

Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of Digital Sakhi Programme Project Year: FY 2021-22

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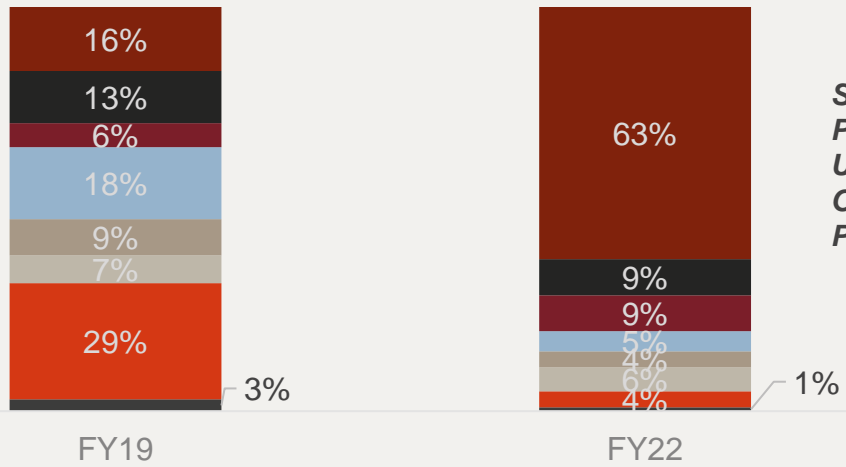
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The Indian Journey to Digital Financial Inclusion & Digital Boom

- India has been at the forefront of bringing the paradigm shift in the global digital payment landscape. Numerous efforts in the form of launch of Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Aadhaar, differentiated banks-small finance banks and payment banks, and improvements in payments infrastructure have supported the momentum that digital financial inclusion has witnessed in the country.
- The COVID-19 pandemic bolstered this further and introduced several first-time users to digital financial services in the past two years with 80 million adults making their first digital merchant payment during the pandemic.
- In a momentous feat, India witnessed 20.57 billion online transactions worth INR 36.08 trillion in the second quarter (Q2) this year- Worldline's India Digital Payments Report

Volume of non cash transactions



Source: Digital Payments in India: A US\$10 Trillion Opportunity, BCG, PhonePe Plus

- Cheque
- NACH
- Pre-paid Instruments
- ATM
- POS
- NEFT
- Internet Banking
- Series 8

➤ **Despite this explosive advancement, certain segments of the market remain underpenetrated with considerable room for growth.**

Scope of growth in the rural hinterlands

- A large chunk of the unbanked population lives in rural areas who hasn't been able to reap the benefits of financial services as have the urban dwellers.
- Amongst the many factors that contribute towards this situation, few critical ones include, income, education, gender and rural-urban differences primarily accounting for this unequal access.
- In India's quest for financial inclusion, digital is a beacon of hope and arguably the most promising way to address the demographic challenges posed by rural India, especially among the rural women.



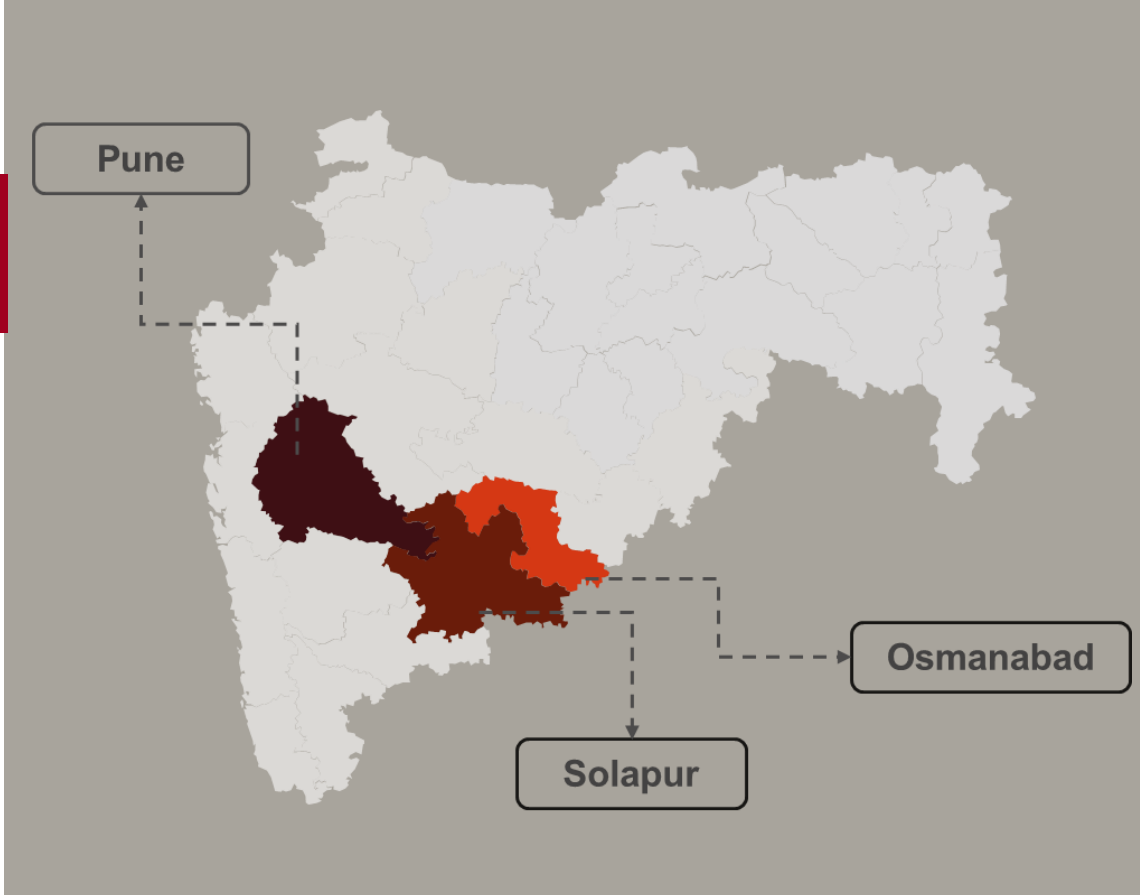
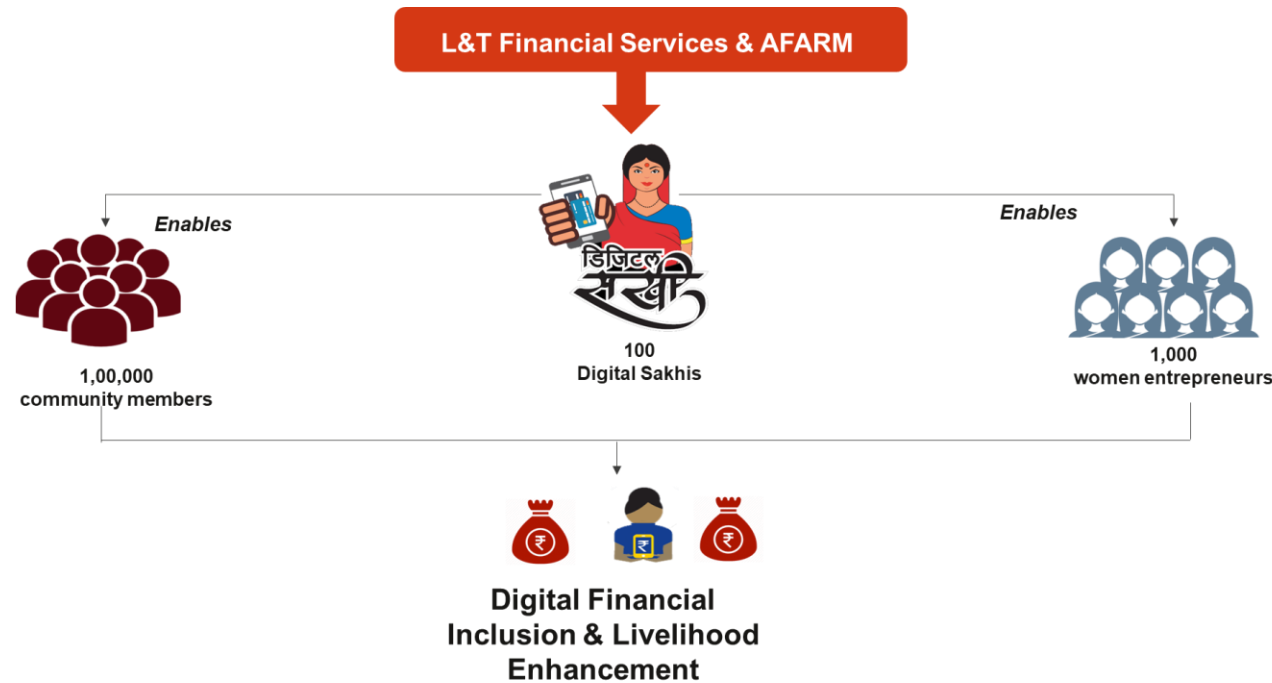
Status of women in the digital financial inclusion landscape

- The pandemic drove a substantial increase in digital payments along with slower narrowing of gender gap when it comes to account ownership.
- However, in India, women with an account are still 18 percentage points less likely than men with an account to use digital payments as per the Global Findex Report, 2021.
- While most rural women have very little access to financial information coupled with low literacy, they are unable to take advantage of banking services, especially if they are online or digital since sole ownership of handsets is also very limited among these women.
- The rural micro-entrepreneurship space also witnesses similar disparity. While India boasts of over 63 million micro, small, and medium enterprises in 2020, half of whom are in rural areas, and approximately 20% of those rural enterprises are owned by women, these enterprises are marred with challenges pertaining to cash-based transactions, lack of digital skills to manage mobile apps and online applications. Such a situation prohibits these micro entrepreneurs in tapping into new economic opportunities and leveraging the paradigm shift in the entrepreneurial landscape and the complimenting digital revolution.
- To actualize the dream of rural economy, it is imperative for the country to include women in the financial value chain. To cater to this emerging need, L&T Financial Services (LTFS) CSR envisioned the initiative, 'Digital Sakhi', which has nurtured a team of Digital Sakhis as digital and financial enablers. These Sakhis have in turn catalyzed women entrepreneurs and community members by imparting knowledge, digital and financial skills, and bringing them into the digital finance fold.

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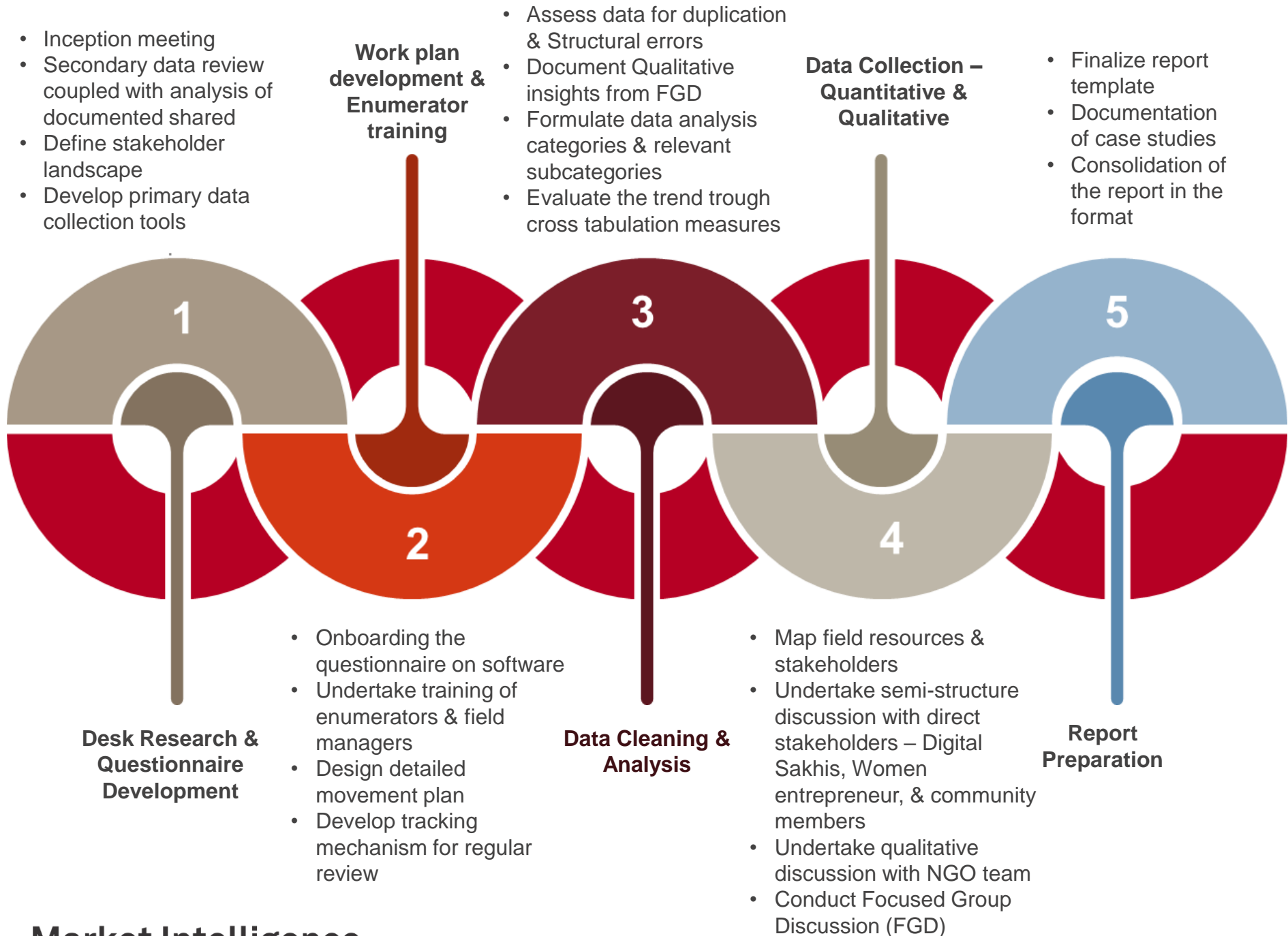
About Digital Sakhi (DS) Program

Digital Sakhi is a flagship programme of L&T Financial Services (LTFS), which equips rural women with the skills and knowledge to confidently impart Digital Financial Literacy (DFL) training to people in their communities and nurture an ecosystem of digital financial inclusion.



