

**Social Impact Assessment (SIA) of Digital Sakhi Programme
Tamil Nadu**
Project Year: FY 2022-23
Submitted by: CRISIL Limited
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Contents

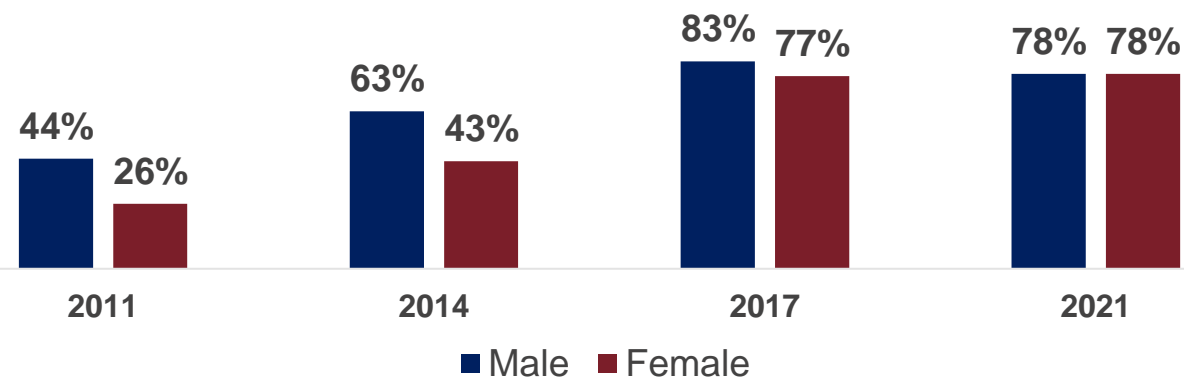
- 01 The Indian Journey to Digital Financial Inclusion & Digital Boom**
- 02 Scope of growth in the rural hinterlands & Status of women in the digital financial inclusion landscape**
- 03 About Digital Sakhi Program Approach & Methodology**
- 04 Key Findings of Digital Sakhi Program**
- 05 Analysis of Intervention**
- 06 Way Forward**
- 07 Case Studies**



The Indian Journey to Digital Financial Inclusion

- India has played a leading role in ushering in a transformative shift in the global digital payment arena.
- India's proactive initiatives, like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), Aadhaar, small finance banks, and payment infrastructure, drive digital financial inclusion.
- These efforts transformed Indian financial transactions, enabling easy and secure digital payments for individuals even in remote areas.
- India's pioneering role in this arena serves as a model for other countries aspiring to harness the power of digital finance for inclusive economic growth.

Gender-wise distribution of bank accounts in India from 2011 to 2021



- In 2021, 78% of Indians aged 15 and above had bank accounts, a significant increase from 44% in 2011, indicating improved financial inclusion, particularly for historically marginalized groups.

Status of women in the rural entrepreneurship landscape

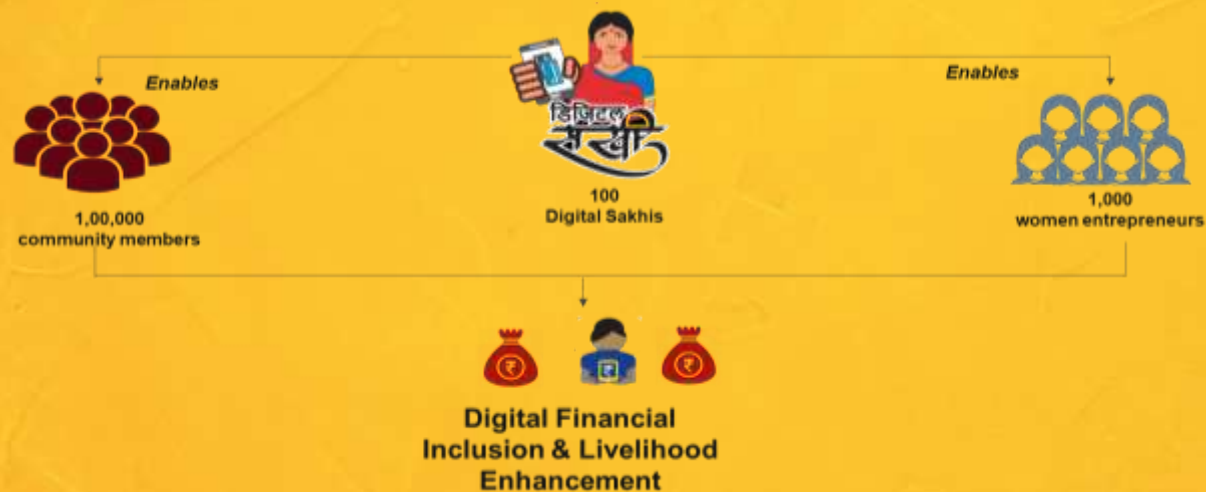
- Rural women indeed make up a significant portion of the rural labor force and are involved in a wide range of sectors, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and informal labor. Despite their active participation, their roles often tend to be more secondary or less visible, even though they perform a substantial amount of physical labor.



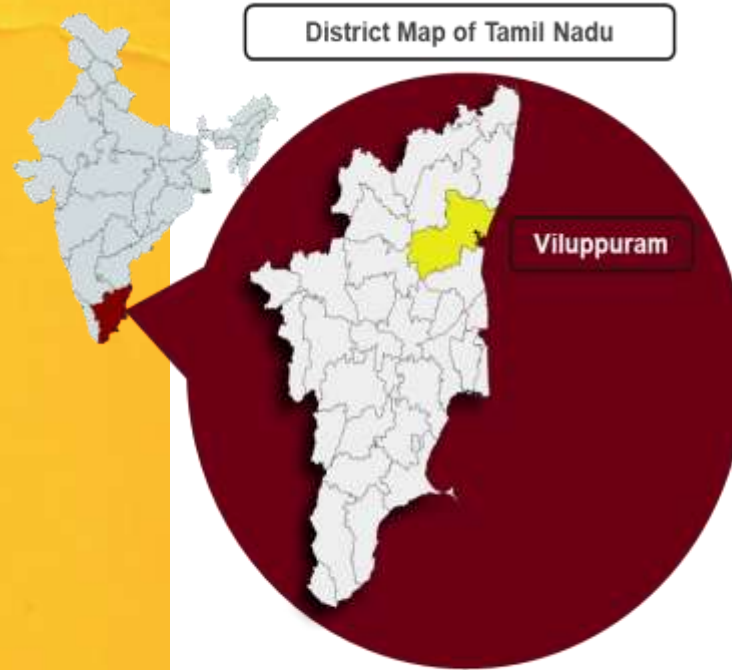
- However, much of the work performed by rural women falls within the **informal sector**, which is less regulated and **lacks formal recognition** including issues pertaining to **unpaid labour**.
- Despite their significant contributions, rural women often have **limited decision-making power** when it comes to matters related to agriculture, land ownership, and resource management.
- Providing these rural women with **knowledge and technology** empowers them to establish more sustainable sources of income and livelihood. **Entrepreneurship** empowers rural women economically by providing them with **income-generating opportunities**. This **financial independence** can contribute to poverty reduction and enhance the well-being of their families.
- Encouraging rural women to participate in entrepreneurship can challenge traditional gender roles and **promote gender equality**. It empowers women to have a say in decision-making processes and to access resources traditionally controlled by men.

Digital Sakhi is a flagship programme of L&T Finance, 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.

L&T Finance & Sri Aurobindo Society



Geographic Coverage



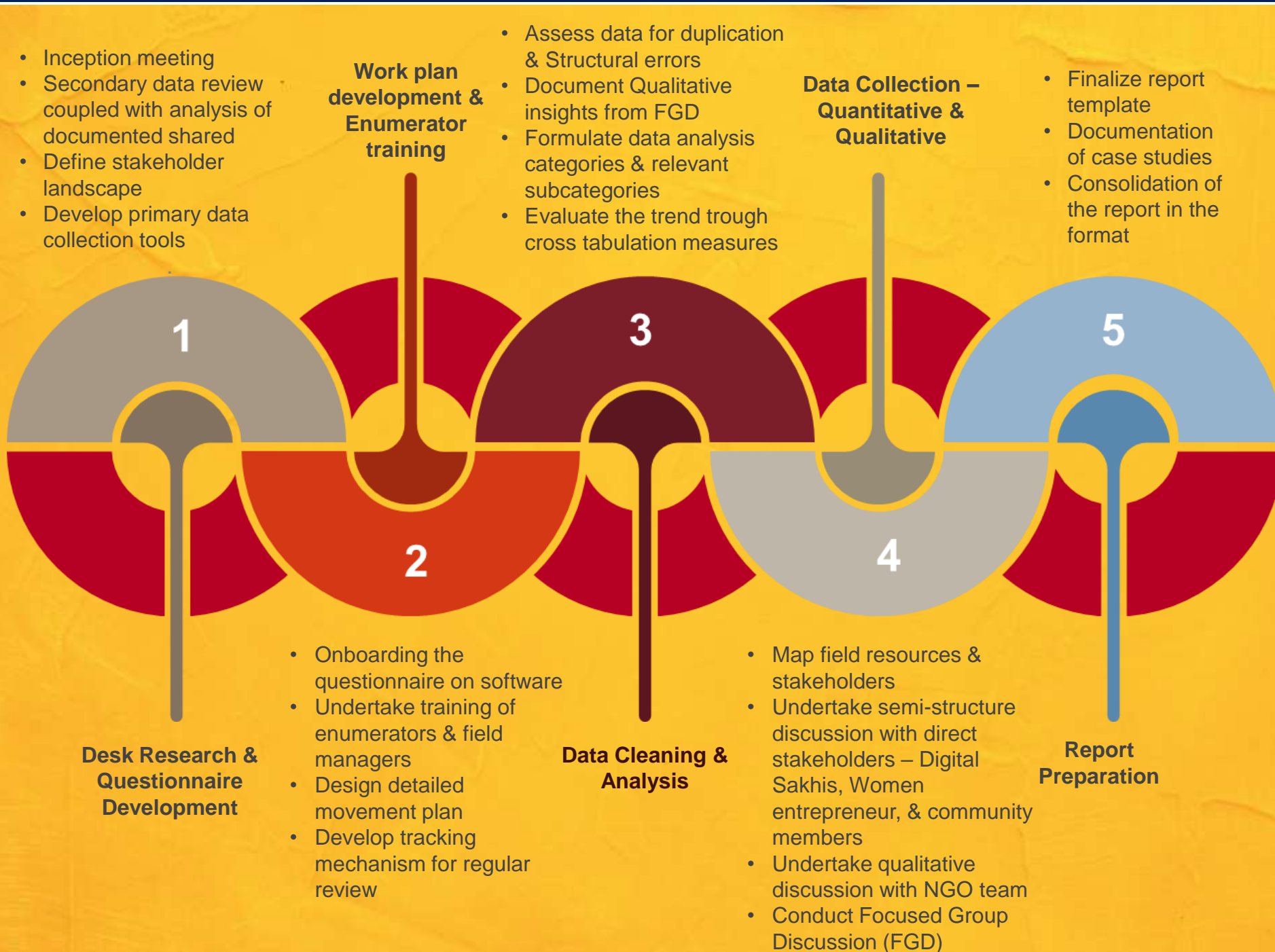
Villages part of Program Intervention

Adhanapattu, Alapakkam, Anumandhai, Appirampattu, Azhiyur, Bommaiypalayam, Chinnababusamuthiram, Chithalampattu, Dhollamur, Elavampattu, Eraiyur, Irrumbai, K.Mathur, Kadaperikuppam, Kalithirampattu, Karasanur, Kasipayalam, Katrampakkam, Kazhuperumpakkam, Keezhkuthapakkam, Keezhpathupattu, Kiliyanur, Kodur, Kondhamur, Kondimedu, Konjimangalam, Koonimedu, Koothapakkam, Kumalam, Kunnam, Manaveli, Mathur, Muttrampattu, Narayanapuram, Nesal, Ottai, Ozhuthiyapattu, Pakkiripalayam, Parangani, Parikalpattu, Perambai, Periyababusamuthiram, Periyakozhuwari, Perumpakkam, Poothurai, Ranganathapuram, Rawthankuppam, Semangalam, Thailapuram, Thandavamoorthikuppam, Therkunam, Thirumangalam, Ulagapuram, Vanur and Vazhuthavur

Villages part of Impact Assessment

Alapakkam, Anumandhai, Bommaiypalayam, K.Mathur, Kadaperikuppam, Karasanur, Keezhpathupattu, Kiliyanur, Kodur, Kondhamur, Kondimedu, Kunnam, Manaveli, Mathur, Nesal, Pakkiripalayam, Perambai, Periyababusamuthiram, Poothurai, Rawthankuppam, Thailapuram, Thandavamoorthikuppam, Therkunam, Thirumangalam, Vanur and Vazhuthavur

- ❖ 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 intervention implementation began in 2021, the implementation partner was Sri Aurobindo Society. It is an NGO dedicated to empowering women in rural areas through skill development and entrepreneurship initiatives. Additionally, the organization extends its support to the children of these families, assisting them in enhancing both their academic performance and life skills..
- ❖ 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 in 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.



