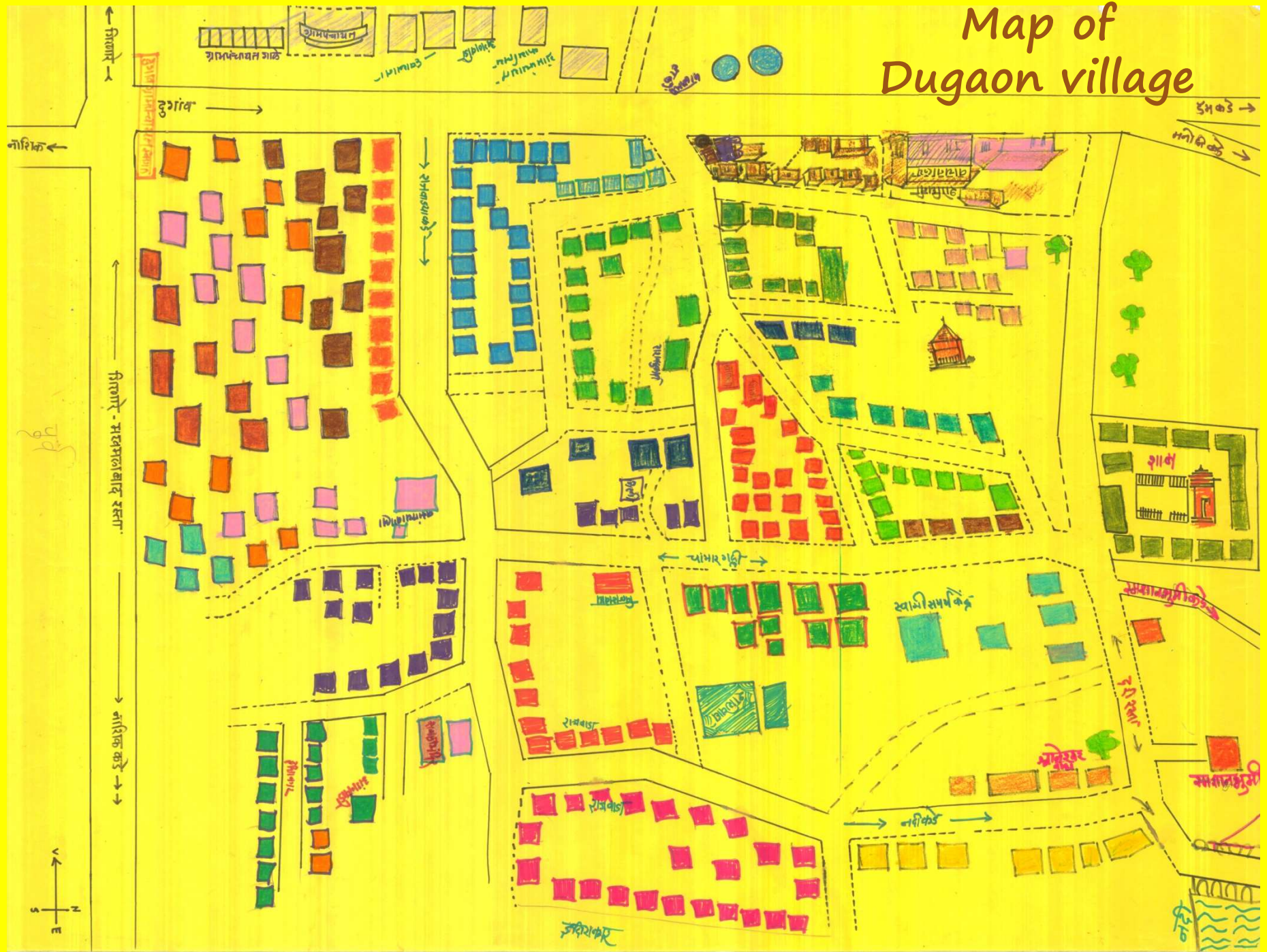
Village Mapping

After the Census survey, the Shodhinis in each village drew maps of their village, detailing the houses and roads of the village, water sources, and important landmarks.