- ❖ The interventions centers around financial literacy & digitization, enterprise development and livelihood enhancement interventions, specifically with rural women. The programme focuses on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5 – Gender Equality, wherein women are identified from rural communities and trained extensively on DFL, leadership and technology.
- ❖ The programme is being implemented by AFARM (Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra). Action for Agricultural Renewal in Maharashtra (AFARM) is voluntary organizations born out of an acute need for an Apex Institution to co-ordinate efforts of Civil Society Organizations in their tasks of providing water and agricultural extension services to villages in drought affected Maharashtra.
- ❖ 100 Digital Sakhis, who are extensively trained as a part of the intervention on digital financial literacy modules, reach out to the larger community to disseminate information on Digital Payments and other relevant government schemes including insurance. The intervention has another leg where 1000 women entrepreneurs (WEs) practicing Goat Rearing, Poultry, Dairy and Tailoring are chosen and up-skilled in their respective trades to yield better produce. These women are trained both on technical trades as well as enterprise development to extend holistic support. The WEs are also trained by Sakhis on digital financial literacy and additionally supported by them in case of facilitating linkages etc.

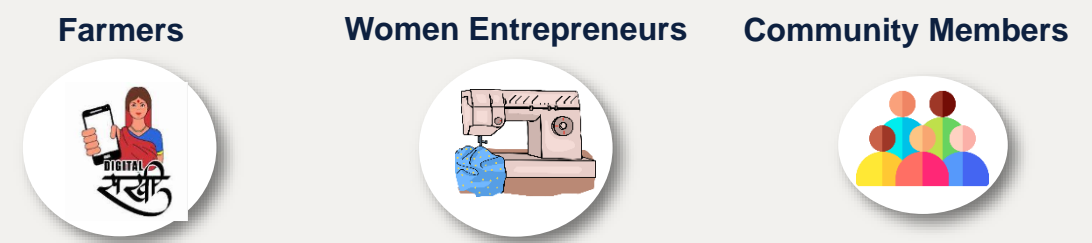
Approach & Methodology



Market Intelligence & Analytics

- L&T Financial Services engaged CRISIL Limited to undertake social impact assessment study for the Digital Sakhi Program in Pune, Osmanabad and Solapur.
- The main aim of this engagement was to assess the direct and indirect impact of the intervention on the beneficiaries and the respective households, including access to financial instruments and overall improvement in socio-economic standards
- We used a mixed-method, cross-sectional research approach for the study; the study captured beneficiaries' perspectives quantitatively, supplemented with qualitative focus group discussions to help corroborate and triangulate the findings.
- It involved assessment of direct programmatic interventions, evaluating the processes undertaken at each junction of implementation as well as the tangible and intangible impact of the intervention on the stakeholders.

Key Stakeholders (Across Pune, Osmanabad, Solapur)

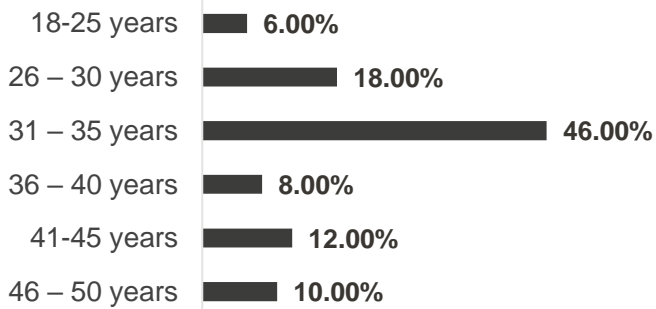


Stakeholders	Sample size	Data Collection Tool
Digital Sakhis	50	Semi-Structured Interview
Women Entrepreneurs	100	Semi-Structured Interview
Community Members	385	Semi-Structured Interview
Community Members	10	Focus Group Discussions
AFARM Officials	3	In-depth Interview
Cluster Coordinators	5	In-depth Interview
L&TFS CSR Team	1	In-depth Interview

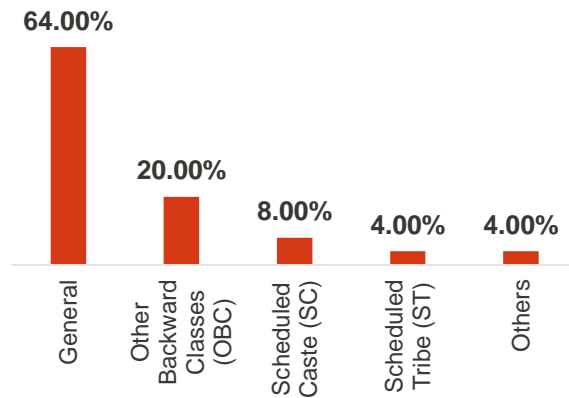
Demographic Profile- Digital Sakhis



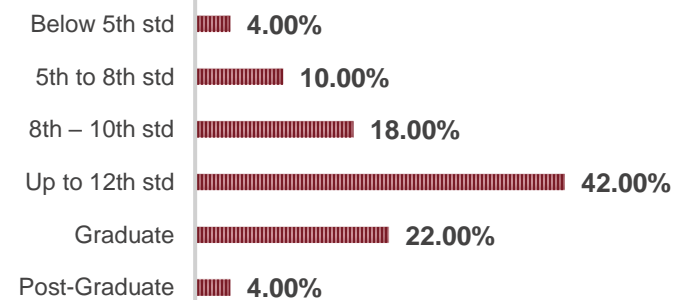
Respondent Age group



Respondent Social Category



Education Levels



Primary Source of Income of HH



Agriculture (58%)

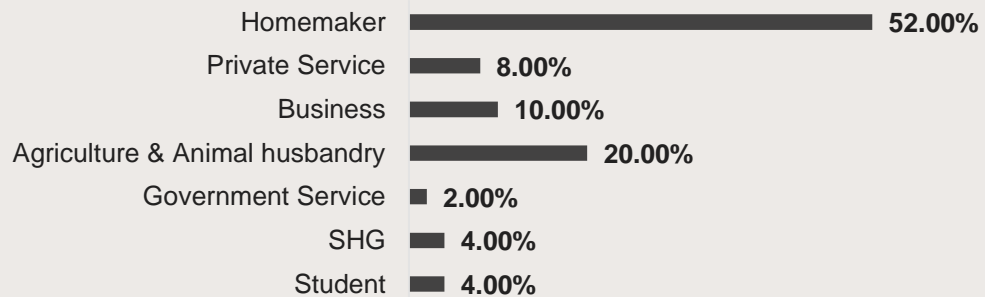


Small Business (28%)



Daily Wages (14%)

Occupation of women before the Digital Sakhi Programme



Prior to the Digital Sakhi intervention, majority of women were homemakers and the prime reason for not doing job was lack of information and opportunity.

“It’s not just about me or my family here. The women of our villages have never been exposed to any kind of training before. This is a big thing for us.”- Saraswati Babu Kadam, Digital Sakhi, Osmanabad

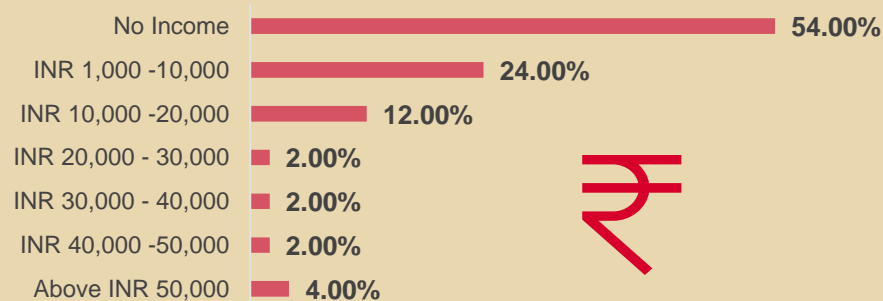
It was difficult for the women to envision their earning potential, considering the existing societal pressure of catering to the needs of family and most importantly the inherent gender roles sewn into the social fabric of the community.



- The discussions with Digital Sakhis highlighted the importance of family support for women to pursue training and further, income generation opportunities.
- While majority of the respondents didn’t face many challenges prior to joining the programme, 30% of the respondents mentioned of family specific constraints because of which they found it difficult to continue with the training.
- There were times when they considered dropping out of the training as well, but they were constantly motivated by the AFARM team to complete the training.
- There were also instances when certain participants dropped out of the training programme
- The Sakhis mentioned of receiving support from their husbands, who also guided them throughout their training journey.

“Initially, my family wasn’t very supportive when it came to undergoing the training. Going out in the village and talking to people wasn’t easy either. After a tiresome day, when I used to come back, I had to get back to completing the pending household chores including cleaning of utensils, washing clothes, cooking etc. This situation continued for many months”- Tanuja Javale, Digital Sakhi, Solapur

Income of the respondents prior to the Digital Sakhi Programme



Awareness on Financial Instruments and Government Schemes



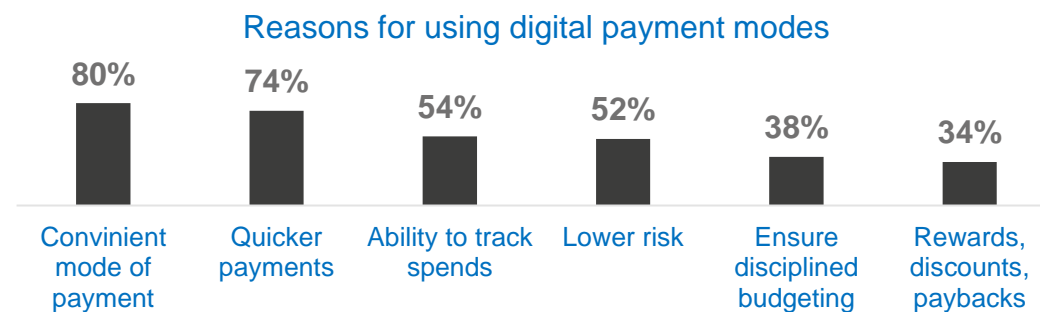
Insurance

- Life Insurance has been the predominant choice of respondents (92.86%) for availing insurance facilities. 100% women said that insurance is very important to secure future and be ready for emergency
- ~70% of the respondents mentioned that they were not aware about the insurances prior to the training.

Loans

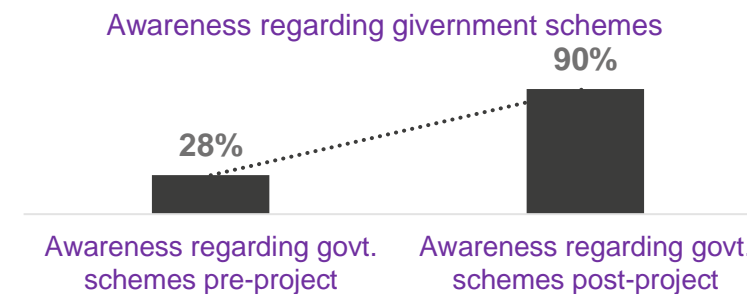
- 42% respondents have taken loan, of which ~76.92% of the respondents have taken a loan post training. Owing to uncertain times during COVID-19, few respondents who were to opt for loan delayed their decision to proceed. Of the respondents 76.92% have taken loan from the banks
- Of the respondents who have taken a loan, 47% have opted for personal loan.