- L&T Finance engaged CRISIL Limited to undertake social impact assessment study for the Digital Sakhi Program in Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu.
- 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 Villupuram)

Farmers



Women Entrepreneurs



Community Members

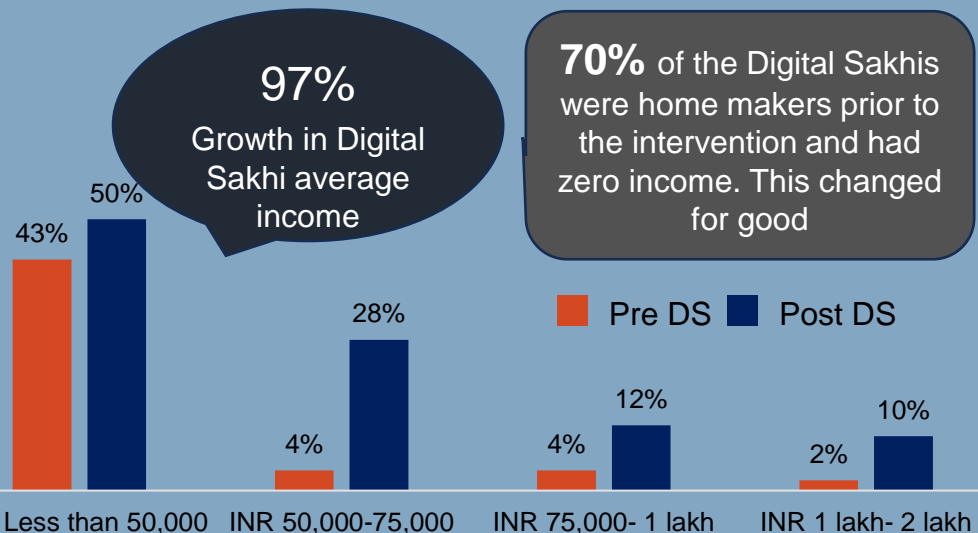


Stakeholders	Treatment Sample	Control Sample	Data Collection Tool
Digital Sakhis	50	-	Semi-Structured Interview (SSI)
WE	40	10	SSI
CM	200	67	SSI
CM	7	-	FGD
Aurobindo Officials	2	-	In-depth Interview
L&T Finance CSR Team	1	-	In-depth Interview

Digital Sakhi



Digital Sakhi income



- 78% have availed insurance
- 74% have availed credit facilities mostly from MFIs and SHGs

100%

- Smartphone with internet
- Bank account linked to smartphones

Earlier **40%** of the transactions were cash based that now has dropped to **10%**.



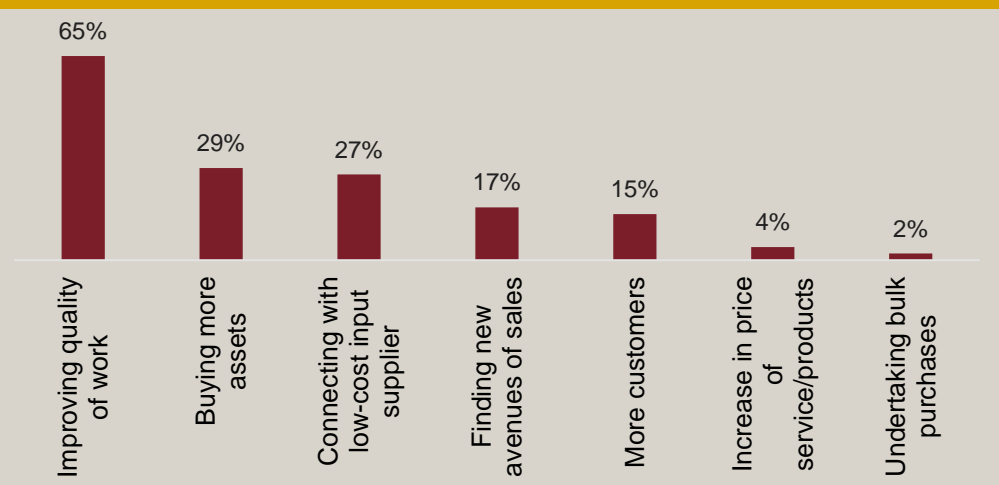
Women Entrepreneurship



Tailoring business is the preferred choice across TG.

- Post intervention as well as compared to CG, a greater number of TG members have started earning more than INR 50,000 per year.
- Earlier the number stood at 44%, now that stands at 93%.

➤ Beneficiary enterprises recorded a 100% increase in revenue and an 700% growth in profits following the Digital Sakhi program.



- 100% of TG respondents now have a smartphone with uninterrupted internet
- UPI is an emerging trend: 86% of TG and 17% of the CG use it
- 96% of TG and 57% of CG are aware of SHG and producer groups. Currently 90% of the TG and 63% of the CG are members of the same. For TG the number was 26% pre intervention
- 92% of the TG has taken loan
- 100% of the TG has taken insurance as against 0% of the CG
- 82% have enrolled themselves and family members in the government scheme

Community Members



- 100% of the TG community members are aware about Digital Sakhis and ascertained that they were reached by the Digital Sakhis in their village
- 3% of the respondents from CG prepares HH budget as against 52% of TG
- 30% of respondents from the TG indicated that their family members have joined the DS project.
- Joining the project has resulted in providing income opportunity (91%), boosting the confidence (50%) and in recognition and respect in society (45%).



75% of TG have taken insurance

57% of TG have taken loan



Bank Accounts

100% of TG

60% of CG

Digital Sakhi

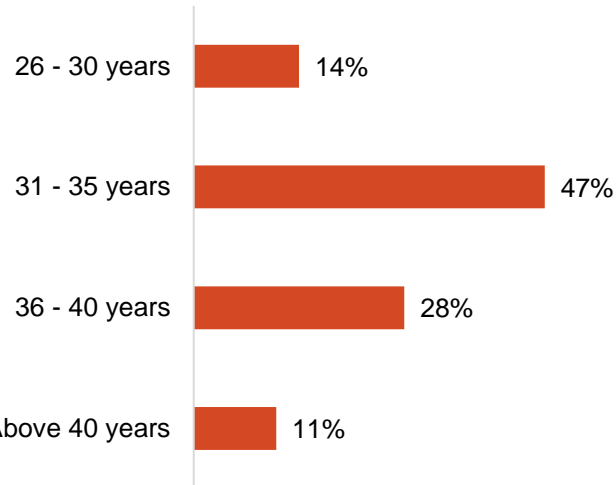




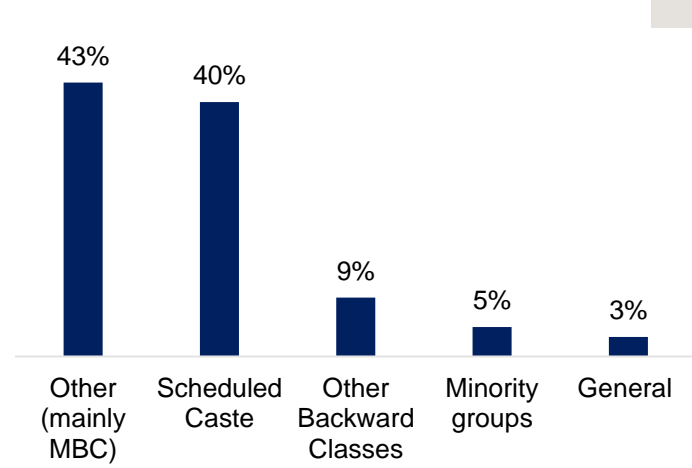
Parameters	Baseline (2021)	Assessment (2023)
Average Monthly HH Income	INR 7,770	INR 16,926
Places where HH saves money	Banks: 50% SHGs: 0%	Banks: 85% SHGs: 12%
Cashless payment used	23%	89%
Budget planning	36%	94%
Better inclusion in family decision making towards expenses and savings	20% As a family together	62% As a family together



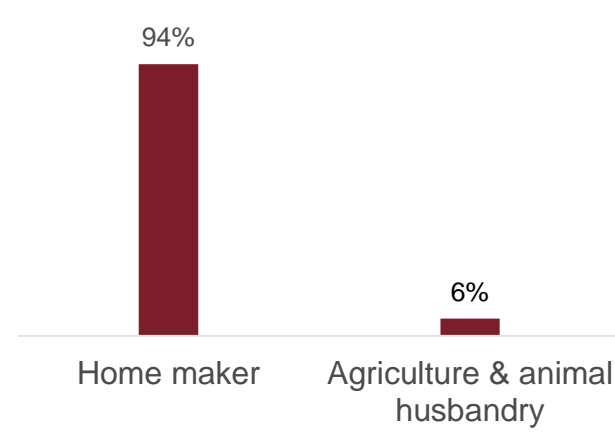
Respondent Age group



Respondent Social Category



Occupation of women before the Digital Sakhi Programme



Top 3 Primary Source of Income of HH



Daily wages (37%)

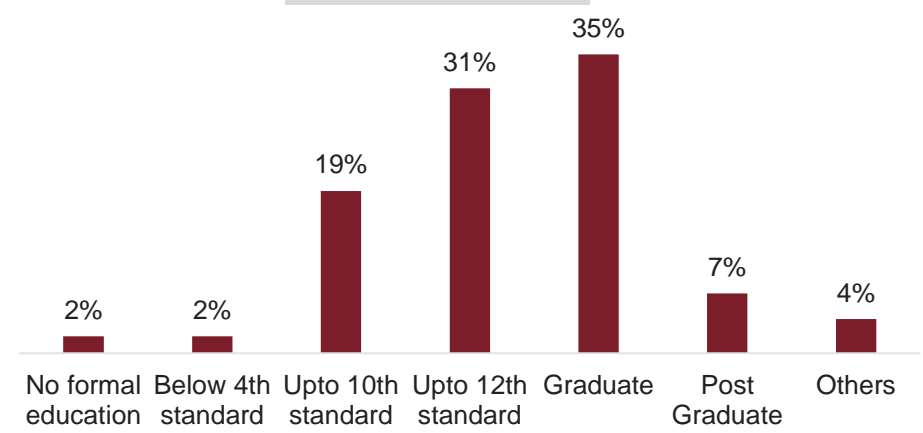


Small Business (26%)



Salaried job (21%)

Education Levels



50% of the respondents earned less than INR 0.50 lakh

39% of the respondents earned INR 0.50 - 1 lakh

11% of the respondents earned INR 1 - 2 lakh

Prior to the Digital Sakhi intervention, majority of women were homemakers and the top two reasons for not doing job were lack of opportunity (53%) & lack of skills (36%).

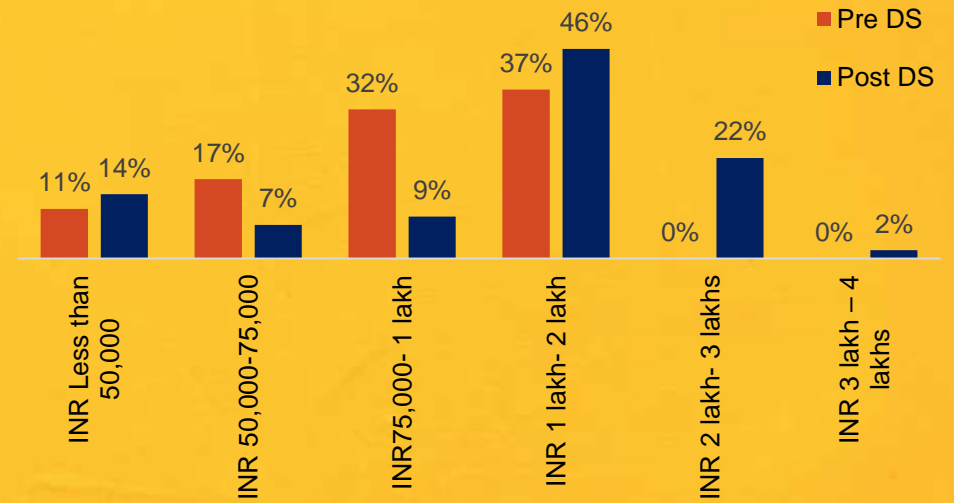
“Since I began earning after receiving the training, it not only boosted my self-confidence compared to before but also elevated the way my daughters and even friends from the village perceive me. Some of them even approach me for advice on how to kickstart their own businesses.”

The women found it challenging to imagine their earning potential, given the prevailing societal expectations of prioritizing family needs, and particularly the ingrained gender roles woven into the community's social structure

Household and Asset Profile

- Digital Sakhi households had an even gender distribution, with an average family size of two male members and two female members.
- Digital Sakhis primarily saw growth in smart phone, two-wheeler, personal computer and refrigerator post-intervention. The above assets are time savers and help the respondents improve their productivity.
- Among the families, 100% consist of all adult members earning.