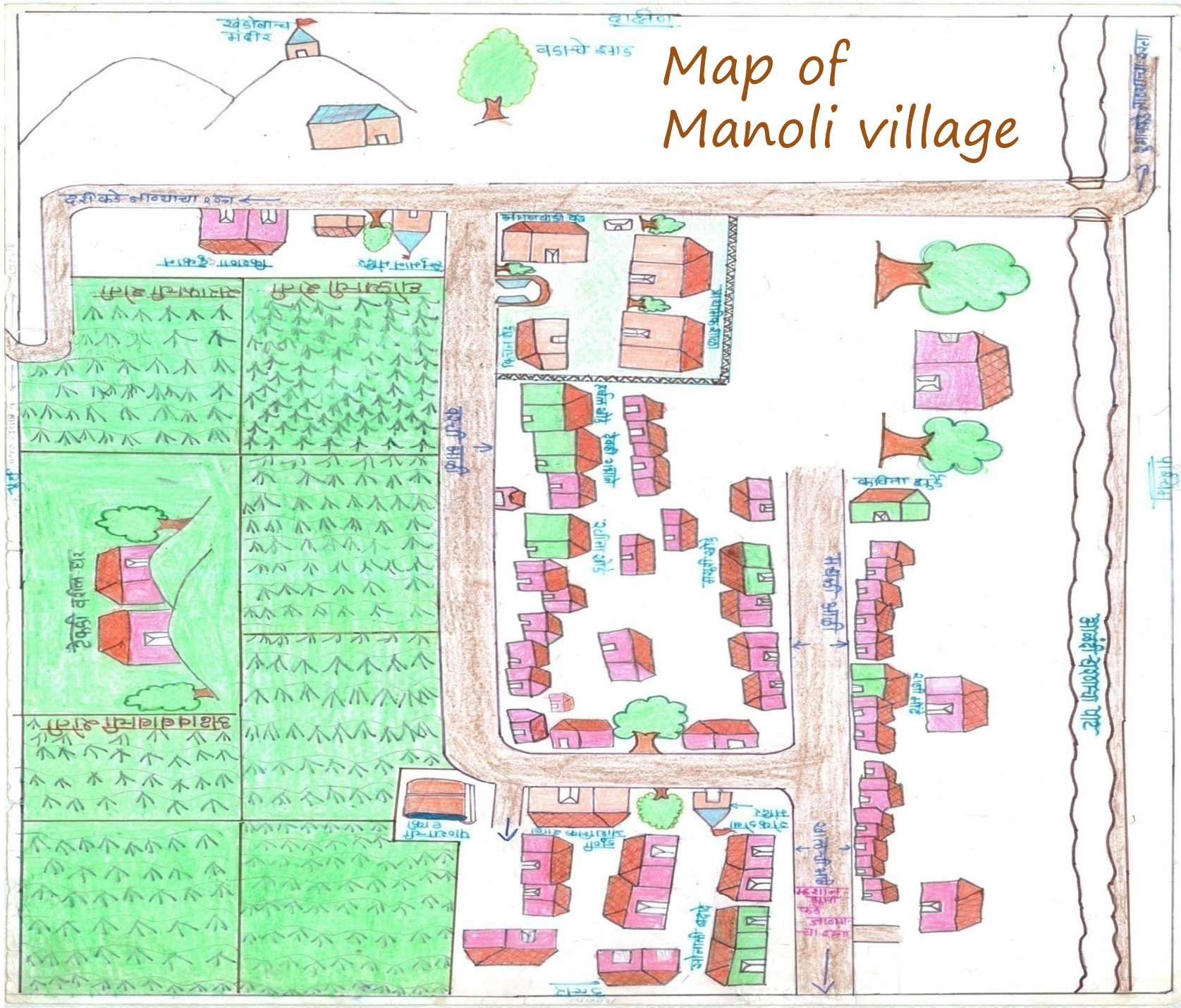
केचरगांव



Map of Dugaon village



Map of Manoli village



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©



In-Depth Interview

After the Girls' Census, one third of the girls from the Census were selected as a sample and participated in an in-depth interview about challenges faced while accessing education, their educational and livelihood aspirations, status at home, health issues, and so on.

Shodhinis interviewing a girl

- **Sample:**
30-35 girls from each village
- **Categories:**
 - Out of school girls
 - School going girls
 - Common questions



A stylized landscape illustration featuring rolling green hills in the foreground, a small tree with purple and pink foliage on the left, and light blue hills in the background under a blue sky.

The Survey Questionnaire was divided into three parts, with different questions for:

1. Out of school girls

- Reasons for leaving school
- Skills they wish to learn

2. School going girls

- Obstacles in accessing education
- Facilities needed to complete education

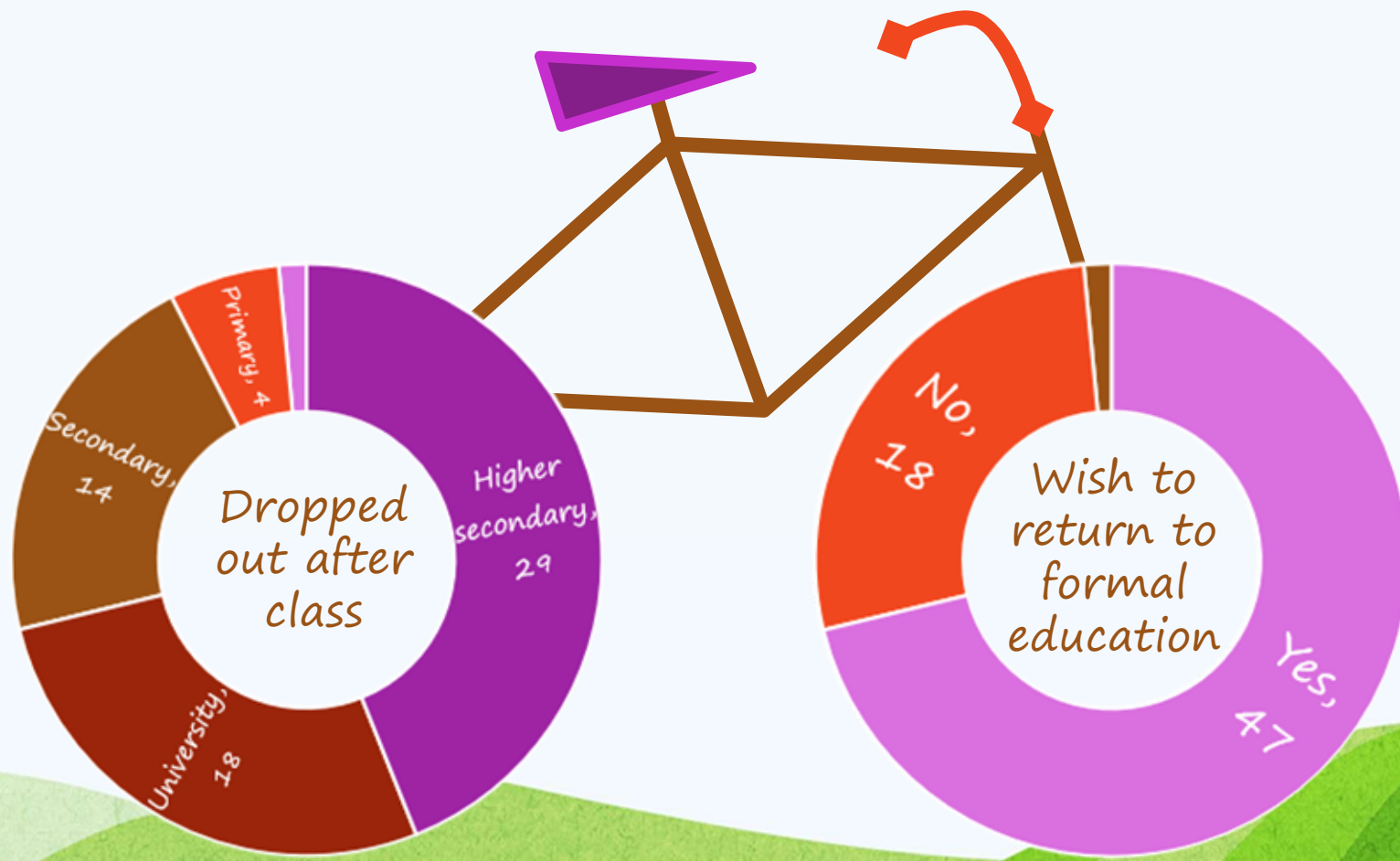
Common questions

- Skills for livelihood
- Facilities for girls' empowerment
- Menstrual issues
- Agency in marriage and at home
- Restrictions faced at home

Out of School Girls

Educational status and aspirations:

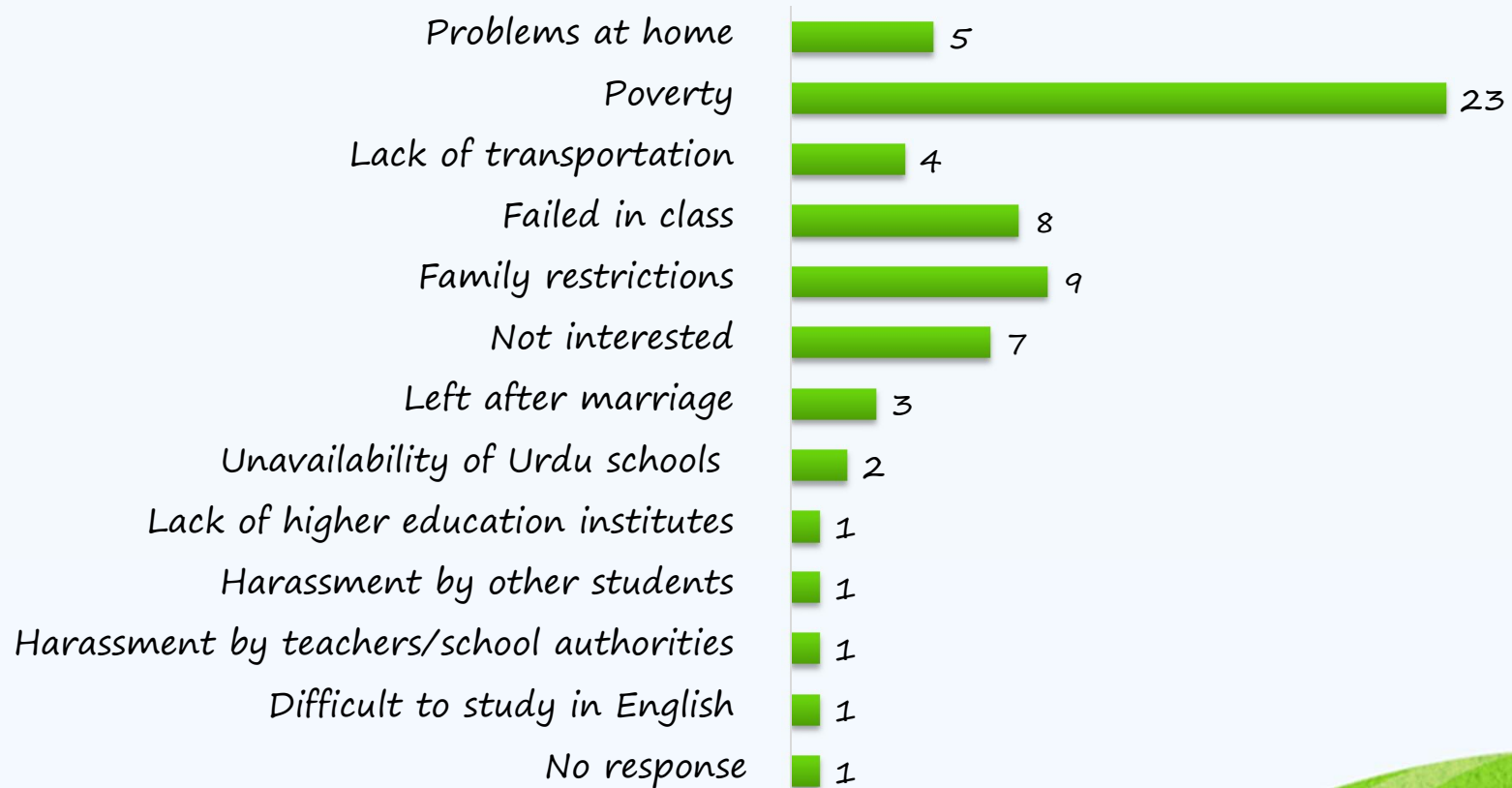
Most girls have dropped out from formal education after higher secondary school (class 10). Almost one-fourth drop out during university (graduation). 71% of the girls said they wanted to continue their education.