Digital Payment Methods



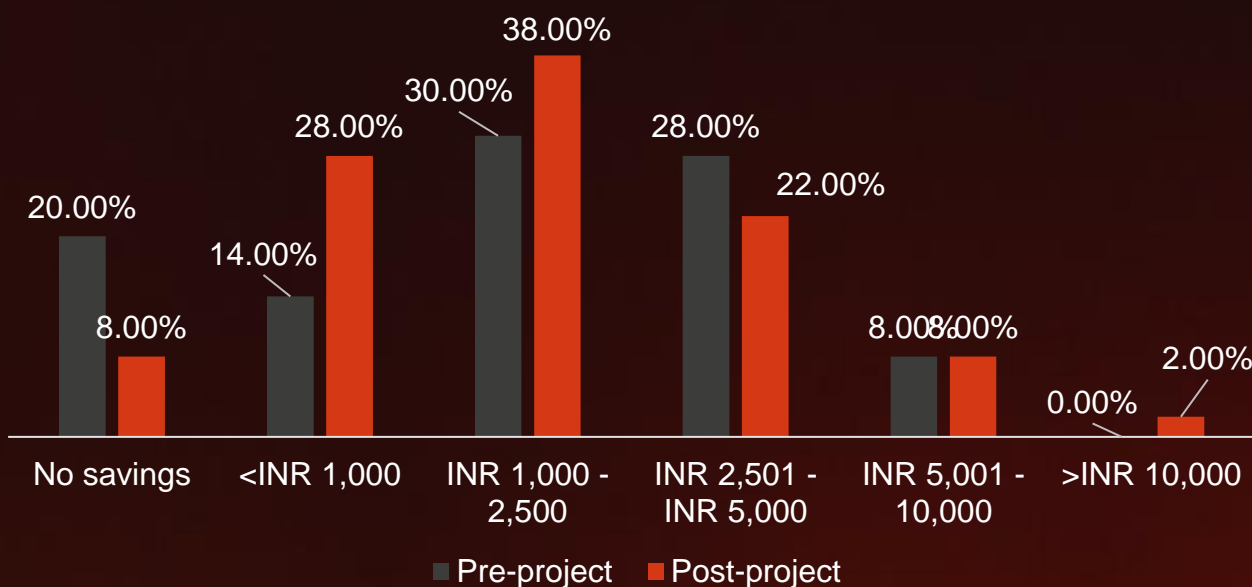
- 90.00% of the respondents are proactively using digital payment methods
- ~62% of the respondents have started using digital payment methods only after the training
- Among the payment methods, respondents have show preference for debit cards (76%), mobile banking (64%) and UPI payments (48%)

Government schemes

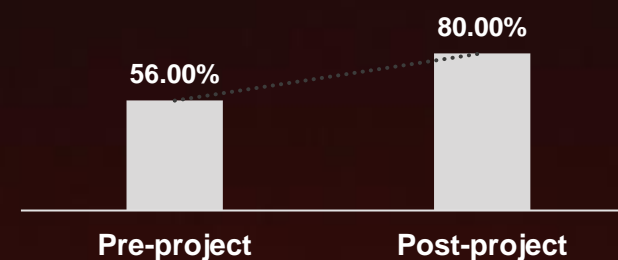


- Awareness levels of Sakhis has witnessed an improvement from only 28% to 90%
- 78% respondents have already enrolled in Government schemes post intervention.
- Among the schemes, Atal Pension Yojana and Jeevan Jyoti Yojana were most popular government schemes.

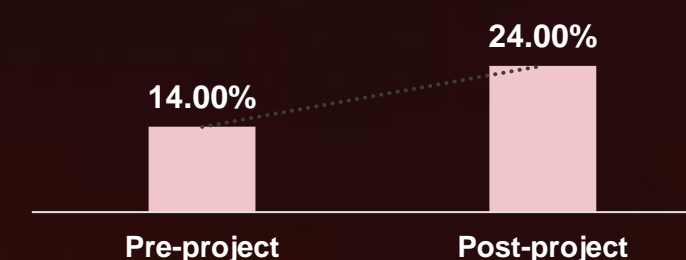
Household (HH) Level Savings: Pre-Post Analysis



Savings in Banks



Savings in SHGs

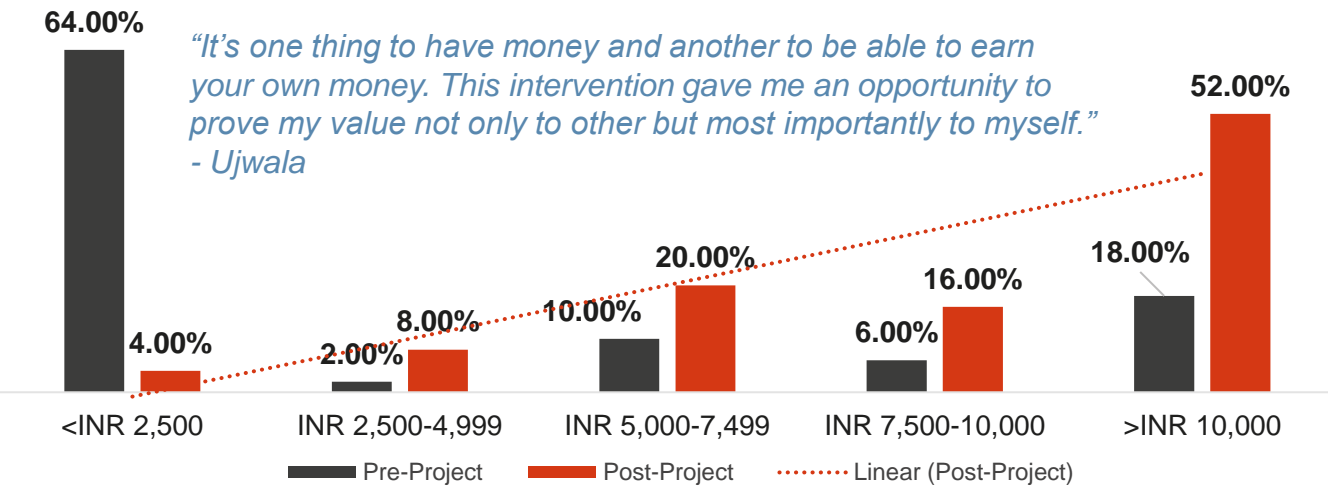


- 92% of the respondents have suggested being able to save on a monthly basis, while all respondents intend to make savings their priority.
- Although people had slowly started saving regularly post training, majority of the respondents utilized these savings in catering to the household as well as healthcare needs during the pandemic.
- This is evident from the trend which suggests that while % of households with savings of larger value has either remained constant or grown at a slower pace, in case of smaller values, there has been a significant increment.
- The data suggests that % of households with no savings has dramatically gone down, while at the same time few households have been able to save over INR 10,000 monthly.

Income, HH contribution, budget and decision making

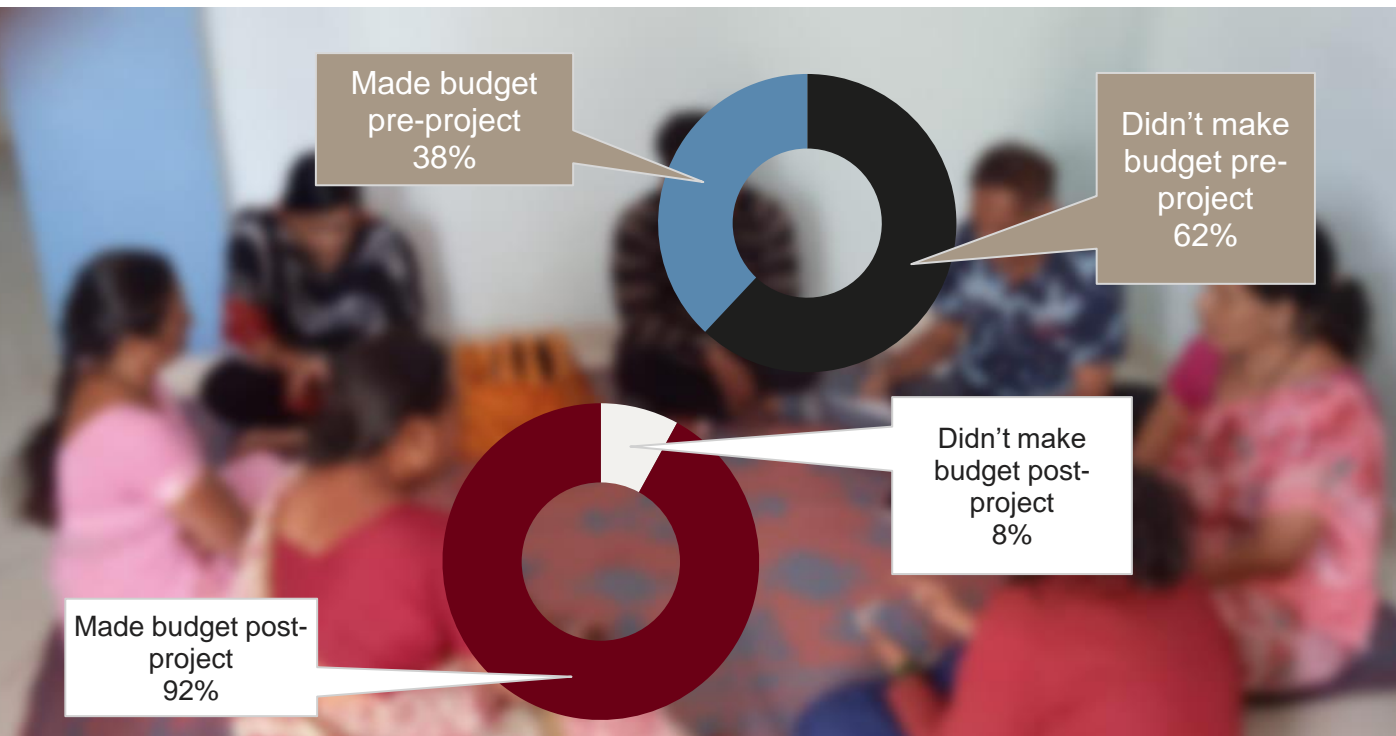


Monthly income of Digital Sakhis Pre & Post Project

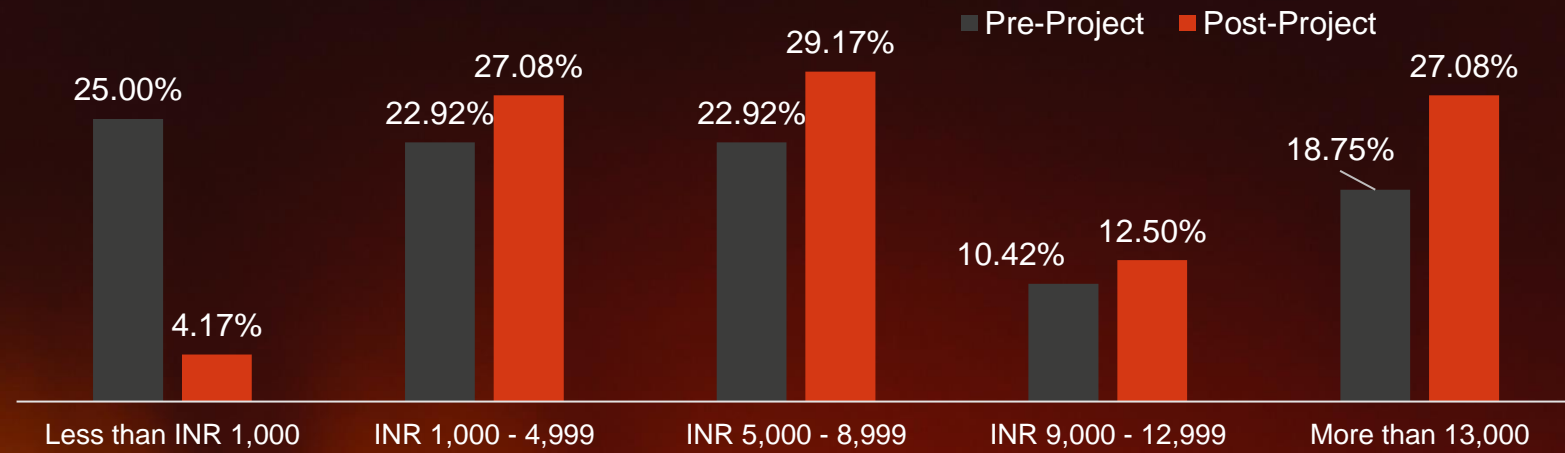


- There was a significant drop in the % share of women earning less than INR 2,500 from 64% to 4% post training. It reflects the segmental change in income. Where more than 100% rise is witnessed in the income bracket of more than INR 10,000, being conclusive of the fact that income bracket has risen for majority of women in rural areas.