Average annual income of the household in INR



- The intervention has instilled confidence (77%), helped develop strong network (30%), provided relevant skills (25%) and hand holding and guidance support (13%) to Digital Sakhis

“The progress of a country is not solely determined by its economic wealth but also by the condition of its women, who constitute half of the population.” - Sheikh Hasina



Insurance

• **Insurance availed:**
 Pre intervention: **20%** Post intervention: **78%**

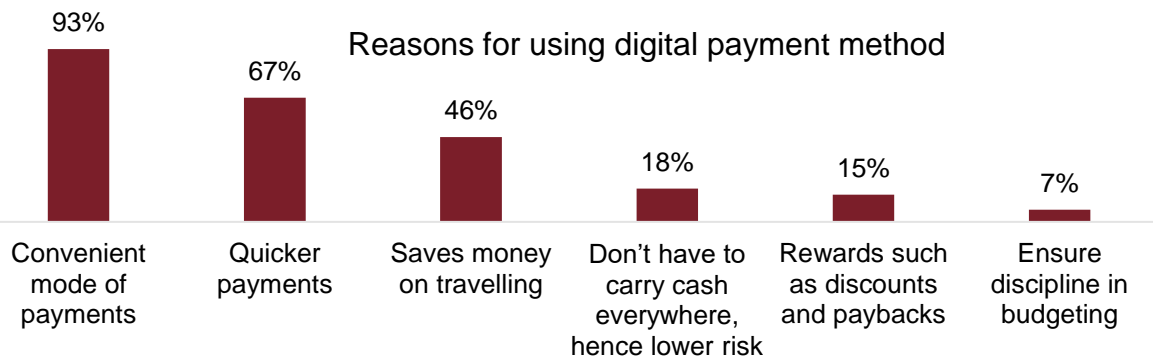
• Life & Health insurance saw a significant increase post-intervention, likely due various government schemes

Loans

• **Loans availed:**
 Pre intervention: **26%** Post intervention: **74%**

• The preferred choice for loans is MFIs

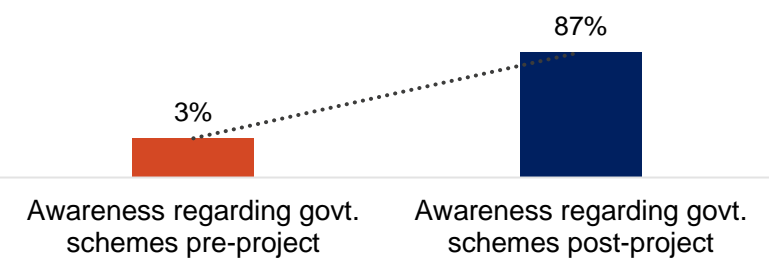
Digital Payment Methods



- Bank accounts of 100% of respondents are connected with smartphones.
- ~80% of the respondents have more than one bank accounts.
- Among the payment methods, respondent's top 3 preferences are for UPI payments (89%), ATM (31%), credit card (31%)

Government schemes

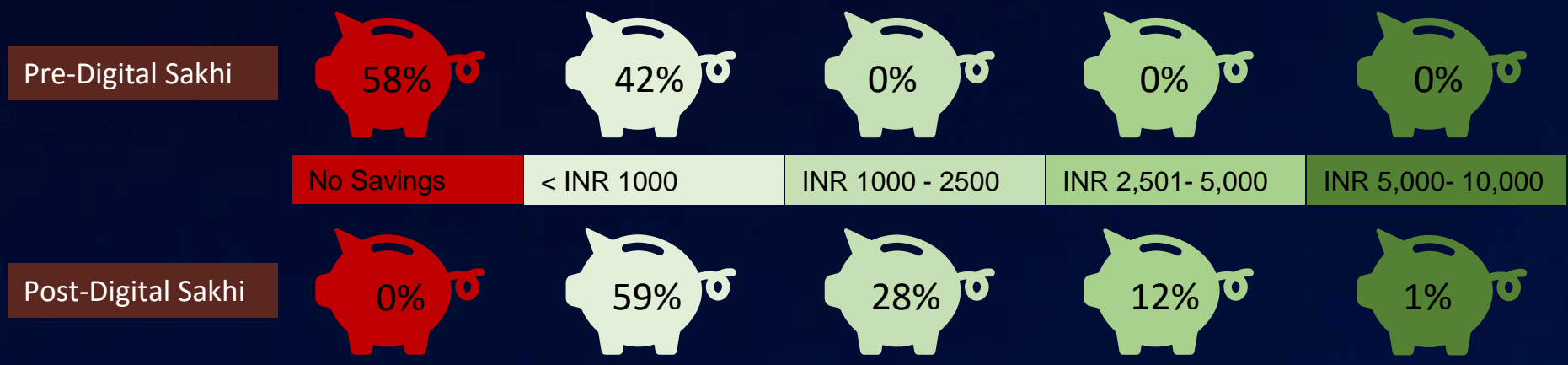
Awareness regarding social security schemes



• **Awareness regarding government schemes:**
 Pre intervention: **3%** Post intervention: **87%**

• Underscores the program's success in educating participants about these schemes. 100% respondents said that the program played a major role in availing the benefits.

Household (HH) Level Savings: Pre-Post Analysis

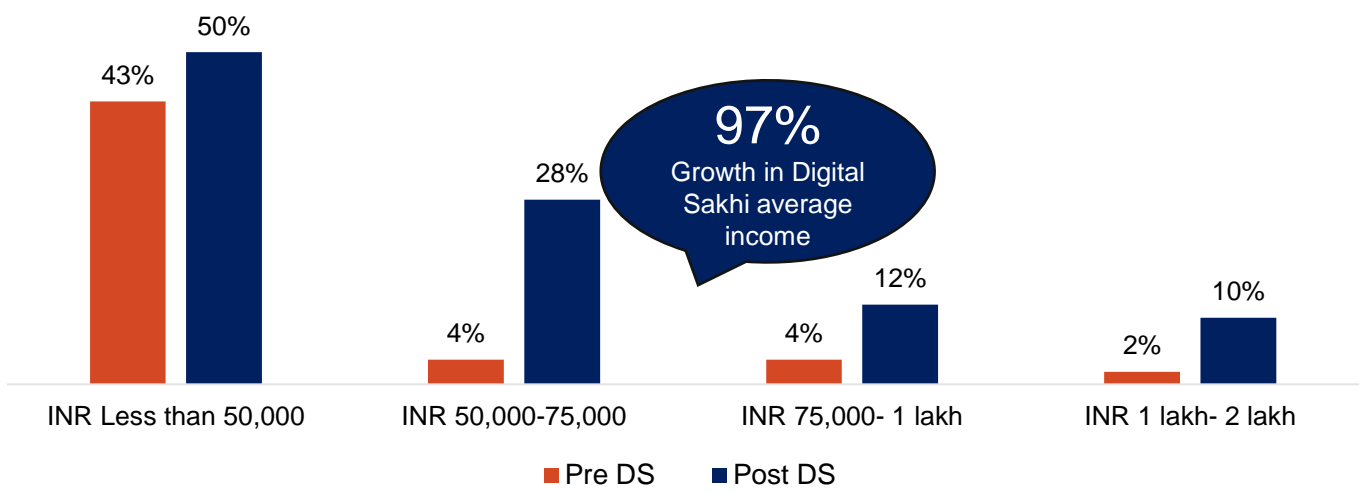


The data indicates a notable shift, the percentage of households with no savings has reached zero, while simultaneously, 41% of households now manage to save more than INR 1,000 per month. The average monthly savings have increased from nearly no savings to INR 3,076.

- Around 95% of respondents save monthly, primarily to fund children's education, acquire vehicle for personal use, cover daughters' marriages, buy gold, and agricultural assets.
- Before the intervention, few preferred saving in banks, but digital literacy training increased confidence in this method. Now, 85% save in banks, up from 0%, while storing cash at home dropped from 40% to 10%. All respondents now earn interest on their savings post-program.
- Remarkably, Self Help Groups (SHGs) is emerging as a significant contributor to this trend, with their percentage increasing from a mere 0% to 12% following the intervention.

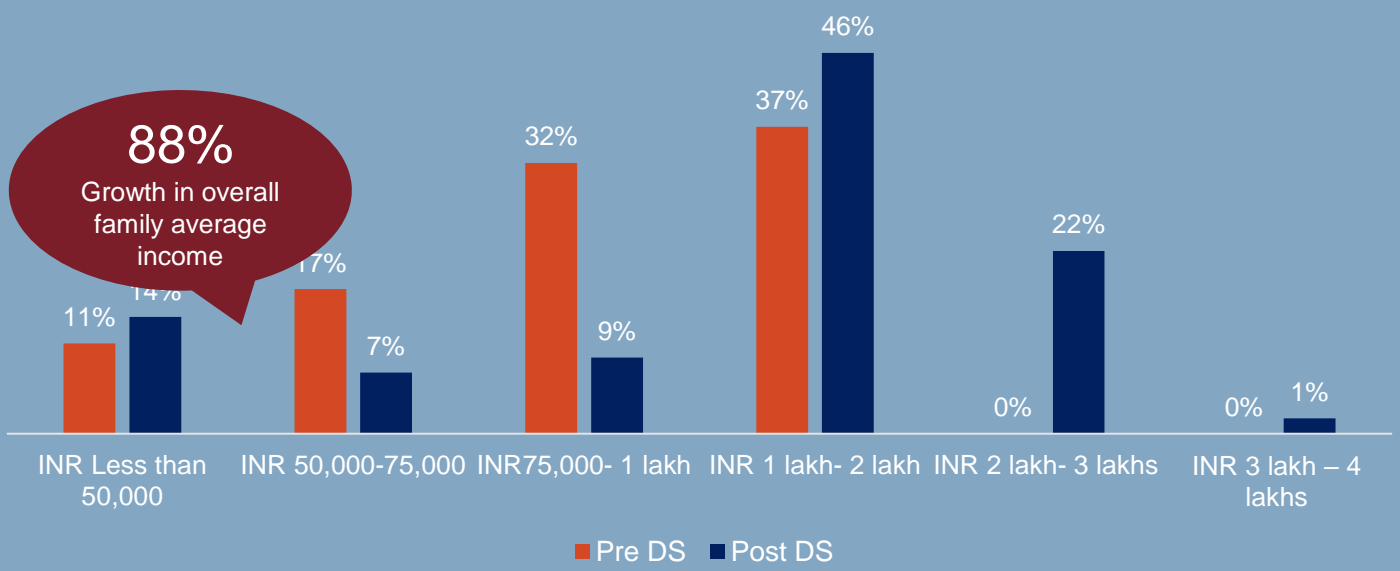


Annual income of Digital Sakhis Pre & Post Project (in INR)



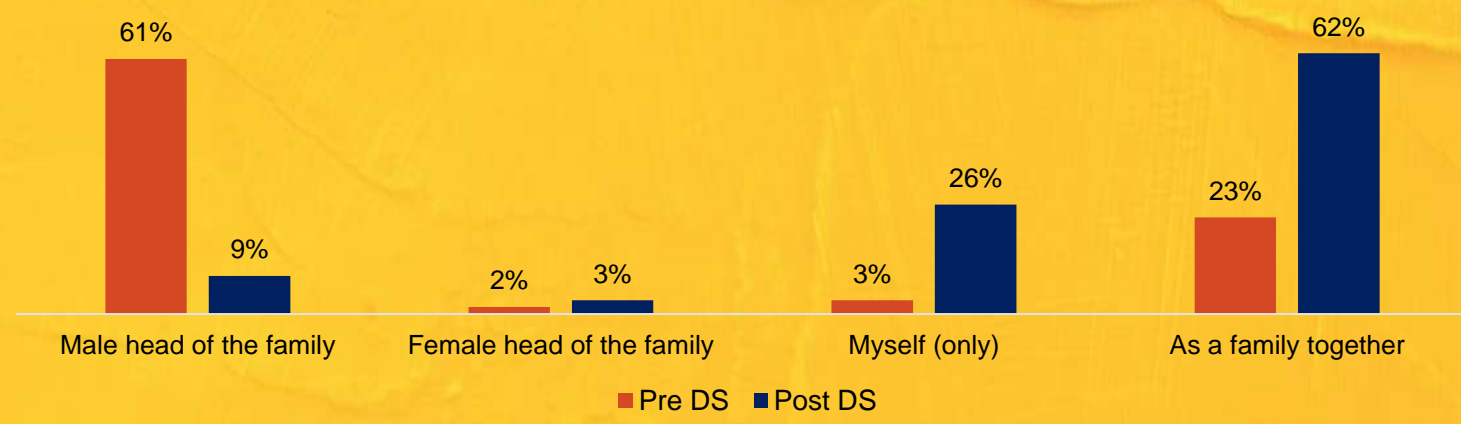
➤ There was a significant increase in the % share of women earning INR 0.50 - 2 lakh from 10% to 48% post training. It reflects the segmental change in income.

Annual income of Family Pre & Post Project (in INR)

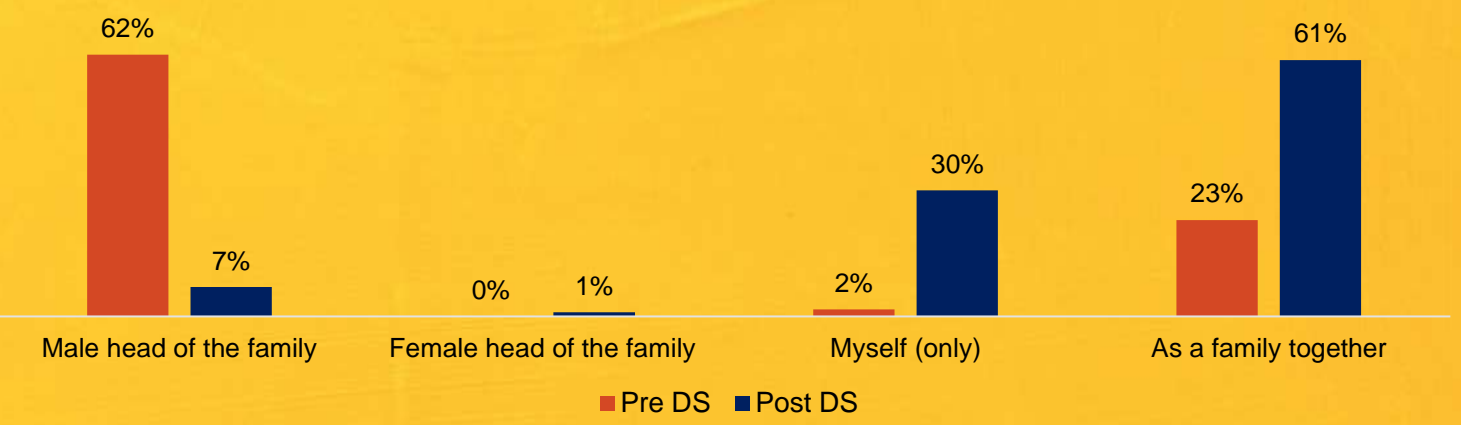


Evaluating the overall change in decision making pattern among the respondents

Decision making related to expenses



Decision making related to saving



- Household-level decision-making is undergoing a shift toward greater inclusivity. Before the program, approximately 23% of household expenditure decisions were collectively made by the family; this figure now stands at 70%.
- The program boosted the confidence of Digital Sakhi participants, gaining trust from their families in decision-making, especially regarding savings. Family decisions in this context increased from 23% to 67%.
- About 91% of Digital Sakhi individuals create household budgets, but for the rest, maintaining this practice is challenging due to limited family involvement.