Out of School Girls

Reasons to drop out from school:

Girls cited poverty and lack of financial resources as the main reason to leave school. Other significant reasons were restrictions imposed by family, academic failure and lack of interest.



Out of School Girls

Skills girls want to learn:

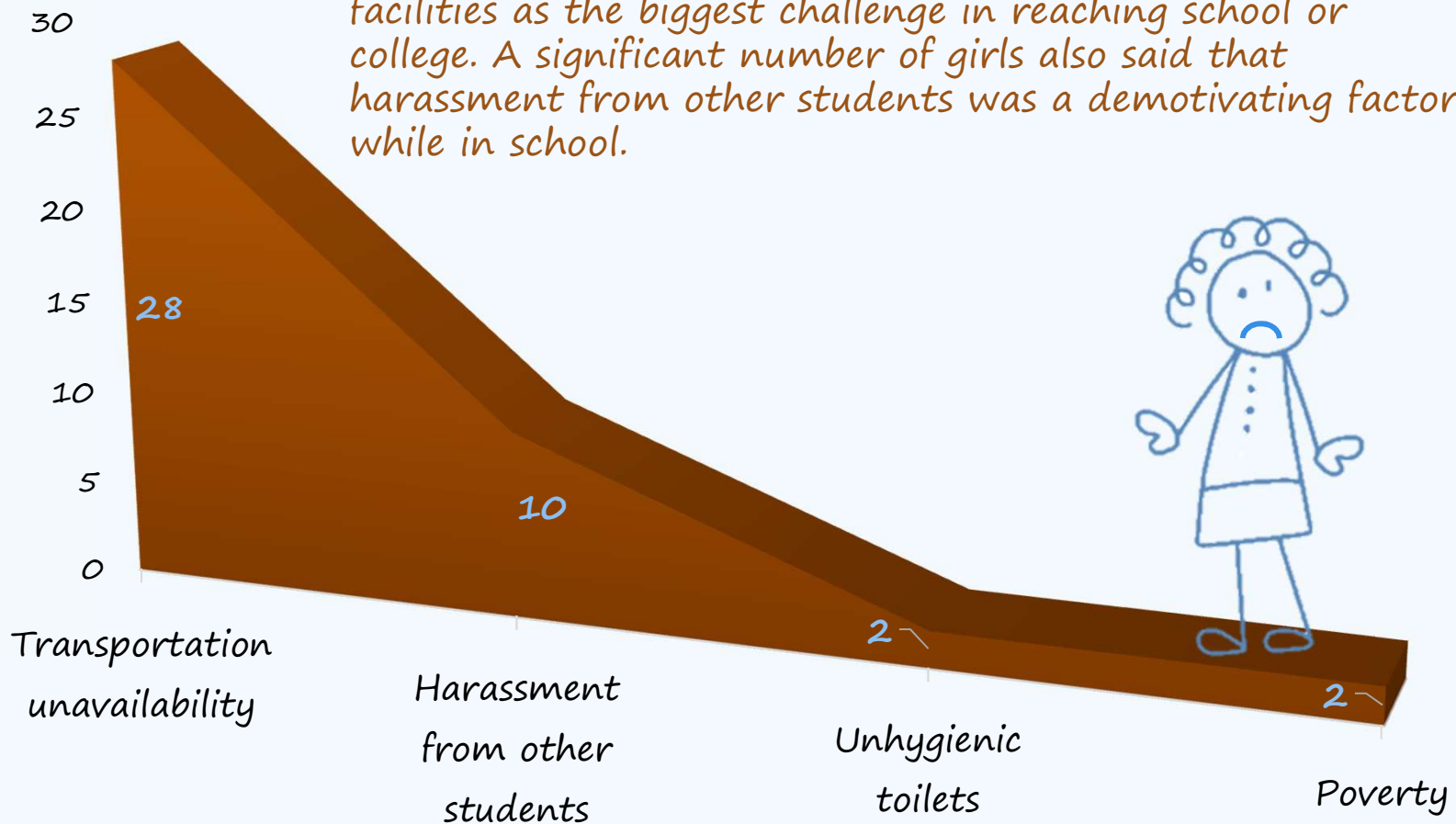
Girls are highly interested in learning skills related to fashion and tailoring, handicrafts, and hairstyling. Most skills are in work traditionally assigned to women. However, some girls did show an inclination towards learning sports and farming.



School Going Girls

Challenges in going to school:

Girls cited lack of adequate and safe transportation facilities as the biggest challenge in reaching school or college. A significant number of girls also said that harassment from other students was a demotivating factor while in school.