Preparation of monthly budget Pre & Post Project

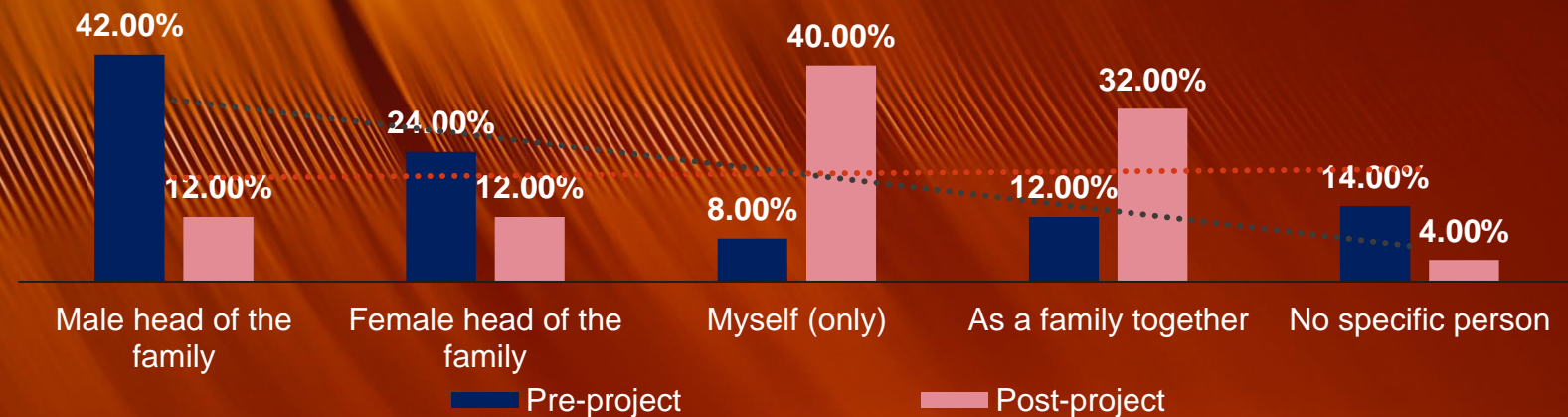


Comparison of monthly savings pre and post project



- 92.31% of the respondents who had no sources of income (homemakers), have been able to secure income generating opportunities.
- While majority of them are pursuing business avenues in the form of tailoring, agri and allied activities, Digital Seva Kendras etc., few Digital Sakhis with good education qualification have also started tuitions for students.

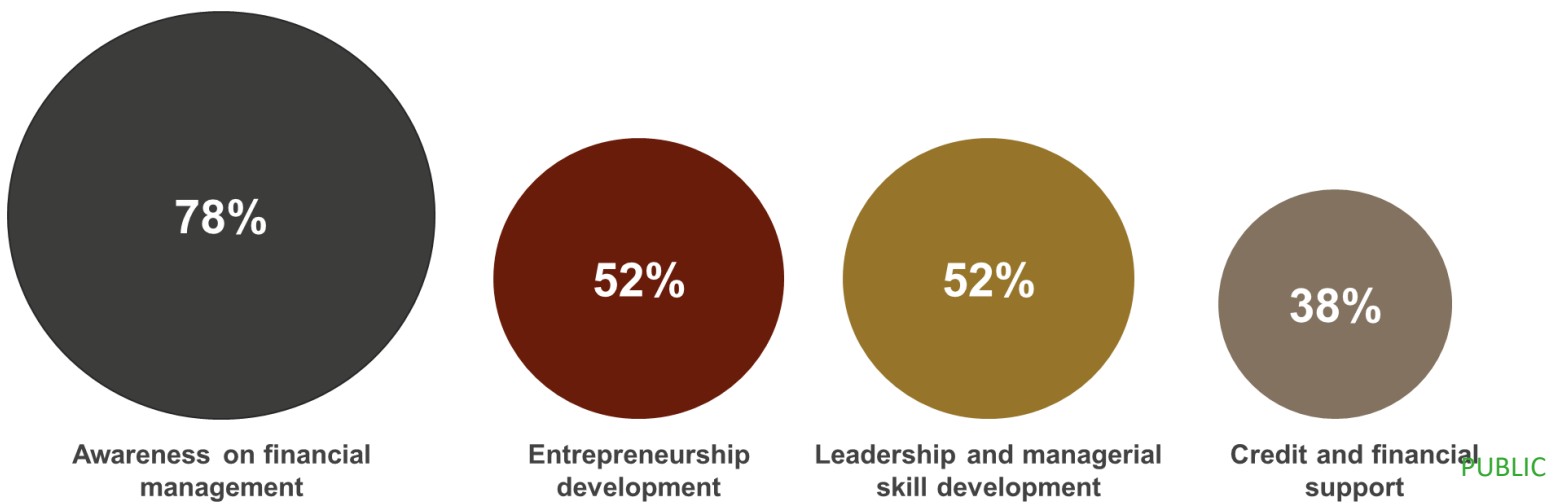
HH Expense Decision Making Pre- Post Project



- When it comes to managing expenses at the HH level, there has been a significant shift in the role of decision maker. Before the intervention, the male head of the family made the majority of decisions (42% of the time), but this has decreased to 12% after the intervention.
- Interestingly, the intervention had a positive impact where the self-confidence and trust of society showed a peak rise in self-decision making from 8% to 40% in the case of the woman making the decision herself.



The DS training programme extended training on numerous aspects. Following are some of the aspects which are most valued by the Digital Sakhis.



- The Digital Sakhi intervention has been successful in ensuring that rural women are empowered to be valuable resources in the community to take digital financial services of various kinds to the last mile. Through the training, the women realized their potential, both in terms of economic and leadership related.
- Each of the Sakhis has helped the other Sakhi in whatever way possible and has been a constant cheerleader and supporter of the other Sakhis. All the Sakhis have also helped the Women Entrepreneurs realize their potential and have supported in establishing their enterprises and also in sustenance of the same.
- The impact of the programme among the Digital Sakhi was witnessed during the project and even after it ended.
- All the Sakhis believed that pursuing this opportunity is critical for becoming a role model for the numerous young and women in their villages to capitalize on the opportunity that they get and pursue their passion.
- The Sakhis believed that its important for women to support other women to ensure holistic development in the community.
- Although the programme has ended, Digital Sakhis have continued to be each other's support system in their respective villages. There remains a sense of ownership for the responsibility that they have towards the community and a clarity that they have to put their best foot forward to achieve success. The programme's important learning was not only about empowering women with financial management skills, but also about teaching them efficiency levels they could achieve with the limited resources available to them.
- What remains crucial is a sense of togetherness that was seen across the group of Sakhis inspite of the individual targets set for them. The Sakhis, throughout the journey, have ensured that they are able to support other Sakhis with the required know how when required.

Gaining the trust of the community members was a very slow yet steady process. People today recognize us as Sakhis, which means friends. And like all relationships, it requires time for the other individual to completely trust us. Also, to ensure that the members remain connected to the intervention, we had to constantly ensure communication with them. This was very critical.” - Vaishali Anil Gaikwad, Digital Sakhi, Pune

Demographic Profile- Women Entrepreneurs (WEs)

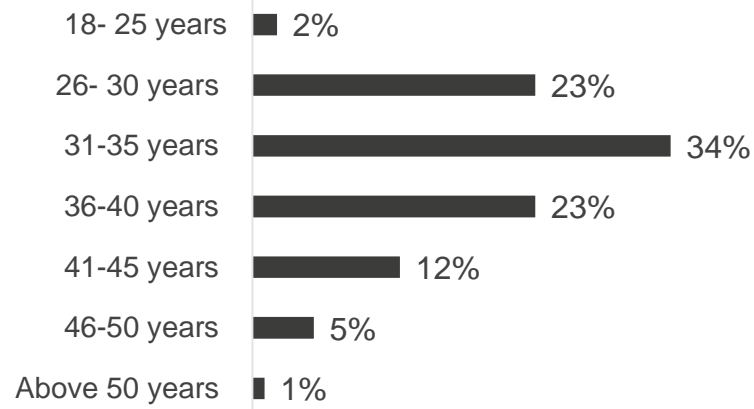


Gender Distribution

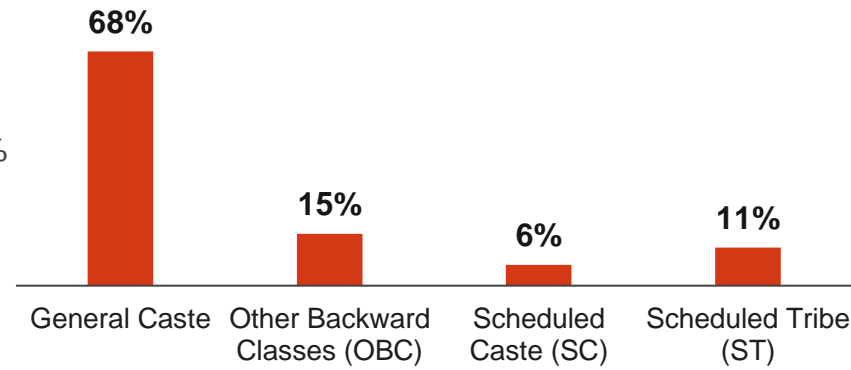


100% women respondents

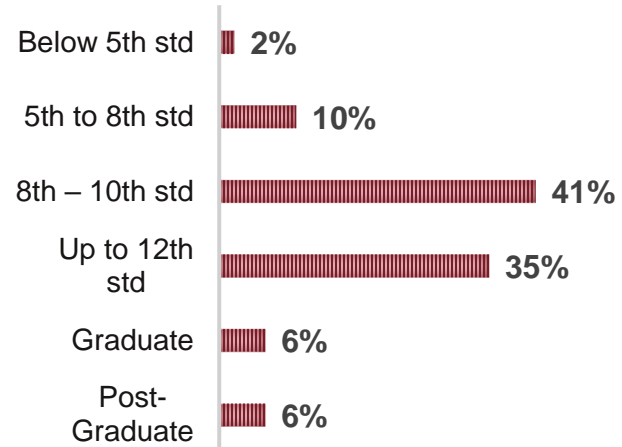
Respondent Age group



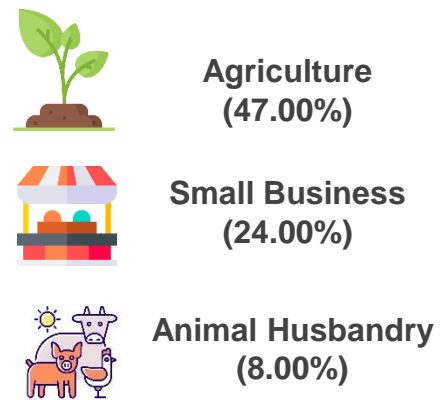
Respondent Social Category



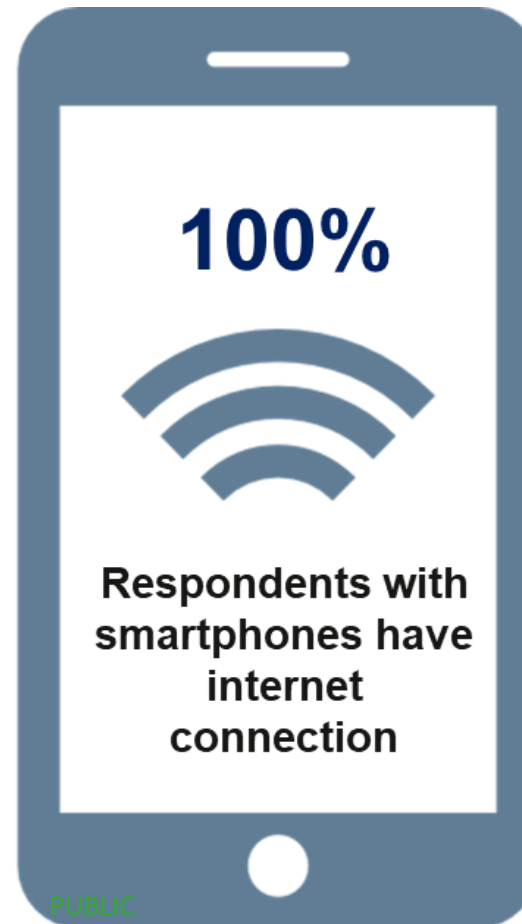
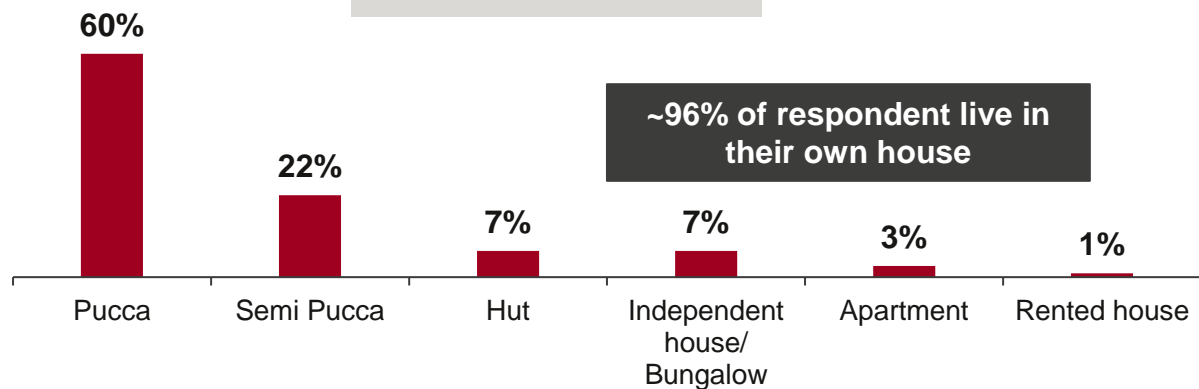
Education Levels