72%

Digital Sakhis joined program for creating **additional source of income for family**

61%

Digital Sakhis joined program **to attain financial freedom**

57%

The programme has successfully motivated Digital Sakhis to join program for developing **leadership skill** sets in them

For women residing in rural areas who have long been accustomed to traditional gender roles and societal expectations, breaking free from these entrenched norms can be an arduous journey. Many women, despite having acquired a good education, often find their potential limited or unrealized after marriage. The weight of societal conventions and traditional duties can weigh them down, making it challenging to pursue their personal aspirations and ambitions.

However, the introduction of the Digital Sakhi intervention has heralded a transformative and empowering chapter in the lives of these women. It has emerged as a veritable game-changer, offering a beacon of hope and opportunity. Through this intervention, women have not only discovered their latent capabilities but have also found the motivation to venture beyond their comfort zones. What was once deemed unattainable has become an achievable reality for these resilient women.

Perhaps most inspiring of all is the sense of unity and support that has flourished among these women. They have forged a network of mutual encouragement, assisting one another in transcending the traditional expectations that had long confined them to household chores. Together, they are breaking the chains of convention, embracing their newfound potential, and paving the way for a future where their aspirations know no bounds.



Women Entrepreneurship



Parameters	TG - Baseline (2021)	TG - Assessment (2023)
Monthly income from business	INR 2,481	INR 5,607
Beneficiaries earning above INR 10,000	0%	10%
People who could not save	18%	0%
Adoption of digital payment modes	65%	92%

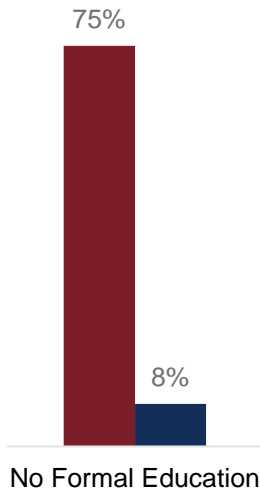




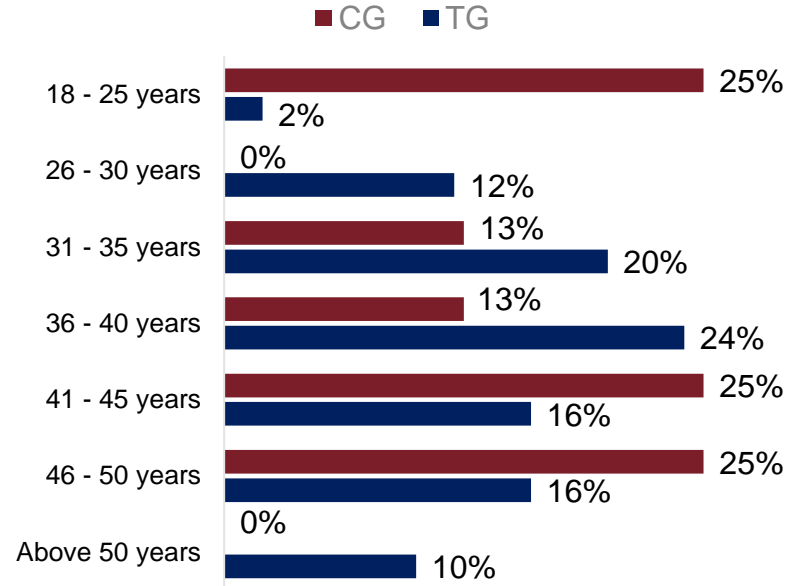
Gender Distribution



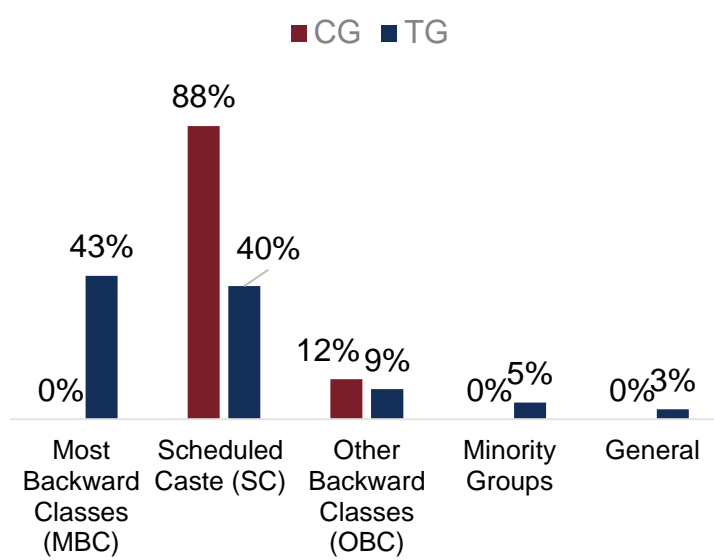
100% women respondents



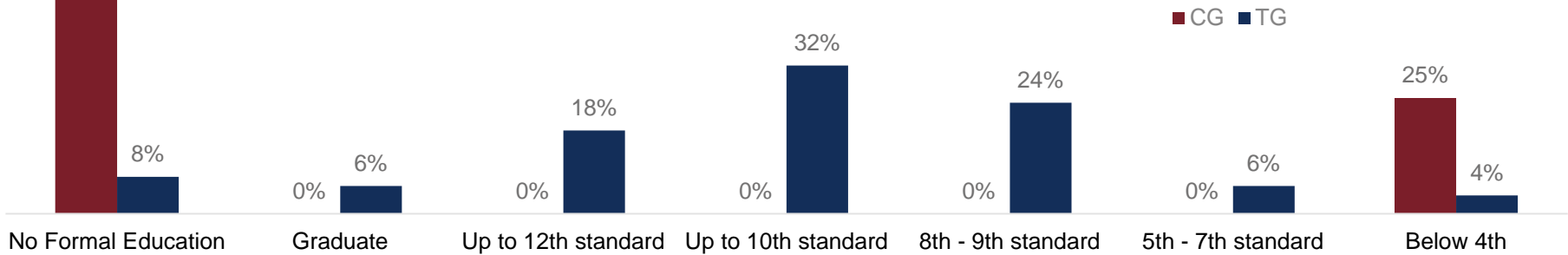
Respondent Age group



Respondent Social Category



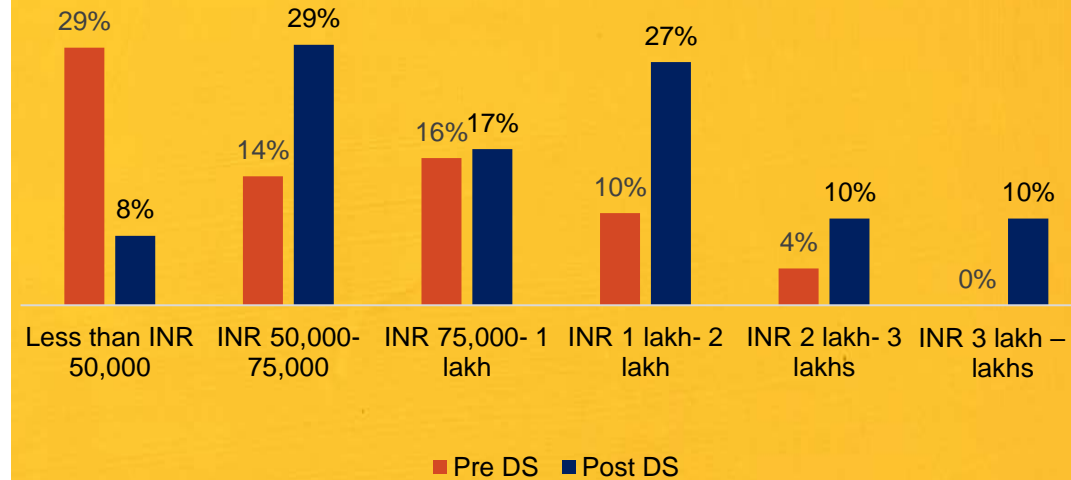
Education Levels



Household and Asset Profile

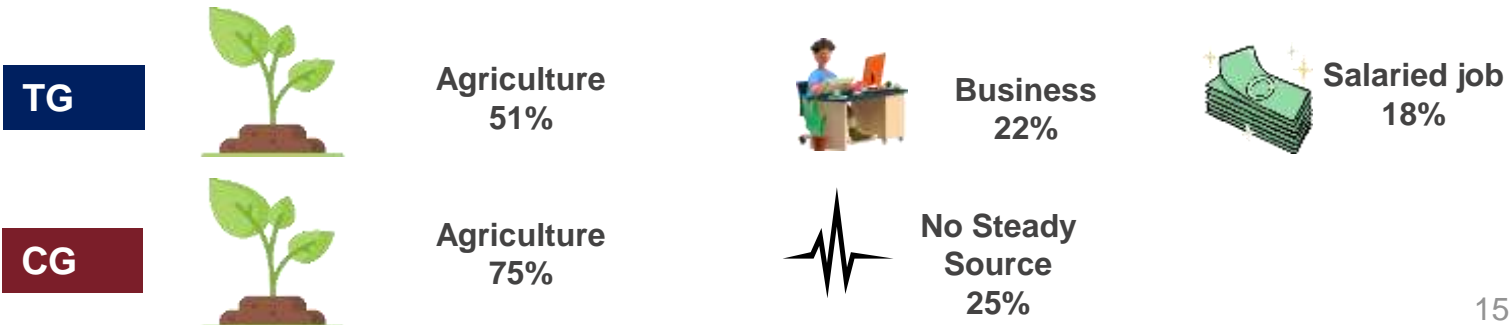
- The treatment group (TG) households had an **even gender distribution**, with an average family size of two male members and two female members.
- The TG also saw growth in smart phone with internet, LPG stove, bicycle, refrigerator and two-wheeler post intervention. The above assets are time savers and help the beneficiaries improve their productivity.
- In the target group (TG), 100% households have at least one male and one female member are working.
- In TG, 6% of families have adult females as sole bread earners.
- 30% of respondents from the TG indicated that their family members have joined the DS project. This suggests that the project has successfully created a ripple effect within families.

Average annual income of the household in INR



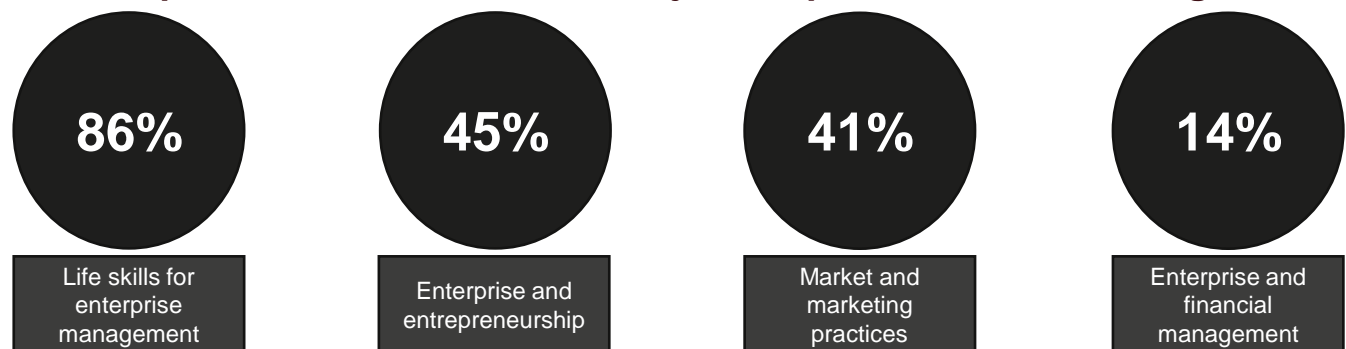
- According to the recipients, the intervention assisted them in acquiring new skills (92%), marketing strategies (40%), and knowledge on financial management (38%).