School Going Girls

Facilities to improve access to school:

Girls cited extra curricular activities, scholarships and improved infrastructure as the main factors needed to improve their access to school. Transportation was also mentioned as many girls face long distances and poor road connections while going to school.



Common Questions

Livelihood aspirations of girls:

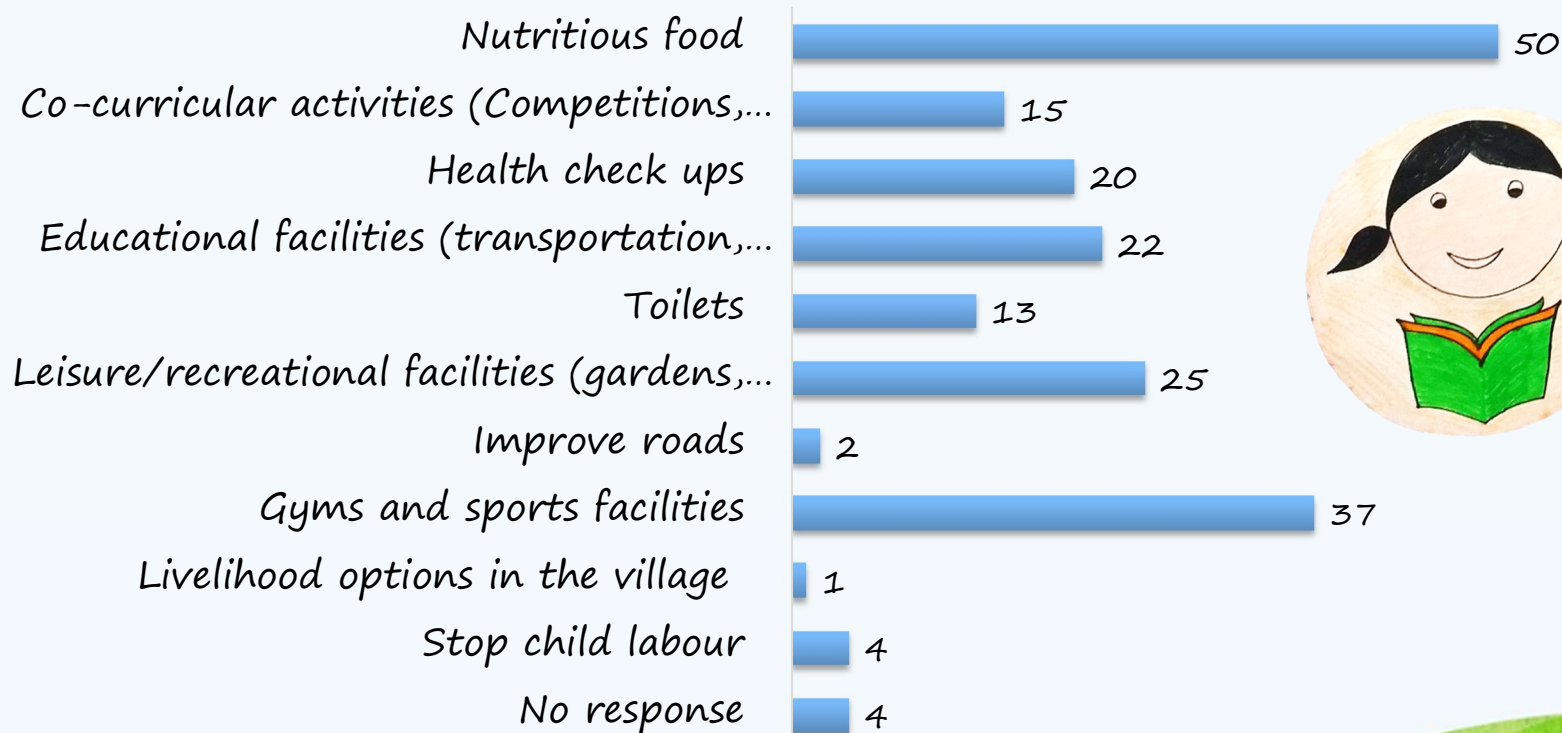
Most girls want jobs as teachers in school or college, or start their own tuitions. A large number of girls also saw farm work as a source of livelihood. Other livelihood-generating areas of work include tailoring, business, art and craft, cooking, and beauty parlour. One girl said she didn't want to work.