Primary Source of Income of HH



Household Structure



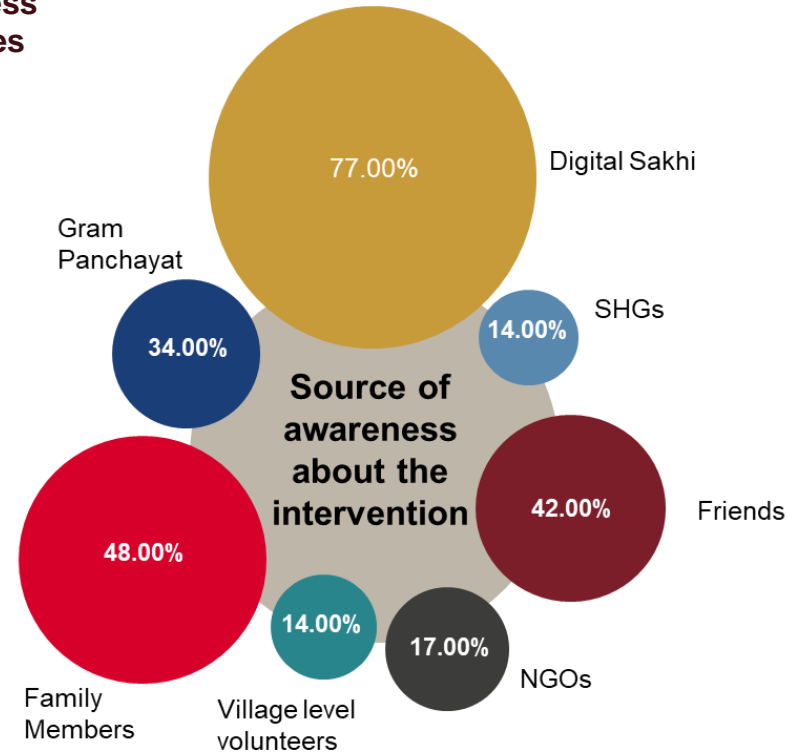
- While majority of the respondents are into tailoring, goatery and dairy, other entrepreneurs are also pursuing poultry, beauty parlours, retail shops etc. The major reason for choosing these sectors was their prior knowledge in the domain, in addition to low investment which gave them the comfort to start something from scratch.
- ~69% of respondents started their business between 2016 to 2019. The training intervention was a major boost for many such women entrepreneurs to start their individual enterprises.
- The respondents were majorly motivated by Digital Sakhis in their respective villages about the training programme and also to start their business. The respondents also mentioned that throughout the course of training and enterprise set-up, the Sakhis have supported them with additional know how and connecting them with individuals with the required expertise/ resource.
- ~44% of the respondents mentioned engagement of family members in their enterprise; the highest participation recorded was by husband.
- Although majority of the respondents didn't highlight of facing many critical challenges, few respondents mentioned challenges pertaining to limited access to credit, restrictions from family members etc. which is a deterrent in terms of scaling the business, and business continuity as well.

Women Entrepreneurship Intervention



The respondents mentioned four major components of the training:

- ❖ Knowledge on expansion of business
- ❖ Information about Financial Services
- ❖ Product Diversification
- ❖ Communication skills



70% of respondents had prepared a business plan with help of Digital Sakhis post training which has helped them glide effectively through various stages of managing their business.

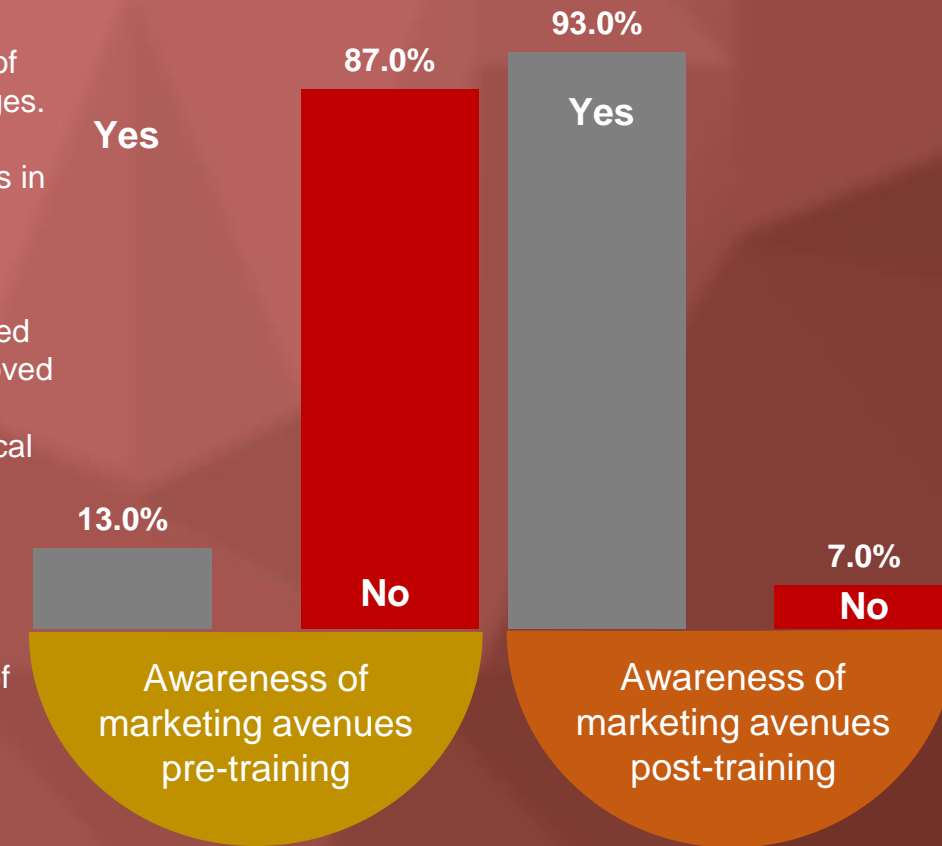
Out of the total respondents, 30% participated in business case competition. This presented a unique opportunity for them to draw clarity on their ideas and present the same in a structured manner.

Out of the total respondents, who went for exposure visits, majority participation was in trades including tailoring and goat rearing. Such visits enabled participants to interact and learn from each other. Participants also mentioned such visits to be extremely eye opening in terms of the opportunities that exist in respective trades.

Market Intelligence & Analytics

Enterprise level Impact

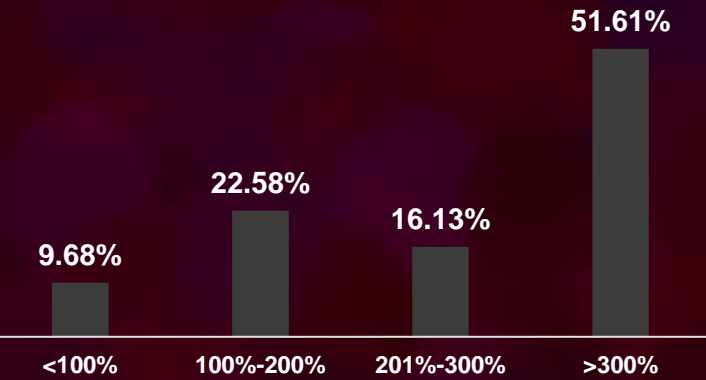
- Majority of the respondents are aware of producer groups and SHGs in the villages. Of these ~87% of the respondents are members of producer groups and SHGs in their respective villages.
- Amongst the many benefits, the respondents mentioned access to shared resources, marketing assistance, improved bargaining power and over sectoral knowledge enhancement to be the critical benefits of membership in producer groups.
- This becomes extremely relevant especially in the case of ~51% of the respondents, who are currently a part of these groups but were previously not aware of these groups or the related benefits.
- It is fascinating to note the knowledge realized among the respondents' post-program especially when it comes to marketing.
- The different marketing avenues have helped the respondents in promoting their products and expanding the customer base.
- The respondents got to know about a number of new marketing avenues such as digital marketing, word of mouth marketing, print based promotion, stalls to display merchandise, door to door promotion etc.
- In addition to this, the respondents also came to know about pricing strategies, procurement of raw materials, cataloging, packaging and most importantly, effective communication strategies to be able to improve customer footfall.



Impact of intervention on business

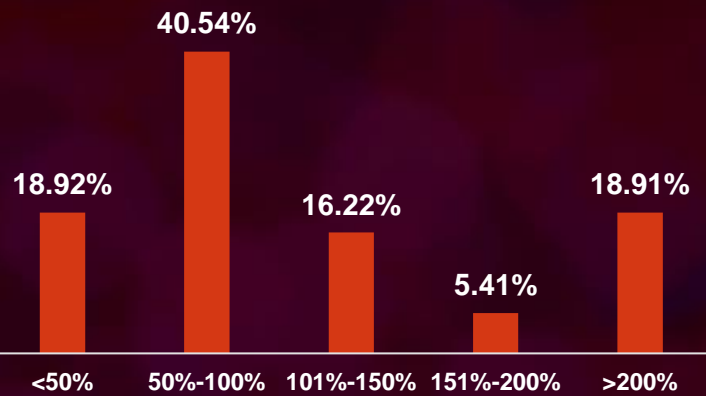


Customer Base Growth



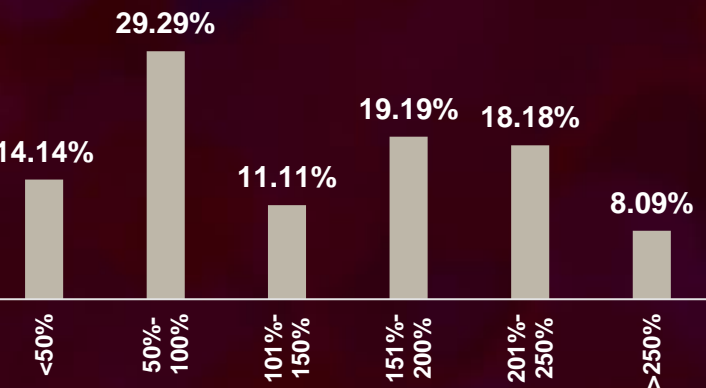
- The respondents understood what a customer is and how they help expand a business.
- From the quantitative analysis, we have observed that there is a sharp **(3X times)** increase in the customer base of the respondents especially in the case of **tailoring and retail business**

Sales Volume Growth



- An increase in sales volume indicates the performance of the business and also contributes to its revenue.
- From the above statistics, we can clearly see a rise in the sales volume of businesses run by women entrepreneurs. **(tailoring and dairy farming)**

Pricing Growth



- Rightly pricing a product in a business has a lot of untapped growth potential for optimizing the business.
- From the data, it has been observed that among the pricing strategies, the respondents have given more preference to **competitive pricing and cost-plus pricing**.

Case: Impact of intervention on women entrepreneurs

Tailoring Business

- The training has helped the women entrepreneurs learn new designs which wasn't known to them earlier. They have been able to improve the quality of product and also diversify their offerings which has led to increased orders from new and existing customer base.
- They have now started purchasing their raw material such as thread, button, laces etc., from wholesale market that has helped them in reducing their cost to a larger extent. Along with tailoring, few of the respondents have also started their own cloth and retail shop that sell sari, dresses as well as tailoring related materials, thereby catering to the larger value chain.



Customer satisfaction



Increase in product quality



Improved product diversification



Better product pricing



Dairy Farming

- The average milk production went up from 237 litres to 517 litres.
- The price fetched by women entrepreneurs increased from INR 23 to INR 45 per litre
- The increase in production was the result of training provided under the programme about feeding and regular vaccination of the animals.
- Further, the knowledge about checking the weight and the location of the exact market of sale helped the women entrepreneurs to obtain a better bargaining position and price.
- Knowledge on improved health management and proper care & maintenance of animals further helped in increasing the quality of the milk and meat.

Goat Farming

- There was increase in the sale of goats from INR 5,000 per goat to around INR 15,000 per goat during peak seasons.

Beauty Parlour

- The average price of the services has increased from INR 250 per seating to INR 350 per seating and it is variable in nature depending upon the services.
- There is better understanding about new emerging practices and products in the beauty & wellness industry

Retail Shop

- Average customer base has increased from ~7 per month to ~15 per month.
- The respondents mentioned that post training they have increased the stock of material in the shop.

Poultry Farming

- There has been increase in customer base from 0 to 13 per month along with volume of rearing chicken from ~100 to ~200.
- Selling price of chicken has gone up from ~INR 300 to INR 400 per chicken.