Top 3 Primary Source of Income of HH



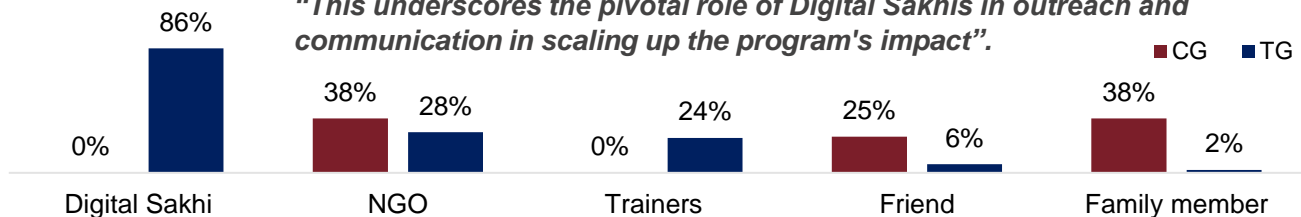


The respondents mentioned four major components of the training



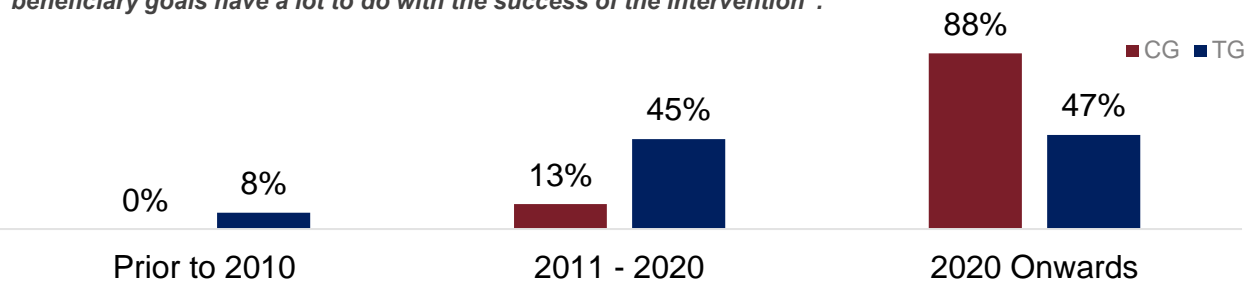
Source of awareness about the program

“This underscores the pivotal role of Digital Sakhis in outreach and communication in scaling up the program's impact”.



Age of Enterprise

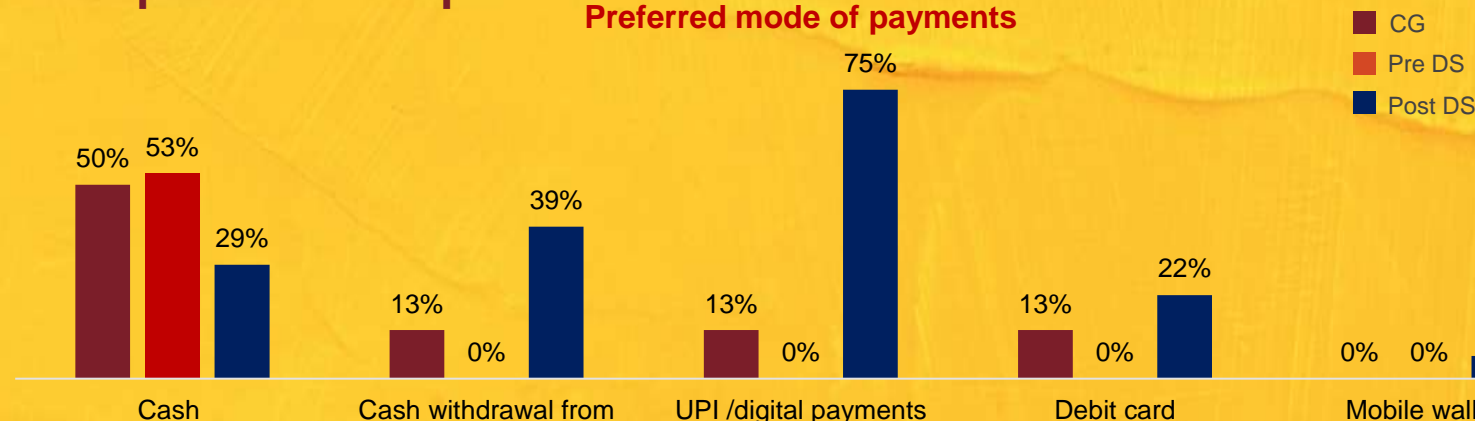
“This demonstrates the need & demand of the program for women entrepreneurs irrespective of the age of set up. The clarity to earn better, and the well explained benefits of the intervention by DS to achieve the beneficiary goals have a lot to do with the success of the intervention”.



- Women find the program appealing because it aligns with their aspirations and needs.
- The WE training had a substantial impact on beneficiaries' businesses, with the majority attributing their success to improved knowledge of business planning
- Most beneficiaries focused on improving the quality of their work (64%), reflecting an emphasis on product/service excellence. Many also sought to connect with low-cost input suppliers (24%) and expand their asset base (22%), indicating a commitment to business growth and efficiency.

Enterprise level Impact

Preferred mode of payments

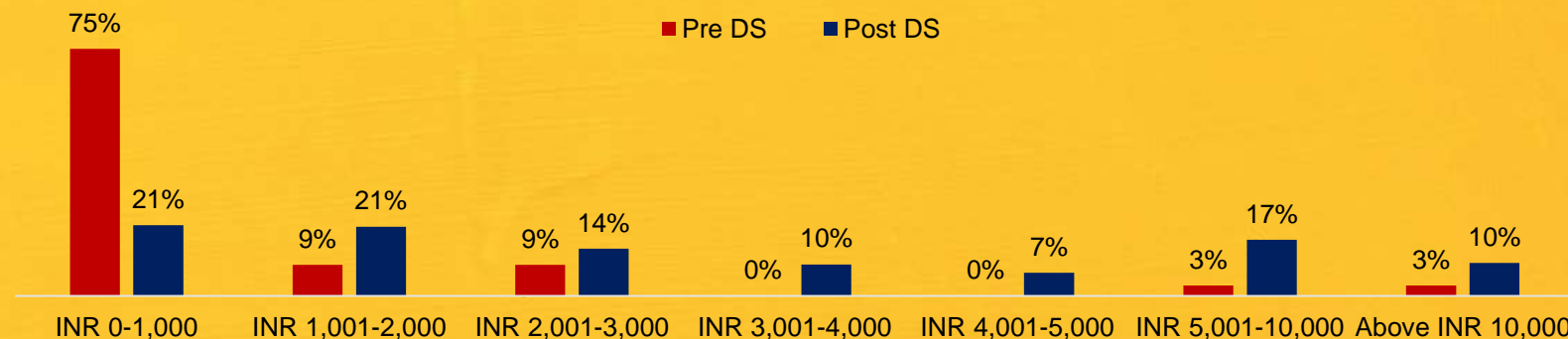


- The CG primarily uses cash (50%)
- The TG shows an increased inclination towards digital modes like UPI payments (75%) which was just 0% before the project and 13% in CG, proving the impact of program in promoting digital transactions

Adoption of digital transactions

- Both groups prioritize "Convenient mode of payments," but the treatment group also values "Quicker payments (76%)," indicating a preference for the speed and efficiency of digital transactions.
- The treatment group also considers the security aspect, with 24% mentioning lower risk due to not carrying cash
- 81% respondents from the TG actively educate their staff about digital payment methods, compared to 30% of the respondents from CG

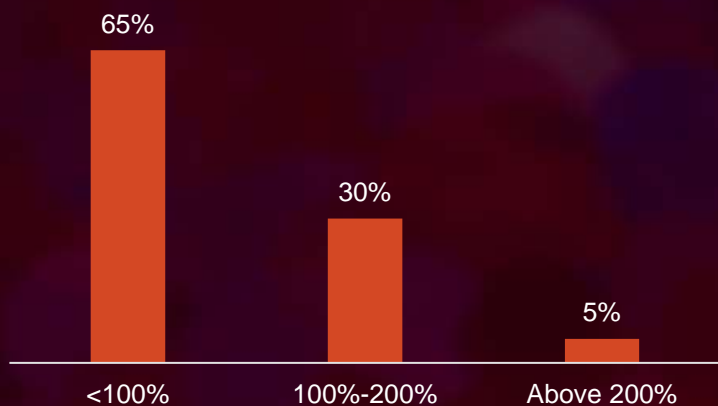
Contribution to business: Profit per month



- Post-Project, there is a noticeable increase in the percentage of beneficiaries earning higher monthly incomes, with a significant shift from the lower income categories to the higher ones.
- The majority of beneficiaries attribute a significant percentage of their increased income to the training received, with 41% reporting more than 75% increase, highlighting the substantial impact of the Digital Sakhi Project on their income generation capabilities.

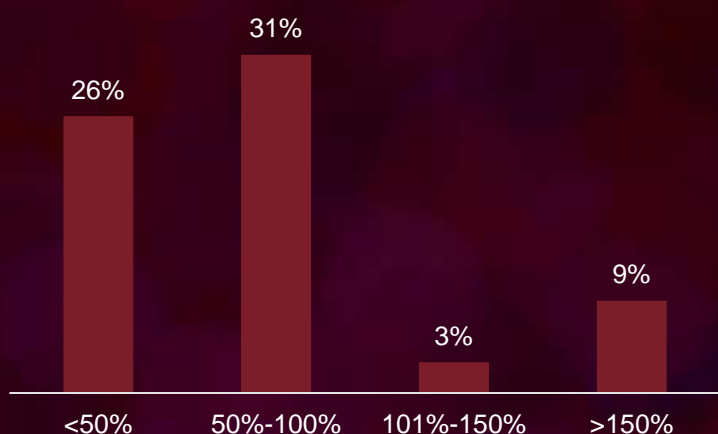


Customer Base Growth



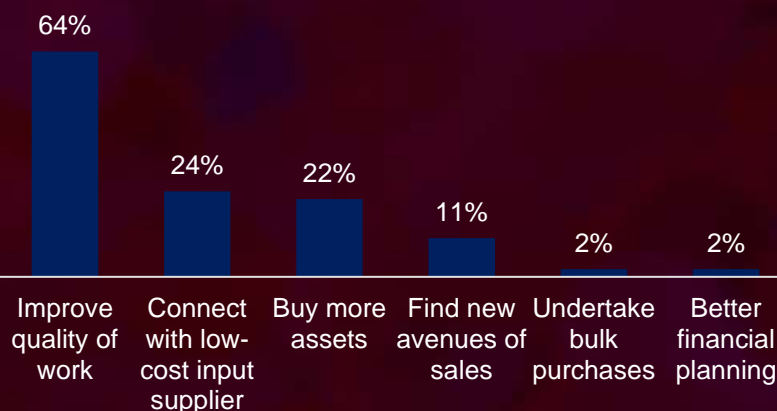
- The intervention was successful in conveying the importance of customer base growth and its impact on revenue and profits
- From the quantitative analysis, we have observed that there is a sharp (More than 100%) increase in the customer base of the respondents especially in the case of tailoring

Revenue Growth



- Out of the sampled beneficiaries, 31% initially had zero pre-project revenue, which then experienced a significant increase post-project
- The growth in businesses are clear outcomes of the training imparted to the women entrepreneurs on developing network and segment knowledge

Business Strategies Adopted



- Improving quality of work has been a key strategy deployed by most of the beneficiaries and it has worked and the same can be seen in increase in customer base and revenue
- The other business strategies adopted by the women entrepreneurs showcases their focus on improving quality of work

Case: Impact of intervention on women entrepreneurs

Tailoring – The most preferred business with wide acceptance due to its flexibility and no dependence

- The training on new designs which wasn't known to women entrepreneurs earlier has added value and confidence in their own work. They have been able to improve the quality of product and also diversify their offerings has acted as an additional pill factor for new and existing customer base.
- Few of them has now started purchasing their raw material such as thread, button, laces etc., from the wholesale market which has helped them reduce their cost to a larger extent. Along with tailoring, a few of the respondents have also started their own cloth and retail shop that sell sari, dresses, ancillary products such as cosmetics as well as tailoring related materials, thereby catering to the larger value chain and more footfalls



Customer satisfaction



Increase in product quality



Improved product diversification



Better product pricing



Goat Farming/Animal Husbandry/Poultry

- The knowledge of feed, timely vaccination, and proper selling strategies during peak season has led to better realizations for this segment of businesswomen
- 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.
- The better realization post intervention has proved vital in developing confidence of expanding and growing business size

Grocery Store

- Grocery stores are generally at the front of the women entrepreneurs' house and give the flexibility to manage business and household chores at the same time
- As the store responsibilities are shared among family members, it becomes convenient to manage the business.
- The intervention has made the stores more digitally savvy accepting payments through various modes of payments, this makes them more customer-friendly leading to improved footfalls



- Most beneficiaries reported that their initial business setup cost fell within the range of less than INR 10,000 (65%) & INR 30,001-50,000 (15%), indicating that many started small-scale enterprises with relatively modest investments.
- Most beneficiaries required physical space (81%) as an investment to set up their businesses, followed by inventory and raw materials (19%).
- 81% adopted new tactics in business. Among those, most beneficiaries focused on improving the quality of their work (64%).
- Many also sought to connect with low-cost input suppliers (24%) and expand their asset base (22%), indicating a commitment to business growth and efficiency.