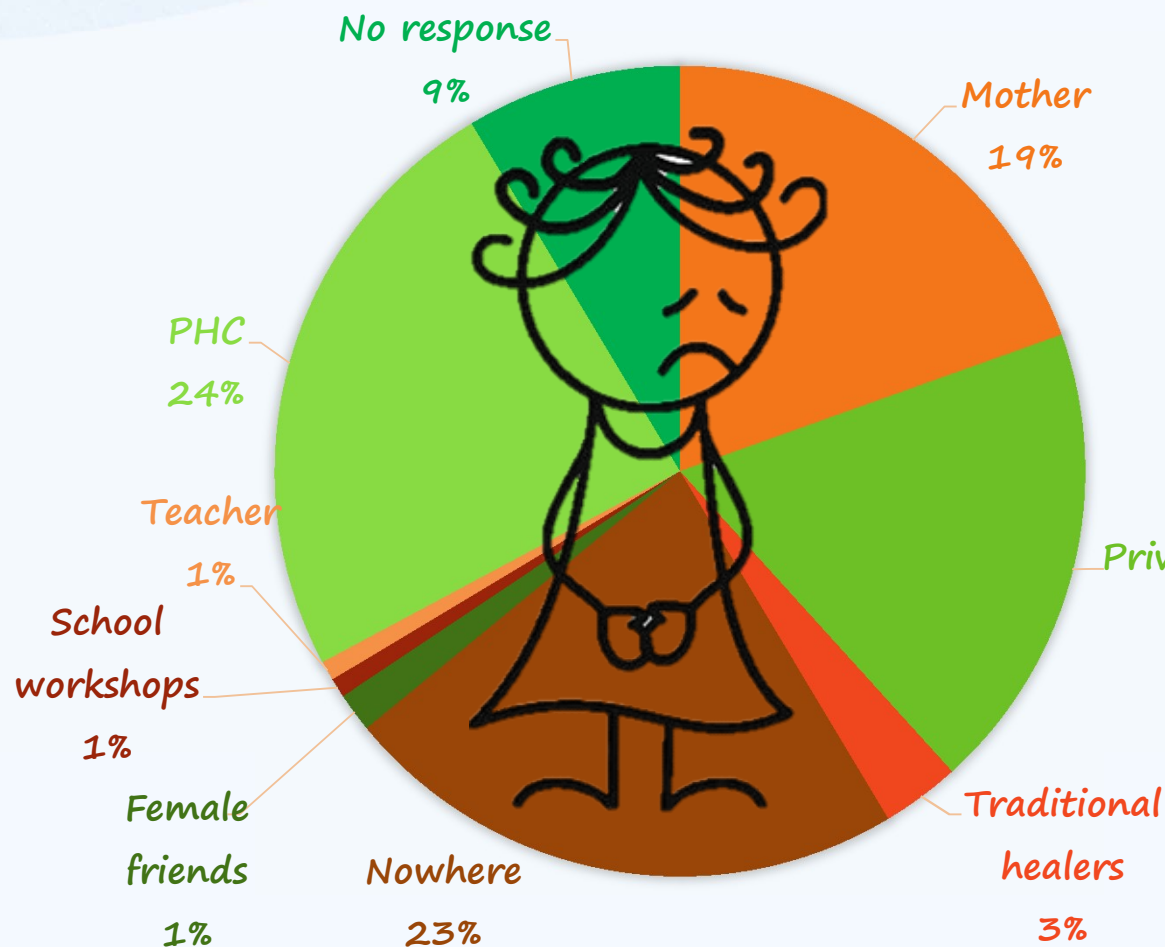
Common Questions

Facilities needed for girls' empowerment:

Girls said there should be provision of nutritional food, gyms and sports facilities, and safe recreational spaces as the most important facilities for girls' holistic development.



Common Questions



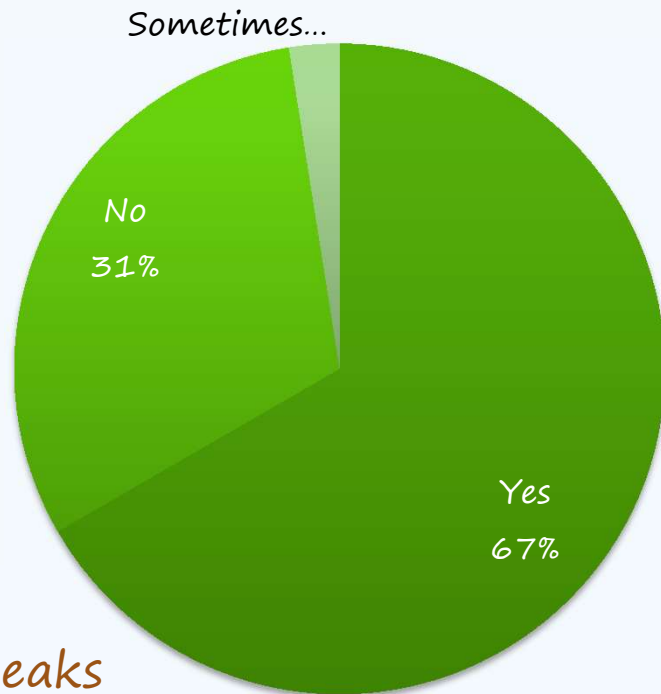
Struggles with menstrual health:

When asked who they go to for menstrual and other health problems, 25% girls said they did not discuss these with anyone.