Impact of intervention on women entrepreneurs



Loans

- 95% of respondents are currently completely aware about the different loans; a definite improvement has been witnessed since 57% of the respondents were previously unaware of any of the loans.
- 98% of the respondents came to know about loans from Digital Sakhis.
- 92% of the respondents, who have opted for the loan, have availed the facility post training.
- Respondents are now preferring to take loans from Banks and SHGs, in case they need in the future, as they would get low interest rate as compared to other informal sources of finance. This has been a positive shift as compared to earlier times, when people weren't aware of the processes involved in accessing loans from banks (especially).
- 94% of respondents are today confident of taking a loan in future for business purposes.

Insurance

- Similar to loans, 99% of the respondents are now aware of the various insurance products and their usage; 58% of respondents were completely unaware about insurance products and only handful of sampled population had knowledge about such products.
- 95% of the respondents came to know about the insurance products from Digital Sakhis.
- 100% of the respondents, who have opted for the insurance of any kind, have availed the same post training. Among the respondents who have taken an insurance, life insurance has been the most preferred one.
- Going forward, the respondents have shown preference towards uptake of Life Insurance and Health Insurance.
- 96% of respondents are confident of taking an insurance in the future for ensuring the business against the unexpected uncertainties.

Digital modes of payment

- 97% of respondents are currently using digital modes of payment for their enterprise specific transactions
- 87% of the family members are also using digital mode of payment for household related work.
- 70% of the respondents prefer to use ATM card for the availing the banking facilities for transactions purpose.



“Until 2019, I didn't have my own phone. I used to use my son's phone, even to make a call. Today, I have my own phone and I am able to make digital transactions for the smallest of things. It's a big change in the lives of the women of this village- ”
Meghna Bhojne, WE, Tuljapur, Osmanabad

- Respondents stated that they find UPI payment & usage of debit as most convenient mode of payment & this helps in quick payments involving less risk of carrying the cash. Few of the respondents said that because of UPI payments they are now able to get their payment hassle free & saves lot of time leaving a larger amount at their disposal.

Impact of intervention on women entrepreneurs



- Majority of respondents benefited from the programme by increasing their trade volumes and revenues. While few of the respondents had no income prior to the training, but now they were earning a stable monthly income.
- The business case study competition helped them not only understand their business better but also improve their communication skills and confidence level.
- Most of the respondents have now started using various marketing avenues after the training, which has given their business a necessary boost.

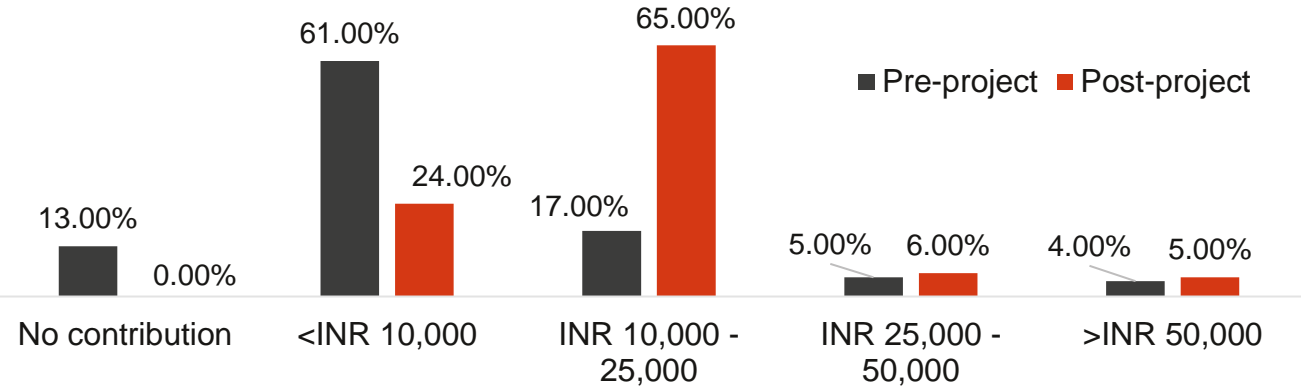
“When I got married and came to my in-law's place, I had only studied till 10th standard. If somebody would have told me 5 years back that I would be earning my own money, I wouldn't have been able to believe. Buts, it's the reality now because of the Digital Sakhi Programme”



Household Level Analysis for Women Entrepreneurs

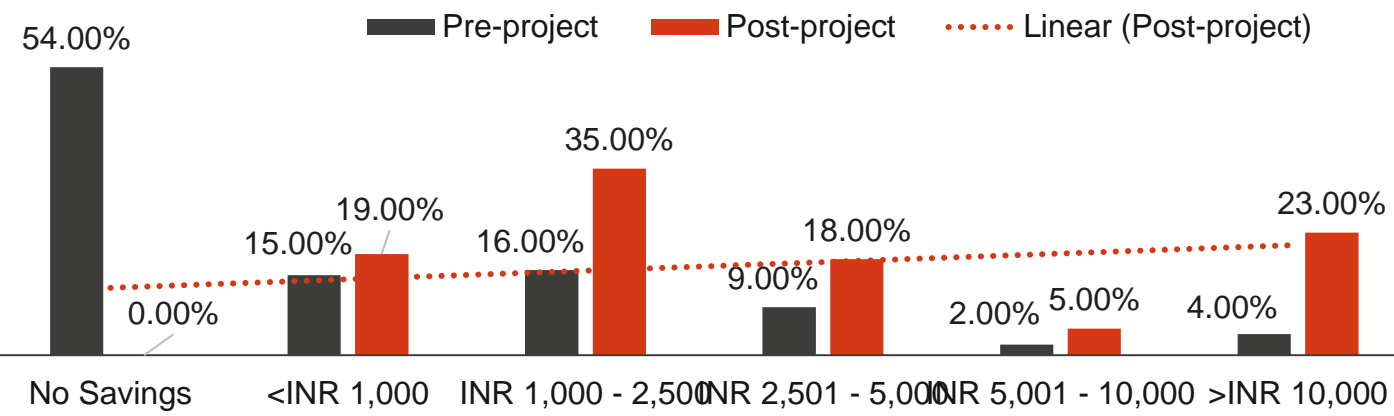


Contribution to HH income Pre-project and Post-project



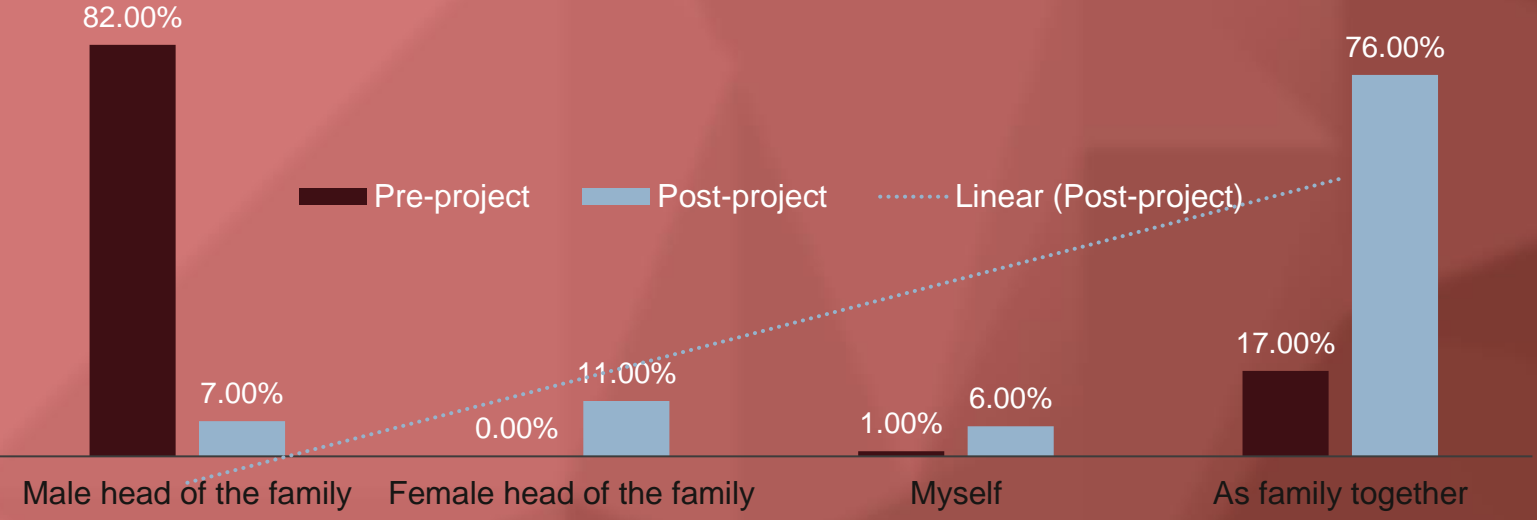
- Post project, WEs have been proactive in contributing to HH income. As compared to pre-project time, the extent of contribution has also seen a rightward shift.
- The preparation of budget has helped the respondents to track down the expenses and control the avoidable expenses. While 83% of respondents have started preparing budgets (as compared to only 23% pre-project), few respondents are planning to start the same shortly.

Comparison of monthly savings pre and post project

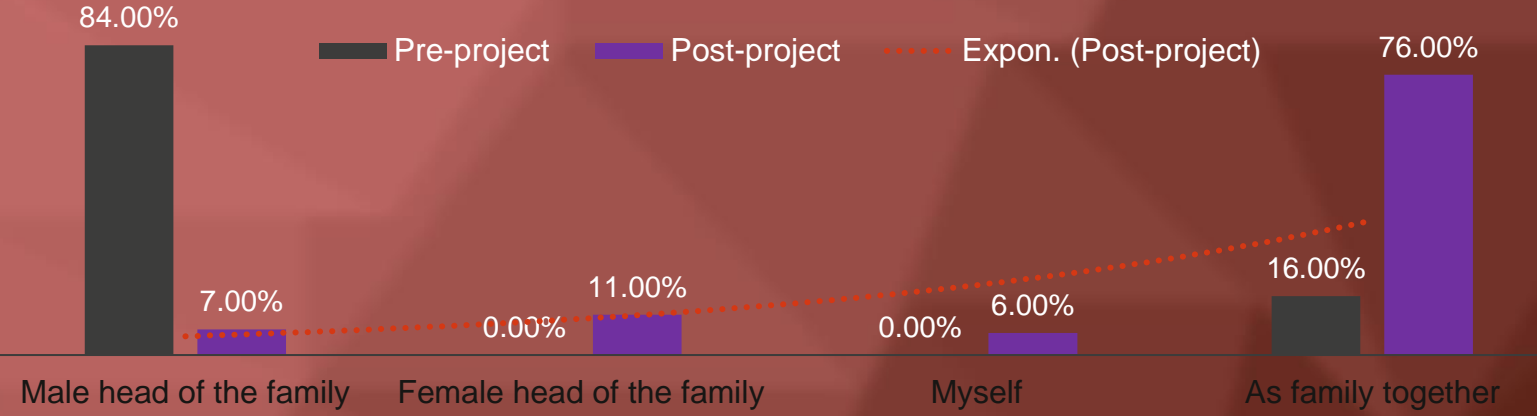


- From the analysis, we found out that many women entrepreneur hadn't started savings, but post understanding the importance of savings they have started saving money in Banks & SHG. More than 80% of the respondents have preferred banks for savings.

HH Decision Making for utilization for savings: Pre- Post project Analysis



HH Decision Making in case of expenses made: Pre- Post Project Analysis



- A sharp transition has been witnessed in case of the role of decision maker when it comes to managing expenses at HH level. While male head of the family majorly took decisions (84%) before the intervention, such instances have reduced to only 7% post intervention.
- Interestingly the positive impact of the intervention could be seen where the self confidence and entrustment of the society showed peaked rise of self decision making. In the case of 6% of the respondents, they have started taking decisions all by themselves.
- As per analysis, it was found that family members raised their trust of decision making on the respondents post training. Families have also started taking decisions together (76%).