Loans

- Loan availed - TG: **92%** of which **67%** took after joining WE training

Impact of intervention in facilitating access to loans for beneficiaries

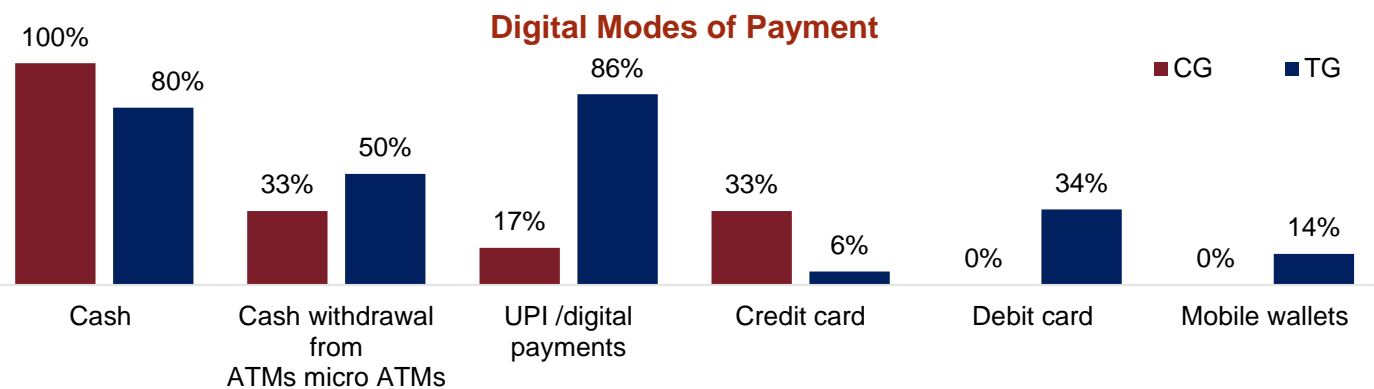
- Most beneficiaries (67%) who took loans in the TG did so after participating in the WE training, suggesting that the training may have increased their knowledge and empowered them in decision to seek loans
- The TG were more comfortable in securing loans from the banks: 46% of the beneficiaries took loans from banks followed by SHGs (39%), suggesting that the program empowered participants to explore formal options.
- Post-project, a significant percentage of beneficiaries opted for loans from formal sources (banks and SHGs) due to lower interest rates. This indicates improved financial decision-making influenced by the training.
- 92%% received financial knowledge on loans in WE training
- 91% of respondents believe that the financial knowledge they acquired through the training positively influenced their ability to secure better loan deals

Insurance

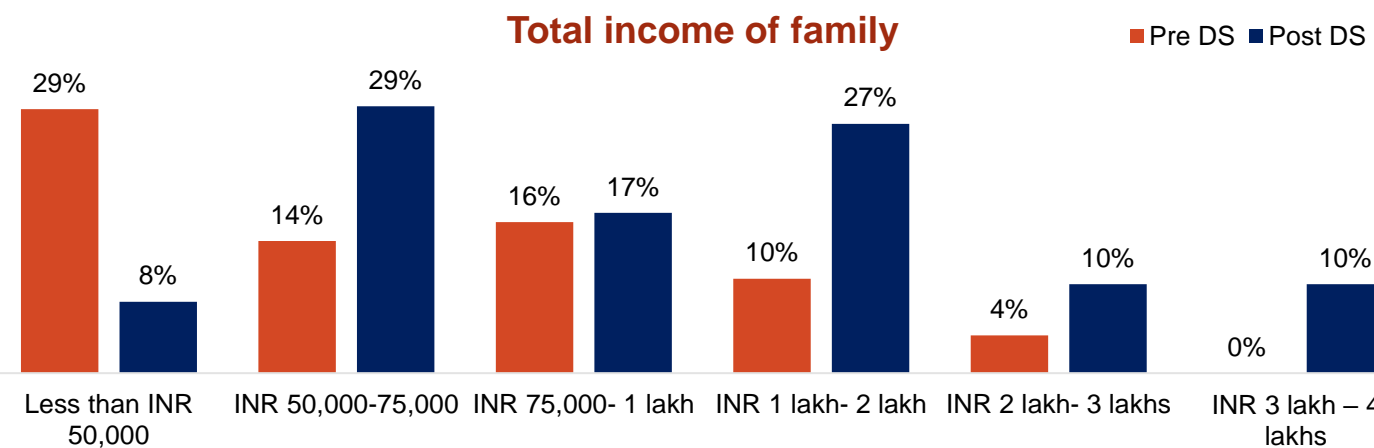
- Insurance availed – Post DS: **100%** of which only **62%** were aware about insurance prior DS program

Impact of intervention in facilitating access to insurance for beneficiaries

- The data suggests that the DS program has effectively heightened awareness about insurance products, boosted the adoption of insurance, and cultivated a robust belief in the significance of insurance among beneficiaries. In CG, no one has ever taken insurance. Whereas the DS program significantly increased awareness and uptake of insurance among beneficiaries as 100% of respondents have taken insurance, prior to the program, 62% were aware of insurance products.
- Post-project, there is a significant increase in the uptake of various insurance types, with life insurance (82%) and health insurance (66%) being the most prominent choices among beneficiaries.
- DS Trainers/Volunteers play a significant role in advising beneficiaries to take insurance policies, indicating the effectiveness of the DS program in spreading awareness and facilitating insurance enrollment.

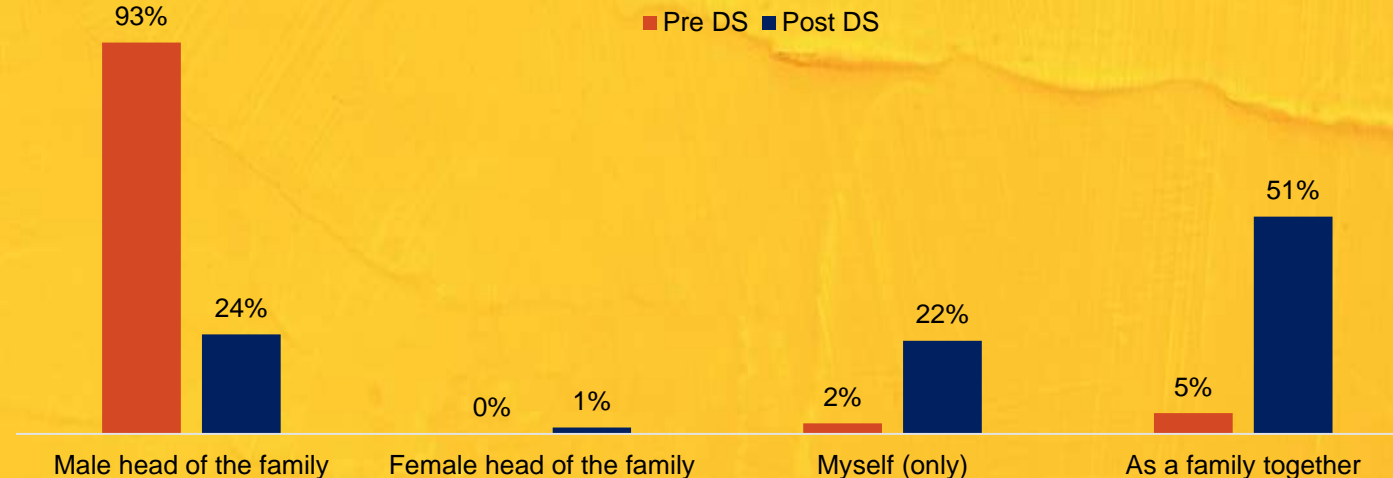


- The TG shows a more significant shift towards UPI/digital payments (86%) and a higher usage of debit & credit cards (40%) compared to the control group.
- The TG is more likely to use digital modes of payment always (54%) compared to the CG (0%).
- The CG exhibits a higher percentage of households that never use digital modes of payment (63%), while the TG has a lower percentage in this category.
- The TG shows significantly higher confidence levels (90%) in using digital modes of payment within the household compared to the CG (33%), reflecting the effectiveness of the Digital Sakhi Project in boosting confidence.

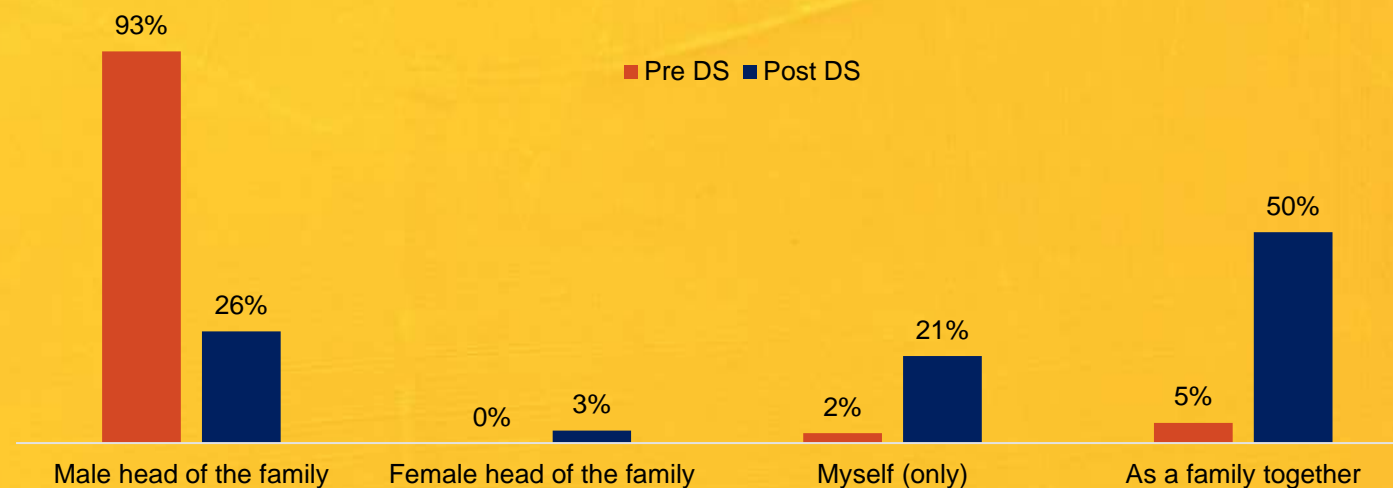


- From pre-project to post-project, a significant number of respondents shifted from low income category to high income category.
- Beneficiaries attribute increased income to various factors, with improving the quality of work (65%) being the most cited reason, followed by buying more assets (29%), connecting with low-cost input suppliers (27%).

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



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



- After the completion of the project, a distinct transformation has taken place in the dynamics of decision-making regarding household expenditures and savings.
- This transformation is marked by a substantial reduction in the percentage of decisions exclusively made by the male head of the family, accompanied by a notable increase in decisions made collaboratively by the family members or by the beneficiaries themselves.
- This shift in decision-making dynamics signifies a more equitable distribution of influence within the household, promoting greater inclusivity and financial participation among all family members.

Community Members



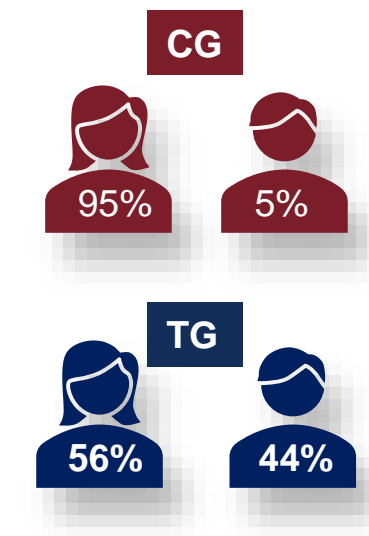


- ❖ The number of respondents having bank account have moved up to 98% post-project compared to 56% pre-project
- ❖ Earlier 22% of the TG respondents had their bank account linked to their smartphones. The percentage improved to 94% post-intervention
- ❖ Earlier 9% of the TG were aware of digital modes of payment, now the percentage has improved to 64%
- ❖ Out of the beneficiaries who are aware of digital modes of payment, 66% are confident in the usage of digital payment methods

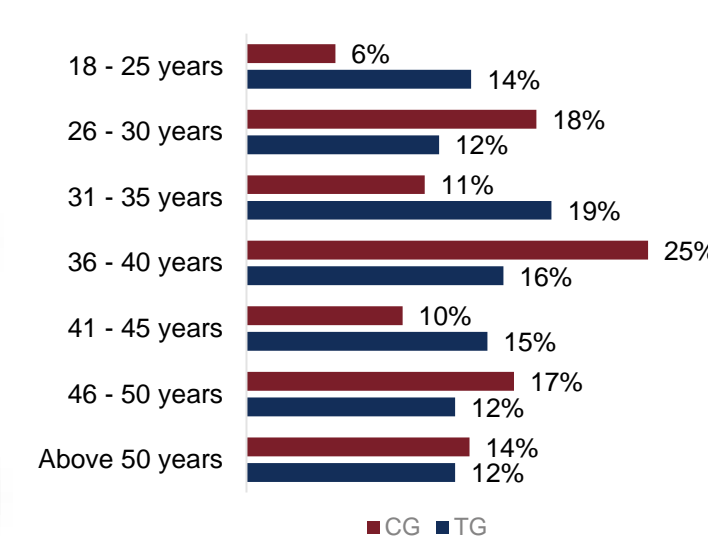
- ❖ Extent of awareness of digital payment methods among men and women
 - ❑ Male Respondents: **75%**
 - ❑ Female Respondents: **96%**

- ❖ Smartphone share: **70%**
68% of the Community members who have smart phone also have active internet connection