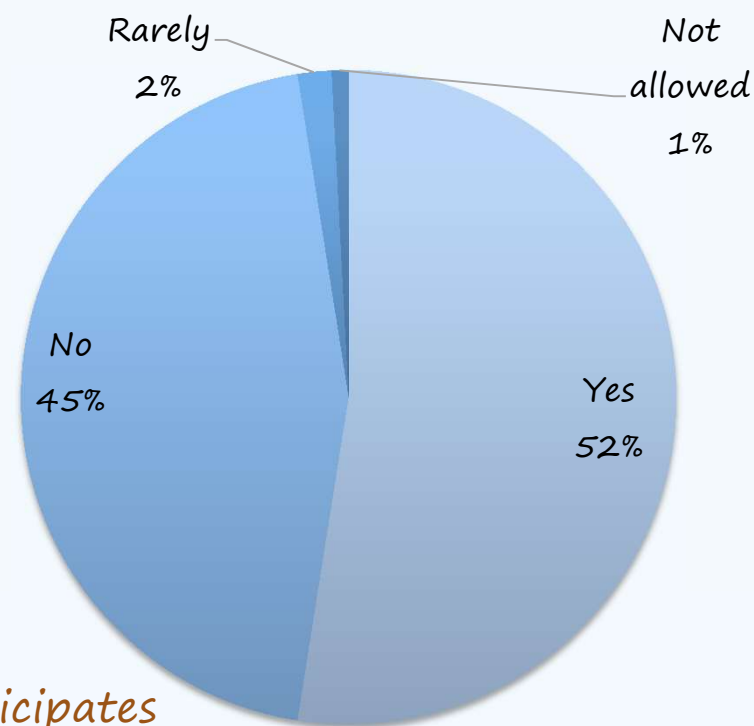
Common Questions

Voice and agency at home:

Most girls answered that they could speak their opinions at home and participate in family discussions and decision-making processes. However, this data might not be representative of reality as most girls who participated in the survey answered these questions in front of their family members. Hence the girls might not have been honest and forthcoming about answers that would go against their families.