Demographic Profile- Community members



Gender Distribution

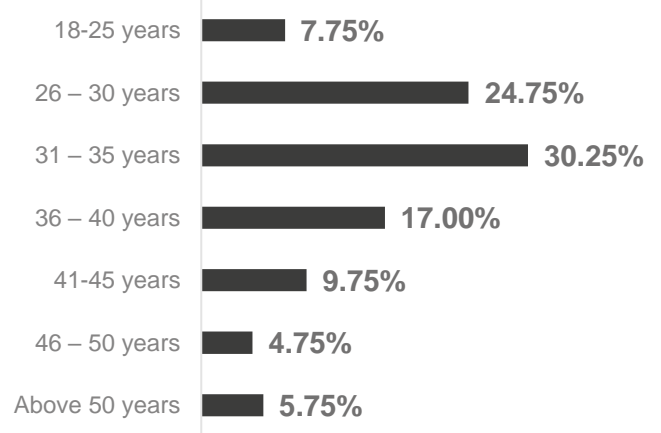


61.50%

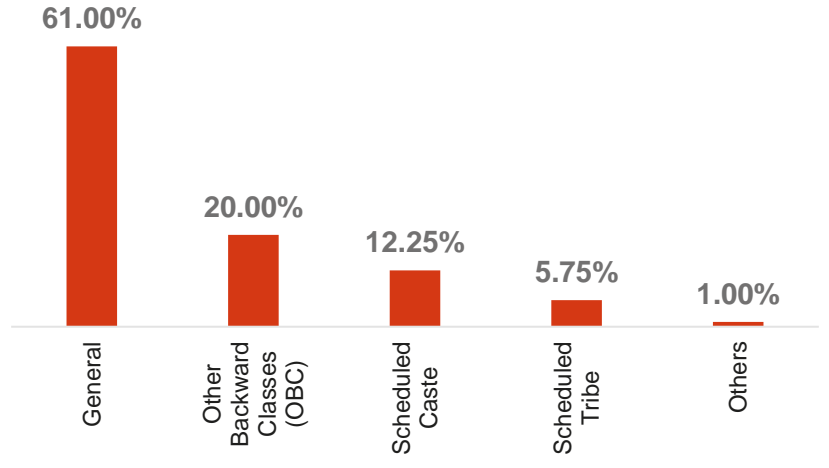


38.50%

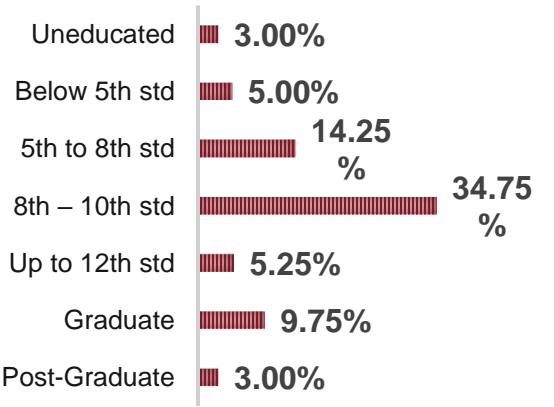
Respondent Age group



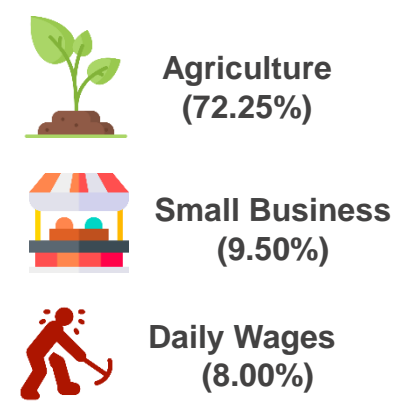
Respondent Social Category



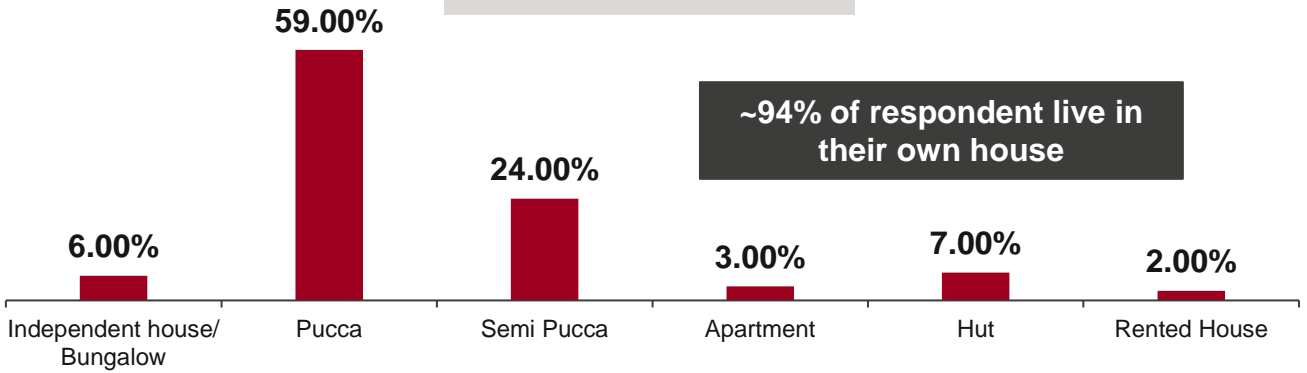
Education Levels



Primary Source of Income of HH



Household Structure



83.97%

Respondents have uninterrupted internet in their phones

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The discussions with the respondents suggest that in line with the primary occupation of the community members, majority of the women are engaged in agriculture, where they support their spouse in undertaking the various agricultural activities.

The communities mentioned that they have witnessed definite growth in case of women professionally, since more and more women are opting for taking up income generating opportunities such as animal husbandry and tailoring and increasingly, working as Digital Sakhis.

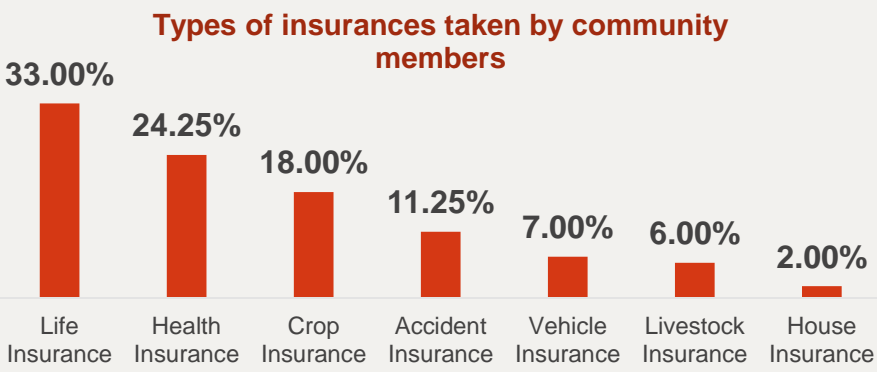
- **76.00%** respondents were aware of Digital Sakhis in their communities of which **97.04%** of the respondents were reached out by Digital Sakhis.
- **65.42%** of these respondents suggested reaching out to the Digital Sakhis atleast three times in a quarter.
- **92.25%** of the respondents suggested that the male members of the DS families have been extremely supportive of their participation in the programme.
- **82%** of the respondents mentioned of knowing Digital Seva Kendra in their village which helps them in Aadhar and PAN card related documentations, online payments, information dissemination on schemes and policies etc.

Impact of awareness sessions



Awareness on Loans & Insurances

➤ Life Insurance has been the predominant choice among respondents (33%). In terms of availing insurances in the future, majority of the respondents have shown inclination towards life and medical insurance (59%).



➤ Majority of people (43%) were advised and informed by Digital Sakhi to avail insurance. ~58% of the respondents mentioned that they were not aware about the insurances prior to the training.



- 9.5% respondents have taken loan, of which ~45% of the respondents have taken a loan post training.
- Of the respondents who have taken a loan, 69% have opted for Personal Loan

Awareness on Digital Payment Methods

- Prime reasons for adopting digital mode for payments were convenience and proper bookkeeping of expenses incurred
- Cash backs, convenience, expense tracking and responsibility are the prime advantages identified for digital payments
- During discussions it was found that network issue and dilemma of theft through data leakage of banks and OTP were some of the areas that people identified as threats
- 77.52% respondents feel that digital payments have fastened the payment process



➤ **90% of respondents now feel confident in using digital payments**

Awareness on Government Schemes



- Central and State Governments, with due consideration to the demographics, have launched numerous schemes targeting holistic well being of the citizens. Most of the times, lack of awareness of these schemes results in rural population missing out on the benefits.
- Acknowledging the same, the Digital Sakhi Programme ensure awareness generation among the community on the various government schemes.
- Due to the intervention, ~50% of respondents aware now well aware of the Govt Schemes. Majority of respondents were informed by Digital Sakhis about the government schemes
- 78% of these respondents have enrolled in Govt Schemes post intervention.
- Atal Pension Yojana was the most popular government scheme amongst the respondents
- 92% of respondents experienced positive impact from these government schemes.

Awareness on Government Schemes

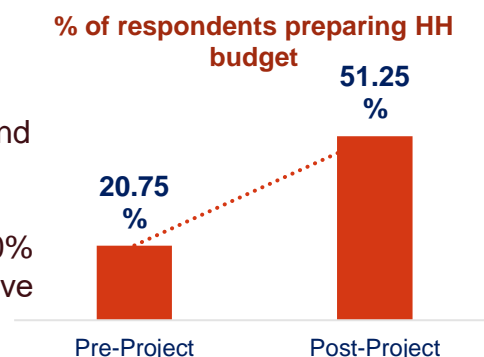
- Although the DS training camps have been a success in the project areas and has witnessed a positive response from the community members, few respondents weren't able to attend the camps, either because they were tied up with work and household chores or in some cases weren't aware of the timing of the camps. Of these, 61.25% were females.
- Of the respondents who couldn't attend camps, ~33% mentioned that one of their family members has attended the camps and have disseminated the relevant information.
- Basis discussion, 76.82% of the respondents have attended at least 2 camps in their villages. The numerous topics covered in these camps include awareness on schemes, financial services etc.
- 90.50% of the respondents have shared extremely positive feedback on the quality of the camps conducted and have found the camps to be very helpful.
- While the community members didn't have many suggestions regarding the camps and had an overall positive response, few respondents also suggested that increasing the frequency of the camps will help in better uptake of practices and will fasten the behaviour change process.

Impact on Financial Management- Budget Preparation, Savings & Decision Making

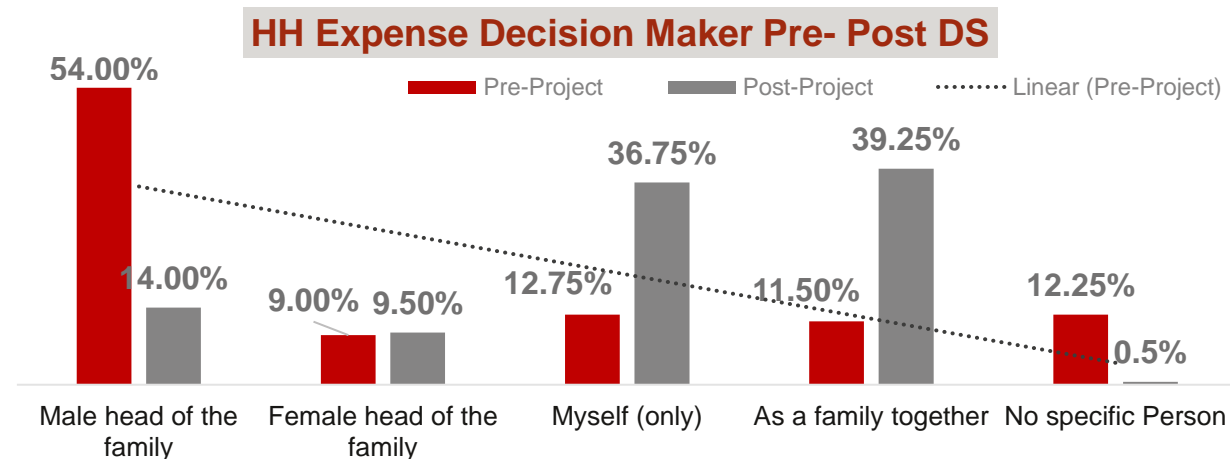


Household Budget:

- Discussions with respondents suggest that preparing a household budget is extremely essential since they have been able to understand their expenses better.
- Of the total respondents who have started maintaining a budget, ~60% said that it's a practice that they have adopted post training. They have realized the importance of saving and are prepared for future.
- 100% of the respondents who are currently maintaining a household budget have realized numerous benefits of the same, saving being the most common benefit.



Household level decision making:



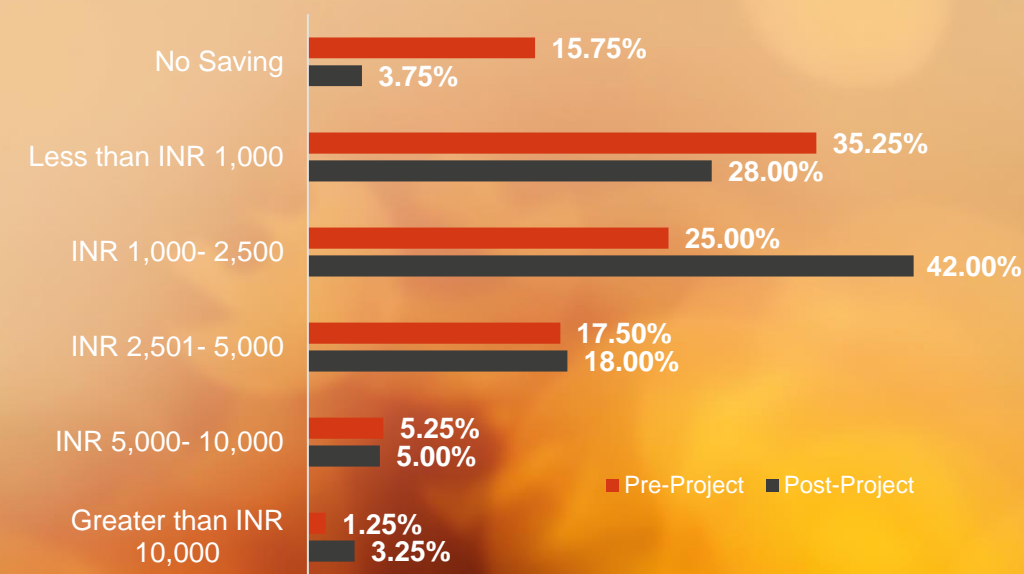
- Prior to the intervention, financial decision making was majorly undertaken by the male head of the family. Post intervention, the dependence on male decision making has declined from 54% to 14% and share of self decision making boomed from 12.75% to 36.75%. Same followed for family as a unit which rose from 11.5% to 39.25% post intervention.
- Since families are opting for taking a financial decision together, having weighed the positives and negatives of a particular decision, they are able to bring down gender disparities within their own families. This greatly signifies the impact of intervention in realization of self dependence and acquired knowledge in terms of financial acumen, especially among the women.
- As per the women respondents, 91.81% women have started taking active interest in managing HH finances, testifying the above statement of being self reliant.