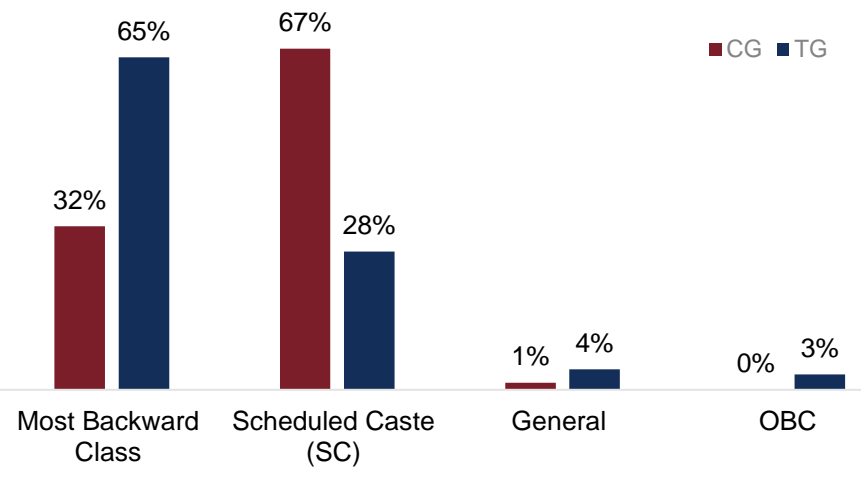
Gender Distribution



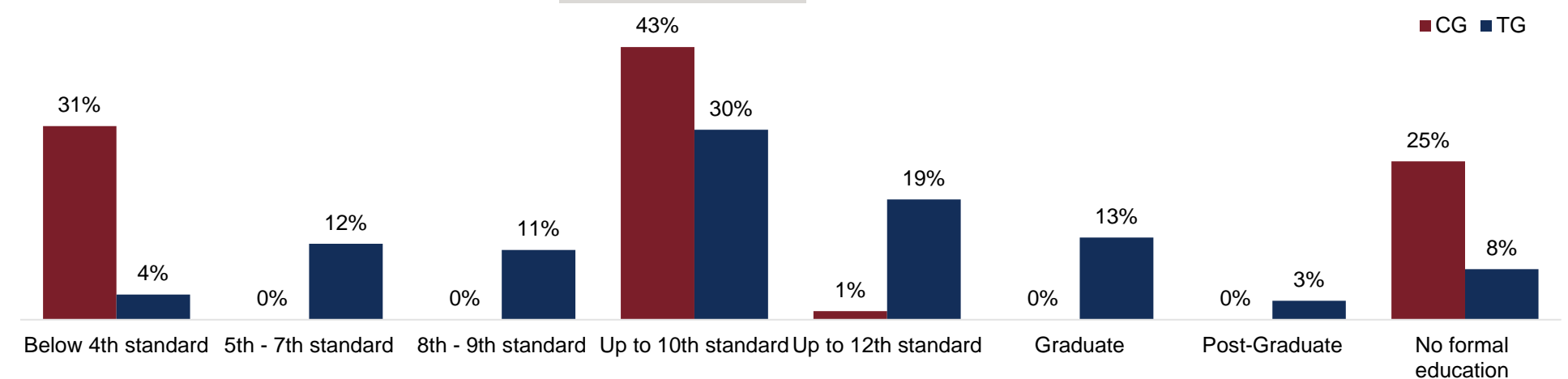
Respondent Age group



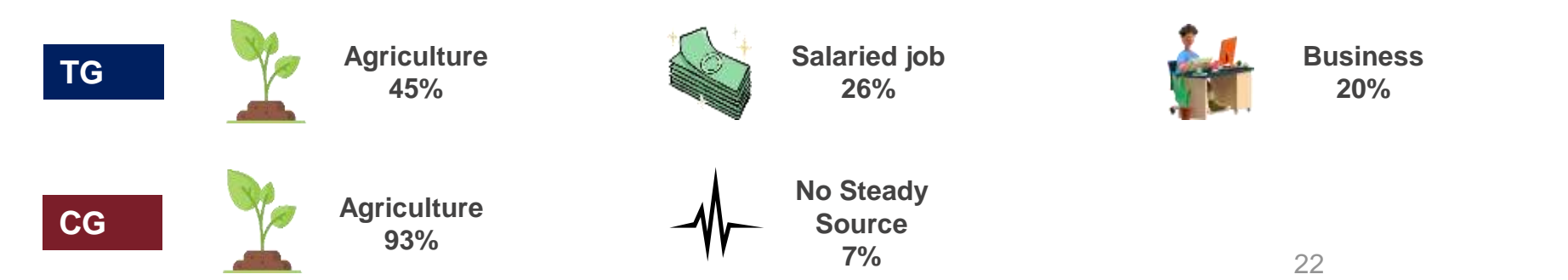
Respondent Social Category



Education Levels



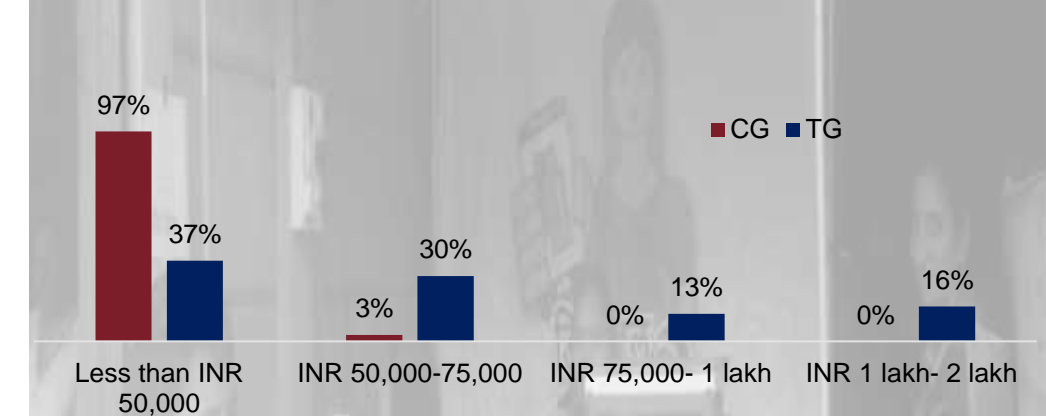
Top 3 Primary Source of Income of HH



Household and Asset Profile

- Treatment group (TG) had an even gender distribution and control group (CG) households had more women respondents
- The TG also saw growth in two-wheelers, bicycle and mixer post intervention. The above assets are time savers and help the respondents improve their productivity.
- The data from CG suggest that agriculture is the only occupation of community members and only 44% of the women are involved in agriculture. Whereas responses from TG suggest that people in village are involved in other occupations also with 73% of women have agriculture as an occupation.

Average annual income of the household in INR



- 99% respondents from the TG have perception that there is a change/ growth in the profession of women in the recent years as against 45% from CG. The TG's significantly higher perception of change suggests that the project has had a substantial impact on empowering women and altering their roles within the community

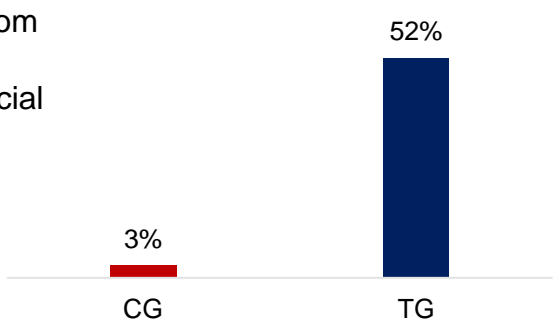
"The progress of a country is not solely determined by its economic wealth but also by the condition of its women, who constitute half of the population." - Sheikh Hasina

Household level budgeting

Compared to control group, the higher number of respondents from the treatment group (52%) preparing household-level budgets indicates that the project has been successful in promoting financial awareness and responsible financial management among the participants



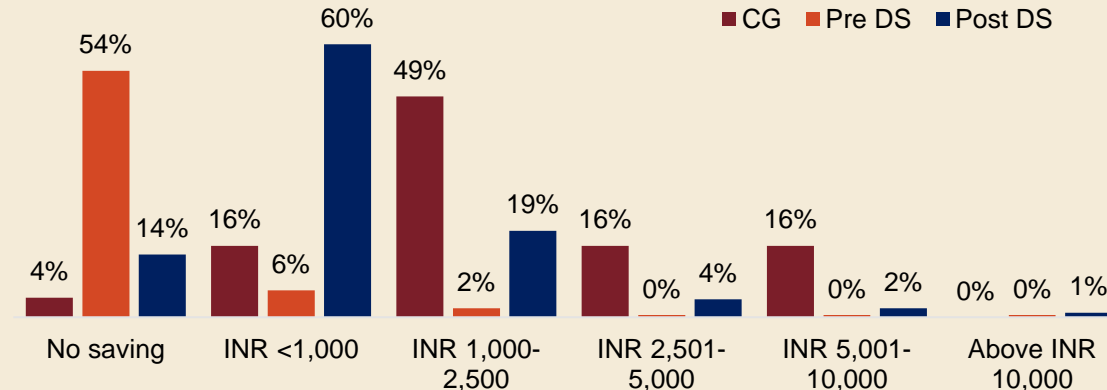
HH level budget



- 30% of respondents noted family involvement in the DS project, showcasing its success in engaging both primary participants and broader communities, creating a positive ripple effect within families.
- Joining the project has resulted in providing income opportunity (91%), boosting the confidence (50%) and in recognition and respect in society (45%).
- 94% respondents visit the DSK and receives assistance related to Aadhaar services, government forms, certificates, and banking transactions.

Monthly savings, mode of saving and return on savings

On an average monthly savings:
 Control Group: ~INR 5,500
 Pre-Project: ~INR 650
 Post-Project: ~INR 2,500



- The project led to a notable positive shift in the INR 1,000 - 2,500 category, indicating improved financial habits. The significant drop in the "No Saving" category underscores the success in promoting savings habits
- The substantial difference between CG and TG (both pre- & post-project) indicates that respondents from CG are also behind in terms of monthly saving. This shows that the program is reaching out to those who needs knowledge on digital financial literacy
- Only 2% of respondents from CG falls under 5% to 7% return on savings bracket, as compared to 20% TG post-project respondents

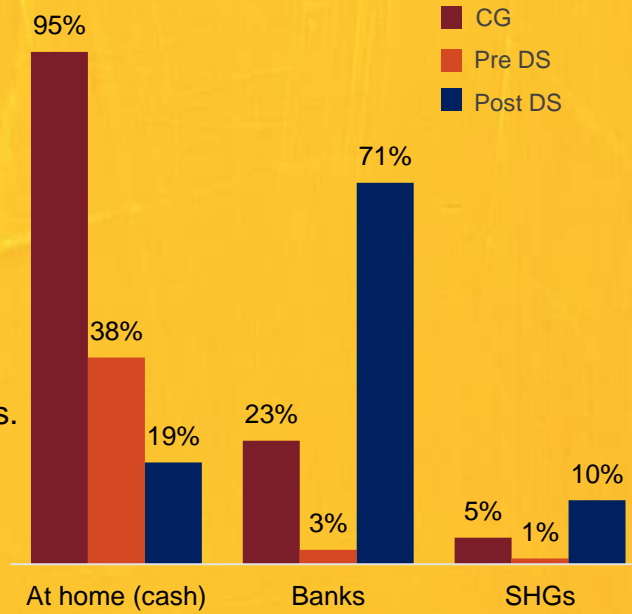
Increased intention of saving

- The substantial increase in the percentage of respondents intending to save after the project highlights the project's success in not only increasing awareness about the importance of savings but also inspiring participants to take proactive steps towards financial security and stability.

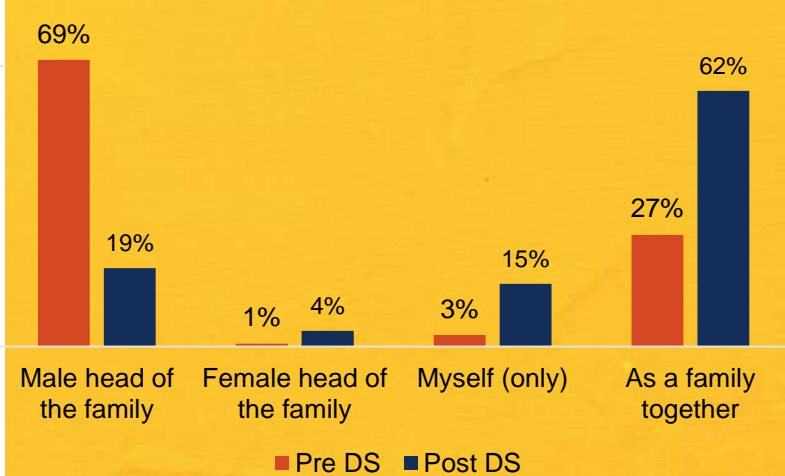


Preferred mode of keeping saving

- The remarkable increase in savings deposited in banks from 3% to 71% and SHGs from just 1% to 12% indicates a significant shift towards formal financial institutions.
- This shift suggests greater trust in these institutions, possibly due to the financial literacy provided by the project.
- The increased savings in SHGs also underline the effectiveness of community-based financial initiatives.
- 95% of the respondents from CG save money at home in the form of cash which is much higher than respondents from TG after project



Decision making in family related expenses



53%
 women respondents are actively involved in managing household finances post intervention



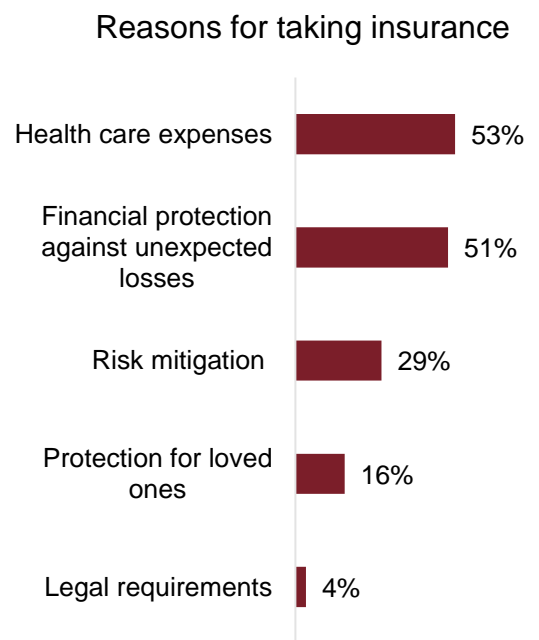
Uptake of Loans	CG: 0%	TG (Post-project): 77%
Loan amount taken (average)	Pre DS: ~INR 62,000	Post DS: ~INR 87,000

74% of the TG have secured loan from SHGs and Banks.