*Speaks
Out at
Home*

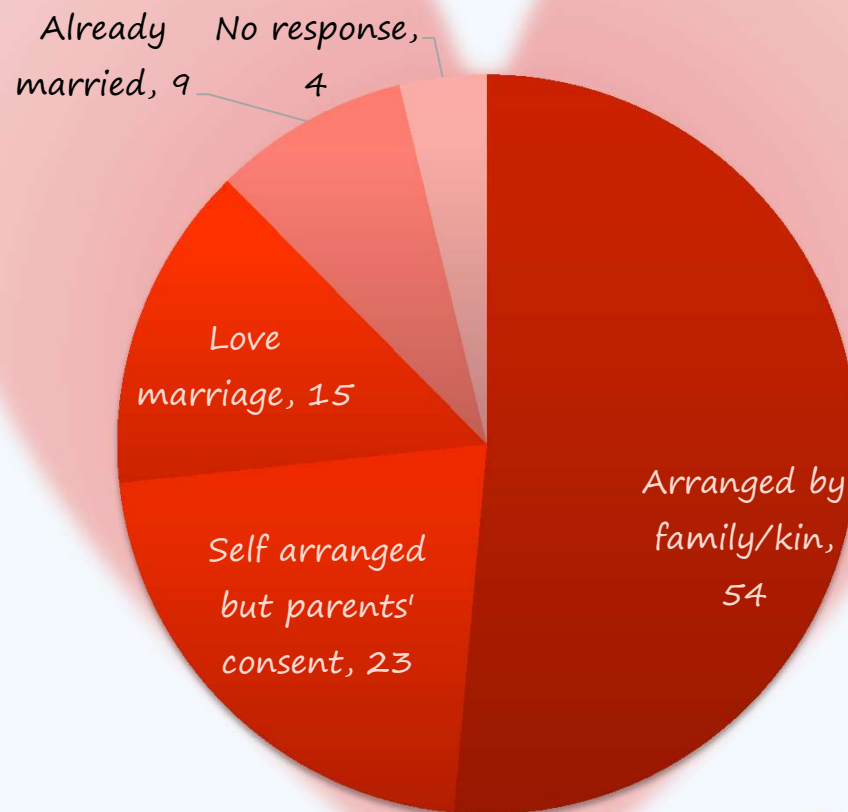


*Participates
in Family
Decision-
Making*

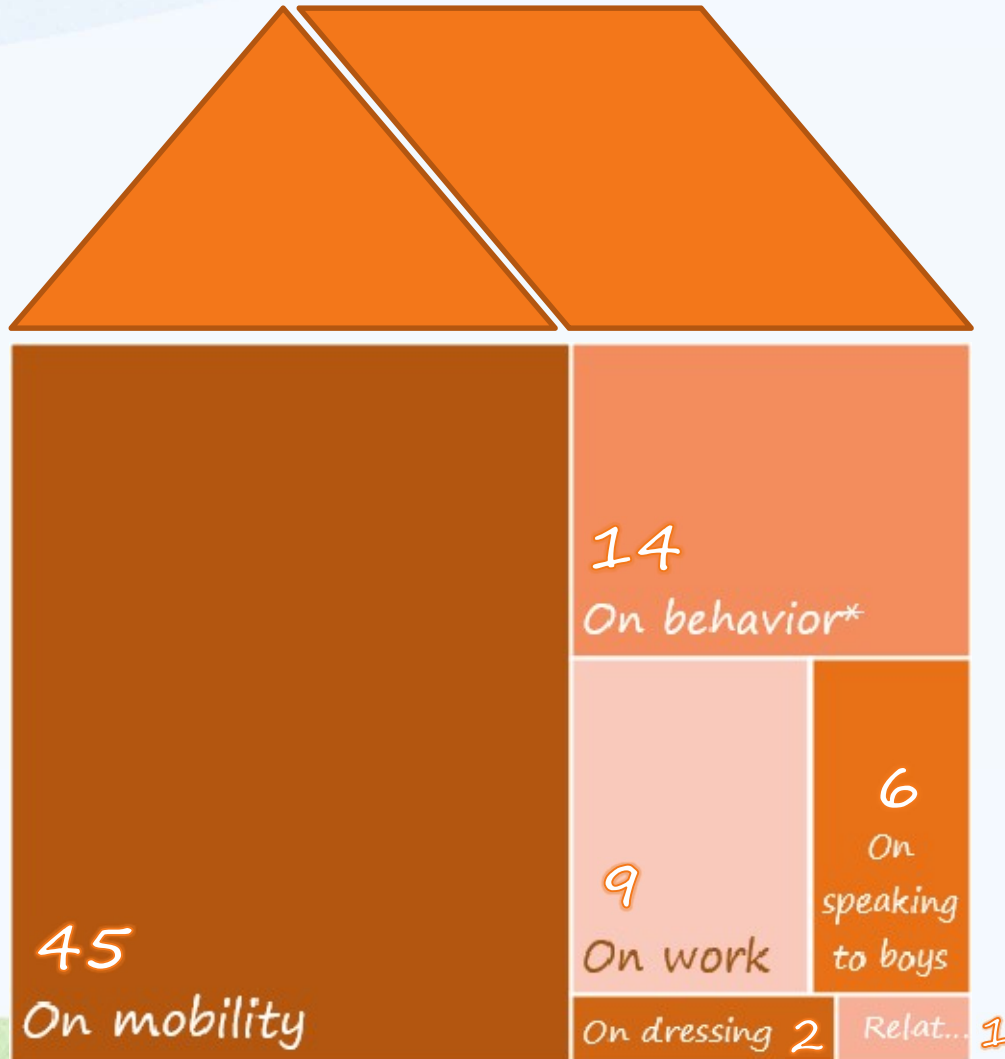
Common Questions

Choice of Partner:

Most girls said they would let their parents choose a partner for them, and girls who wanted to make the choice themselves also said they would ask for their parents' consent.



Common Questions

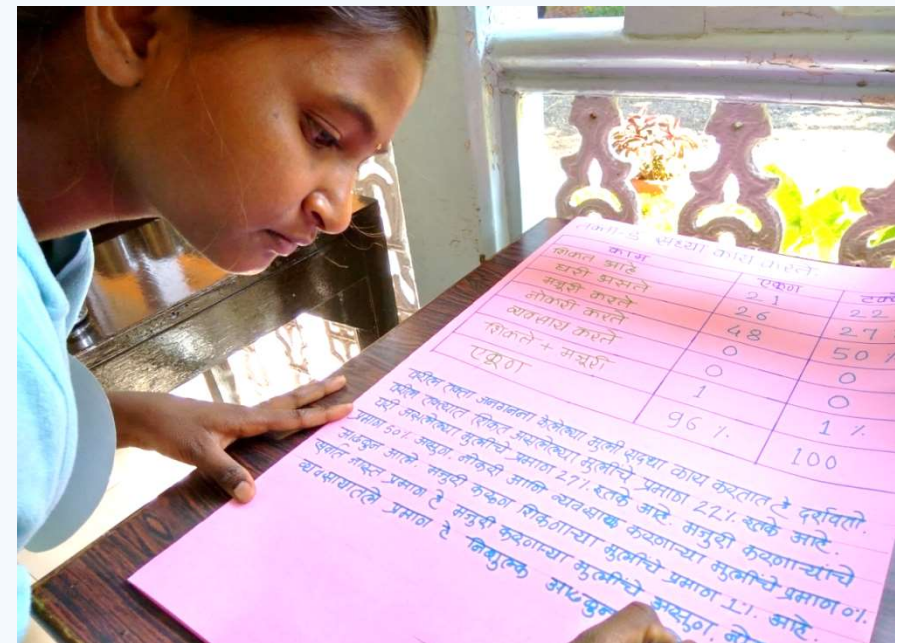


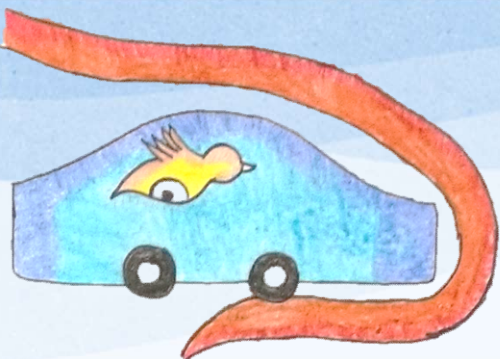
Restrictions from Family:

60% girls face restrictions from family members. Girls cited mobility as the most significant restriction imposed by family.

Key findings of our survey

- 59% of girls drop out of school
- Poverty is the biggest reason to leave education
- 51% of school dropout girls work as farm labourers
- Family restrictions and limited transportation facilities are also major reasons
- 52% of school-going girls say transportation is the major hindrance in pursuing education
- Unavailable/unhygienic washrooms and harassment on the way to school are some other hindrances
- 23% girls cannot talk about menstruation issues to anyone





Our Recommendations

- We need concrete roads in villages
- Girls need government transportation facilities for going to school
- Girls need playground and gym in villages
- Health check-up for girls every six months
- Child marriage need to be stopped and minimum age for marriage be raised to 21
- Girls need toilets in village
- There should be women police in village
- Sufficient electricity and water should be available in villages
- Women Gram Sabha (meeting) should be conducted every month
- Nutritional diet should be provided to girls



...being Shodhinis of the same village

- Collective identity as 'Shodhinis'*
- Our confidence increased*
- We started questioning*
- We started speaking out*
- We made new friends*
- Developed critical thinking*
- Developed research capacities*