Household level savings:

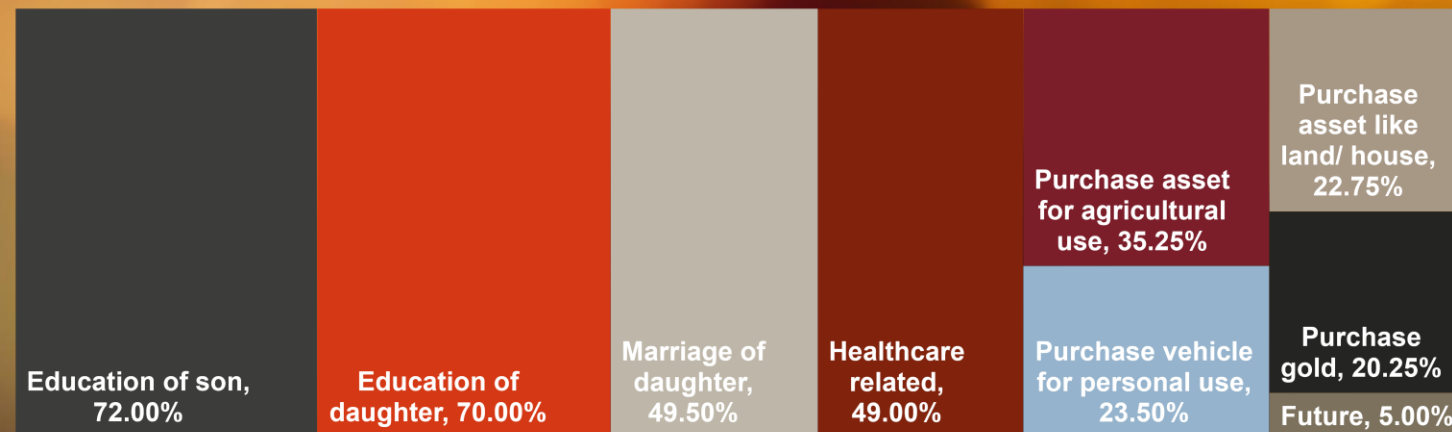
74% respondents save money in bank. A similar situation was observed in case of pre training scenario as well.

Because of demonetization, there was a dramatic change in people's saving habits since people started saving in banks as compared to earlier times when they used to stack cash at homes.

Pre-Post Analysis in case of savings



Avenues for utilization of savings



- There has been definite realization of the importance of savings among the community members since majority of the respondents (~89%) have been able to save regularly.
- While the prime reason for respondents to save has been the education of their children, many members also want to stay prepared in case of emergency.
- Marriage continues to be an essential reason for people to save, but the positive shift that can be seen in case of a larger number of people saving for reasons such as education, speaks highly of the values generated in the society.



Analysis of the intervention

Relevance:

- Majority of the direct beneficiaries (Digital Sakhis and Women Entrepreneurs) are in the age group of 26-40 years, which ensures long term impact and spill over benefits of the program activities.
- Earlier, the involvement of women in financial decision making at household level was extremely limited owing to pre-dominant gender biases. Women's role, even with good education qualification, was confined to the four walls in most of the sampled villages. Hence, program has been able to cater to the inherent gender discrimination by empowering more women with the right set of knowledge and information.
- By reaching out to community members, there was definite improvement in the awareness about digital financial inclusion, government schemes etc. On the other side, the community members also realized the potential that the women of their villages held, which further instilled a sense of confidence, self reliance and pride within the women.

Coherence:

With the objective of “leaving no one behind” the UN General Assembly adopted the universal, integrated and transformative 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a set of 17 goals in 2015.

The evaluation finds coherence of the intervention with international frameworks such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as government's strategy around digital financial inclusion. Further, the objectives of the program are well linked with “Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Sakshrata Abhiyaan” to usher in digital literacy in rural India under National Digital Literacy Mission.



Effectiveness and Impact:

- The impact created in the lives of the beneficiaries can be understood from the positive uptake of the learnings and the resultant change in behaviour of the Sakhis, entrepreneurs and community members at large.
- The women (Digital Sakhis and Women Entrepreneurs) have been able to actively participate in economic activities and improve their earnings. Due to increased motivation and exposure, women are now able to look out for better avenues for improving their earnings. Positive change has been witnessed in case of maintenance of household budget and expense management, increased contribution to household income, regular and improved saving, adoption of government schemes amongst others.
- Across stakeholder segments, shift in decision making at household level speaks highly of the positive impact that the intervention had and how it has been effective in bringing down gender disparity.

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Sustainability:

- The sustainability of the intervention of this sorts depends on the snowballing impact created as a result of the knowledge dissemination. Since, the Digital Sakhis are a part of the community itself, educating them will have a multiplier impact at two critical levels:
 - At the household level
 - At the community level, since now the community acknowledges their role in the development process
- The addition of Digital Seva Kendras strengthens the case for sustainability, since the presence of an infrastructural arrangement further bolsters the extent of visibility in the community. However, in the case of women entrepreneurs, in addition to training and capacity building, creation of market linkages is critical, which will further ensure the sustainability of the intervention

Efficiency:

- The project engaged Digital Sakhis, who were basically from the community itself. This helped in enhancing association of the larger community with the programme. This has led to increased operational efficiency since each Digital Sakhi has a target of reaching out to a pre-defined number of community members, ensuring greater coverage. The discussion with the Sakhis suggests that although there have been few instances of attrition, but the number is limited.
- Conducting community camps in addition to door-to-door visits has actually helped improve the efficiency of reaching out to larger audience. While few Sakhis are also leveraging on similar get togethers and meetings, others haven't been able to undertake the same, which may be incorporated as a component of the intervention

Recommendations



Reaching out to Digital Sakhis, WEs who dropped out/ discontinued

It is important to evaluate the needs of both Sakhis and WEs, who dropped out or discontinued for some reason, and efforts may be made to re-skill these participants basis a more compact module, which would not only boost the confidence of drop out women, but also build goodwill among other women in the community to adopt the learnings.



Strengthening the feedback mechanism

Collecting feedback to assess training content and effectiveness is crucial. A robust feedback mechanism could be developed in such a manner that tries to gauge the understanding of the participants at different periods in the training cycle. Besides training, feedback from beneficiaries could also be sought regarding exposure visits, case participations etc.



Training on business loans and insurances for WEs

While the women have come a long way in terms of understanding the avenues available to access formal sources of credit, it is important to ensure effective handholding when they want to access credit. While the awareness of loans and insurance is high among the participants, uptake of the same remains low, even in case of need. Hence, dedicated training on the same will ensure that women are able to access the same effectively.



Building capacities on cybersecurity

With the growing risks around cybersecurity, it is important to constantly enhance the knowledge of the beneficiaries on fraudulent transactions and how to take preventive measures to be safe. The opportunity cost of not catering to cybersecurity issues is high since a single default can have severe repercussions, where people mightn't be willing to carry out any digital transaction out of fear.



Overall market development for WEs

Supporting women in overall market development is important to operate effectively and strike the right conversation with market participants. Such an exercise would involve extensive mapping of the value chains that the micro enterprise are operating in and catering to, so that specific modules could be developed in building sustainable relationships for these women entrepreneurs.



Upgrading the module for WEs to capture investments

Although the current modules are focused on formal sources of credit and other financial instruments, the entrepreneurs were also intrigued to understand the various investment instruments that could help them grow their business.

Such a module could be developed for specific entrepreneurs who are keen on leveraging on such investment opportunities.



Better access to Rural Credit

Improved access to rural credit has a critical socio-economic impact on rural households. Hence, facilitation of the same can be done through a collaborative approach with the banks, MFIs and local gram panchayat in the village to initiate discussions across the stakeholder groups regarding the challenges in accessing and how it can be resolved.



Increased village coverage and planned coverage of Digital Seva Kendras (DSKs)

Currently, while a particular Sakhi reaches out to community in one village, she should be assigned to other nearby villages as per her comfort to ensure that knowledge dissemination takes place in a more cost-effective manner.

The allocation of DSKs should follow a planned coverage of households who will access the services. This planning will help in ensuring efficient coverage in a particular location.



Restructuring the learning modules of financial literacy

While the digital financial literacy content has been well appreciated by stakeholders, it becomes extremely crucial that these aspects are well aligned to the changing financial ecosystem. Frequent review of learning modules every quarter to cater to rising demands and innovations along with certification, would also be crucial in motivating the learners.



Overall market development for WEs

It is critical for the organization to improve its visibility and there are various ways in which the company can improve its visibility, such as through increased transparency, a focus on equity, deepening community connections, encouraging creativity, etc.

Tanuja Nagnath Javale, Digital Sakhi, Kumbhari, Solapur



Tanuja is a qualified BA student, who, apart from technological challenges, faced problems in convincing family members to enroll for the LTFS training. While she struggled to communicate, today, she says- "Training me Madam sab saawal mujhse hi puchti hain, ab me itna bolti hu ki log bolte h kitna bolti ho".

She is grateful to the in-depth training provided on Pan card, Aadhar card, residence proof, necessary licenses and other digital methods. Now she helps DSKs of nearby villages in their processes along with digital payments and National Securities Depository Limited services. She also manages 42 SHGs in addition to this.

She earns INR 25,000 per month, saves INR 10,000 per month and invests in fixed deposits and life insurance. She is proud to run a producer company with all women staff, which is planned by baseline survey and predominantly marketed by digital medium.

Kalpna Rama Waghmare, Digital Sakhi, Jamgaon, Solapur



Kalpna joined Digital Sakhi program in 2017. She studied till 11th standard before marriage, and pursued class 12th, agriculture Diploma and BCA post marriage. Despite being educated she was not allowed to work or pursue a job.

When Digital Sakhi program was launched, she was contacted by Anganwadi Workers as they knew about her education levels. Post training, she has started making HH budgets and made good savings. She has bought 0.05 acres of land along with her husband, using her own savings. She wishes to learn tailoring in order to increase her income.

She played a vital role in village's digital transformation, ensuring involvement of women in this process. Efforts of Kalpna has helped in transitioning the status of women, where they are now more self-reliant and independent.

Kalpna, proudly addresses herself as the 'Anchor Digital Sakhi', who has helped other Sakhis as well in their journey.

Seeta Arun Bhivarkar, Woman Entrepreneur, Jamgaon Solapur



Having been married for 40 years, Seeta Bhivarkar is a 60-year-old elderly woman living in Jamgaon, Solapur. Currently, she is an aaganwadi worker and runs her dairy business with around 10 to 15 buffaloes in her shed.

Through the program, she also got information about various financial services such as operating a debit card in an ATM, making a monthly budget, the importance of saving, etc. She explained, "In my whole life, I never went to an ATM to withdraw money as I was scared of it." Today, I withdraw money from an ATM and use it for myself."

Further, she said the Digital Sakhi training has changed the mindset of the male population in the village, and they have now started supporting and encouraging women in the villages.

Asha Sunil Damale, Woman Entrepreneur, Kadus, Khed



Asha Sunil Damale is a 48-year-old woman living in Kadus village in Pune. At a young age, she started her parlour business from home, which gave her a minimum income of INR 5,400.

She said, "I always wanted to do business and be empowered." Initially, her son and in-laws supported her in setting up a small parlour. When she got to know about the training, she immediately enrolled for the same. Post-training, she got a sewing machine that was sponsored by the L&T team and started her second business of tailoring.

While having a conversation with her, she mentioned about changing the mindset of communities in the village. She said, "Earlier, the mindset of people towards women doing business was not looked at in a positive way. Now, every woman in the village is working in some capacity and not sitting ideal at home. This talks a lot about the impact and the difference that the intervention made in the lives of women."



Educating a woman has a snowballing effect. If you educate a man, you educate an individual.

If you educate a woman, you educate a family, if you educate a girl, you educate the future- Queen Rania of Jordan