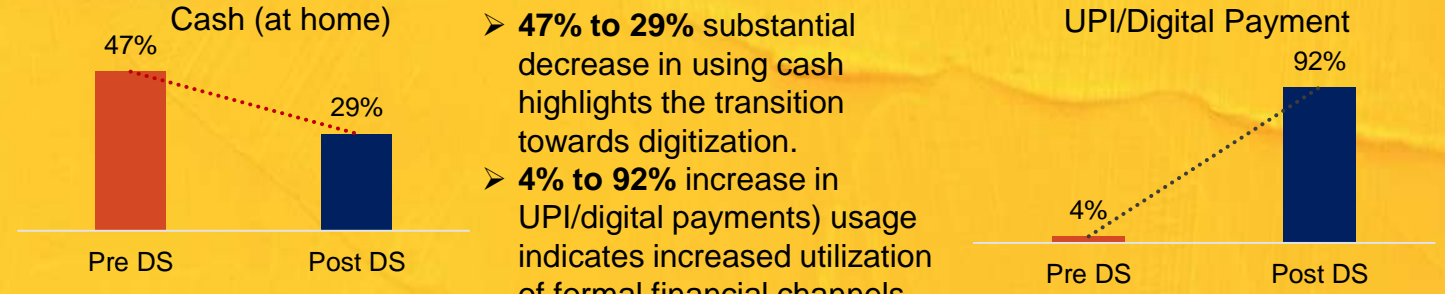
- Of the TG respondents who have taken loan, 77% have taken it after the DS initiative
- 100% of the respondents from TG think that financial knowledge through DS training helped them to great extent to get a better deal on loan
- The data reveals a compelling and tangible financial impact stemming from the involvement of Digital Sakhis in assisting respondents.
- On average, each respondent has managed to save a substantial amount of approximately INR 3,700 on their loans, thanks to the guidance and support provided by these digital facilitators.

Uptake of Insurance	CG: 50%	TG (Post-project): 75%
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- 97% of the respondents from the TG got advised from DS trainers/volunteers and 8% of the respondents got advised from insurance officials, showing the sign of increased role of DS
- 53% consider insurance vital for healthcare costs, showing the project's success in educating about financial preparedness for medical emergencies.
- 51% see insurance as crucial for financial protection, showing project's impact on risk management.
- 29% now see insurance as key for risk mitigation, highlighting the project's impact on understanding the importance of a financial safety net.



Digital mode of payments



- **47% to 29%** substantial decrease in using cash highlights the transition towards digitization.
- **4% to 92%** increase in UPI/digital payments) usage indicates increased utilization of formal financial channels.
- The remarkable increase in smartphone-linked bank accounts from 22% to 94% showcases the project's role in enhancing digital access and connectivity
- The significant jump in awareness about digital payment modes from 9% to 64% signifies the project's effectiveness in raising digital literacy and awareness
- The increase in the usage of digital payment methods from 8% to 57% underscores the project's impact on transforming financial behavior. This transition signifies a shift towards convenience, efficiency, and financial empowerment through digital avenues
- Rise from 2% to 58% in using bank services through UPI /digital payments signifies the effectiveness of the project in promoting digital literacy..

Awareness on social security schemes



Enrollment in social security schemes



Training Camps

- 66% of the respondents attended three or more trainings
- The high percentage of participants (69%) suggesting the introduction of more modules indicates their appetite for a comprehensive learning experience.
- The suggestion to increase the duration of the camps (40%) reveals a thirst for in-depth learning and a desire for thorough coverage of subjects.
- Participants' preference for incorporating activities (77%) underscores the importance of interactive and practical learning approaches
- The suggestion to reduce the duration of camps (6%) could stem from participants' time constraints or a desire for condensed yet impactful learning sessions.



Relevance:

- A significant proportion of the primary beneficiaries, including the Digital Sakhis and Women Entrepreneurs, fall within the age bracket of 26-40 years. This ensures enduring impact and widespread benefits from the program's initiatives. Traditionally, women faced substantial barriers in participating in financial decision-making within households due to prevailing gender biases. Even with good educational qualifications, women's roles were often confined to domestic spaces in the sampled villages. Consequently, the program has effectively addressed inherent gender discrimination by equipping more women with essential knowledge and information.
- Engaging with community members has notably heightened awareness regarding digital financial inclusion and government schemes. Simultaneously, it has prompted recognition of the potential held by women in their respective villages, instilling a newfound sense of confidence, self-reliance, and pride among them

Coherence:

In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously approved the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This comprehensive agenda, comprised of 17 interlinked goals, is aimed at achieving a universal and transformative impact while ensuring that no one is left behind. The evaluation emphasizes the program's harmonization with global benchmarks, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and aligns seamlessly with the government's strategic vision for advancing digital financial inclusion. Furthermore, the program's objectives closely mirror the Digital India initiative, which stands as the flagship program of the Government of India. This overarching initiative seeks to propel India towards a digitally empowered society and a robust knowledge-based economy.

Efficiency:

- The program strategically engaged Digital Sakhis, individuals who were drawn from the very communities they serve. This enhanced community involvement significantly, resulting in improved operational efficiency. Each Digital Sakhi was assigned a specific target of reaching out to community members, ensuring broader coverage. While there have been isolated instances of attrition, the overall numbers remain limited, as indicated by discussions with the Sakhis.
- Conducting community camps, in addition to door-to-door visits, has further bolstered efficiency in reaching a larger audience. Some Sakhis have successfully leveraged similar gatherings and meetings, while others could incorporate this as an additional component of their interventions.

Effectiveness and Impact:

- The positive uptake of knowledge, increased financial stability and subsequent behavioral shifts among the Sakhis, entrepreneurs, and community members underscores the substantial impact on beneficiaries' lives.
- Both Digital Sakhis and Women Entrepreneurs have actively engaged in economic activities, resulting in improved earnings. Increased motivation and exposure have empowered women to seek better avenues for income generation. Positive changes have been observed in household budget management, enhanced contributions to household income, regular and improved saving practices, and increased adoption of government schemes, among other notable improvements.
- Across various stakeholder segments, the shift in decision-making at the household level attests to the intervention's effectiveness in mitigating gender disparities..

Sustainability:

- The intervention's sustainability hinges on the cumulative impact generated through knowledge dissemination.
- Educating Digital Sakhis, who are integral members of the community, holds a multiplier effect at both household and community levels. The community's recognition of their role in the development process further bolsters this impact.
- The establishment of Digital Seva Kendras further strengthens the case for sustainability, as the presence of infrastructural facilities enhances visibility within the community. However, for women entrepreneurs, beyond training and capacity building, the establishment of market linkages is crucial to ensure the intervention's long-term sustainability.

SDG Goal		Target	
	End poverty in all its forms everywhere	1.4	By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance
	Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	4.3	By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
		4.4	By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
	Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	5.5	Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
		5.b	Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
	Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all	8.3	Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services
		8.6	By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training
	Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation	9.3	Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets
	Reduce inequality within and among countries	10.2	By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status
	Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development	17.17	Encourage and promote effective public, public, private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

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Utilizing the digital medium for upskilling	Creating awareness among family members	Catering to challenges in budget preparation	Fostering robust ecosystem	Fostering Digital Financial Literacy among youth
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<p>Digital Sakhi program participants, proficient in digital literacy and tablet use, are ideal for advanced digital skill development.</p> <p>With the use of shorter interactive course material like customized YouTube videos by L&T Finance or specialized online courses, aiding individuals in exploring new business opportunities or improving their skills, like adding mobile repair services or expanding their current shop offerings.</p>	<p>Prioritizing the awareness and education of male household members is essential.</p> <p>Providing training on sharing domestic responsibilities will empower women to allocate more time to their entrepreneurial pursuits.</p> <p>Recognizing the significance of household-level behavioral change is crucial to ensure the sustainability of intervention benefits and garner support from all household members</p>	<p>Inconsistent income and limited family support pose challenges in budget preparation.</p> <p>Despite individuals being mindful of their expenses and having spending awareness, they face challenges in formally creating household budgets.</p> <p>There is an opportunity to enhance awareness and leverage smartphone budgeting applications as a valuable alternative approach.</p>	<p>Women entrepreneurs face difficulties in establishing forward market connections, particularly in businesses like goat farming, poultry, and occasionally animal husbandry.</p> <p>Integrating both forward and backward market connections could greatly enhance the intervention's effectiveness. This entails not only linking them with potential buyers but also ensuring a seamless supply of essential resources to support their businesses.</p>	<p>The current intervention, with its proven effectiveness, stands at a pivotal juncture where strategic expansion can significantly enhance its impact. A forward-looking approach involves extending the program's reach to school/ college campuses, presenting an opportunity to broaden the coverage of beneficiaries and regions. By venturing into school and colleges, the intervention recognizes the unique potential of reaching students during a formative period of their lives.</p>
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Partnerships and collaborations	Adopting a saturation-based approach	Collectivization and institutionalizing businesses	Decision making via landscape analysis	Focusing on Entrepreneurship component
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<p>To explore collaborations and tie up with other institutions to spread digital financial literacy across age classes and age groups. The tie-up can help build the capacity of qualified financially literate forces creating more awareness and opportunities. The existing digital sewa kendra set up can also be explored for tie-up with other institutions and work as a hub and spoke model for offering various services and making them more viable and self-sustainable.</p>	<p>Embracing a saturation-based approach for Digital Financial Literacy signifies a deliberate and all-encompassing strategy aimed at reaching and educating an entire demographic or geographic area comprehensively.</p> <p>This approach involves the systematic deployment of a wide array of strategies targeted at both horizontal and vertical penetration of Digital Sakhi interventions in and around the locations already selected for implementation.</p>	<p>There is potential to explore avenues where DS/women entrepreneurs can pool their skills and efforts to establish a cooperative venture.</p> <p>By coming together, women entrepreneurs can amplify their collective voice, leading to increased bargaining power. This strength in numbers allows them to negotiate better terms with suppliers, buyers, and other stakeholders.</p> <p>A parallel approach can be adopted for the mapping exercise of DSK, focusing on enhancing access to services and optimizing the effective utilization of the DSK infrastructure.</p>	<p>Many women entrepreneurs focus on a single trade within their regions, which can lower trade profitability and result in unpredictable income.</p> <p>Conducting a landscape analysis and redirecting the selection process towards more profitable trades can contribute to the development of a thriving community of entrepreneurs with diversified and sustainable income sources.</p>	<p>Developing a comprehensive booklet or digital guide represents a proactive initiative aimed at highlighting avenues for skill enhancement within the beneficiaries' existing trades. This resource not only sheds light on current opportunities but also offers valuable insights into emerging business trends.</p> <p>By serving as a reservoir of information, it becomes an invaluable asset for those seeking to broaden their skill sets and explore new horizons within their industries.</p>
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Ms. Sundari, a 32-year-old entrepreneur, transformed her family's prospects by starting a grocery store in 2018. With guidance from a local digital expert, she diversified her offerings to include digital transfers, a photocopy service, and a printer. This shift led to a monthly profit of over INR 10,000. Now, she's expanding to a superstore with home delivery and a gaming parlor, aiming to meet all community needs in one place. Sundari's journey showcases the power of determination and adaptability for personal and community success.



Mrs. Velzivilli, a 38-year-old from Poothurai village, faced educational barriers but learned tailoring skills from her mother-in-law. Encountering digital Sakhi's led her to an empowering initiative by L&T Finance. With an investment of INR 50,000 and online learning, she launched her own successful tailoring shop. Now earning INR 20,000 monthly, she plans to expand with fashion designs and tap into nearby markets. Mrs. Velzivilli's story exemplifies how determination and resourcefulness can lead to entrepreneurial success, with support from initiatives like L&T Finance.



Madhina, 36, transitioned from daily wage laborer to a digital Sakhi in 2019, aiming for financial independence. Through comprehensive training, she gained skills in savings, digital payments, leadership, and more. Overcoming distance and household responsibilities, she practiced diligently on a provided tablet. Madhina's impact has reached 1,350 households, advocating for financial literacy. Her Digital Sewa Kendra now earns her INR 12,000 monthly, up from INR 8,000, lifting her family's annual income from INR 50,000 to INR 150,000. She aspires to educate the next generation and her community on digital payments and government policies, aiming for a brighter future and breaking the cycle of poverty.



T. Sengeniamma, 30, from Villupuram, Tamil Nadu, had been solely reliant on farming for income. In 2019, she joined the L&T Finance digital Sakhi program on recommendation from an NGO. With strong support from her family, she transitioned from a homemaker to starting her own Digital Sewa Kendra, offering services like insurance payments and Aadhaar updates. This shift led to a 100% boost in family income and doubled savings. Sengeniamma aims to further secure her daughter's education and future. She looks forward to similar projects, believing they empower women by enhancing business knowledge and providing tangible support through BFSI partnerships and equipment for Digital Sewa Kendras.





"Investing in women's lives is an investment in sustainable development, in human rights, in future generations - and consequently in our own long-term national interests." -
Michelle Bachelet