

# **Mein Pragati, Rajasthan Phase 1 – Endline Report**

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**Report Submitted to**

**CRISIL Foundation**



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## Abbreviations

A/c	Account (Bank Account)
BC	Business Correspondents
CM	CRISIL Mitras
FD	Fixed Deposit
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FHC	Financial Health Counselling
FL	Financial Literacy
HPPI	Humana People to People India
JSSY	Janani Shishu Suraksha Yojana
MFI	Microfinance Institution
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
LC	Life Cycle
PMJJBY	Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
PMSBY	Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
RD	Recurring Deposit
SHG	Self-help Group
SRLM	State Rural Livelihood Mission
SSY	Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana
SSM	Social Security Mela

## Meaning of special terms used in the report

- **CRISIL Mitras:** These are local youth trained in financial literacy curriculum by CRISIL Foundation; and the field level functionaries for the project responsible for member trainings and execution of the project in the field.
- **Sakhis:** *Sakhis* are village level volunteers; mostly active SHG members, ASHAs, Anganwadi workers or other progressive women (in some cases, men). They support community on financial literacy as well as helping community access government schemes beyond project period on a voluntary basis.
- **Life Cycle:** The financial literacy trainings were conducted in phases. Each phase having a batch of target beneficiaries was called a 'Life Cycle'. In Phase 1 of the project, all beneficiaries were trained in 4 Life Cycles.
- **Social Security Mela (SSM):** SSMs were village fairs or meets organized by HPPI to bring all community members, government officials, elected representatives and financial institutions on a single platform. Here officials could interact with community and those interested could even enrol for government schemes.

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## Executive Summary

### Context

CRISIL Foundation in partnership with Humana People to People India (HPPI) is implementing a project, “Mein Pragati” - A Financial Capability Building project in Alwar, Dausa and Sikar districts of Rajasthan. Total beneficiaries targeted in the project are 81,000 to be covered in two phases. The first phase of the project targeting 36,000 beneficiaries, ended in September 2017. This report is the endline report of this phase – Phase 1.

### Methodology

At the beginning of Phase 1, baseline data had been collected from the target beneficiaries. Due to certain project constraints, the beneficiaries from whom the data was collected and the actual community members who got the training were significantly changed. To assess the impact, the endline data was collected from the actual beneficiaries and this was compared with the baseline data as well as to a control group. The control group in this case was the baseline data collected for Phase 2, with whom intervention is planned from Nov-Dec onwards with a new set of beneficiaries. The sample size was derived statistically and adjusted for possible design effect, as sample is not purely random. The endline sample was distributed across districts and Life Cycles in same proportion as the actual beneficiaries. The sample was selected by M2i team without intervention from HPPI.

### Findings

#### 1 Impact on Access to and awareness on financial services

- The awareness on basic bank account was already high during baseline thus, no change was observed on it. However, there is significant improvement in awareness on various types of insurances. Most people now understand benefits of the insurance.
- Awareness on FD and RD was still low. People did not understand the long-term benefits of such products as they are often not able to differentiate between savings and investments.
- There is a marginal improvement in access to basic bank accounts within family as well as for women holding bank accounts as this was already high even in baseline. The families having account increased from 90% in baseline to 98% in endline.
- Women holding bank accounts increased from 87% in baseline to 98% in endline.
- Active bank accounts (those having transaction in last 6 months) increased from 81% in baseline to 87% in endline. The proportion of active accounts was highest for LC1 (Life Cycle 1) beneficiaries at 90% and lowest for LC4 beneficiaries at 83%.
- There was high adoption of insurance services. For life insurance, the proportion went up from 28% in baseline to 51% in endline. For the health insurance, adoption went up from 3% in baseline to 15% in endline.

- There was high enrolment observed in PMSBY with 45% reporting enrolling in it. PMJJBY also had significant enrolments with 23% of the endline beneficiaries reporting enrolling for it. This figure was 8% and 2% respectively for PMSBY and PMJJBY for control group.
- No change was observed on adoption of investment-based or long-term financial products like Fixed Deposits, Recurring Deposits and even Pension products. The proportion of people having these products remained unchanged in endline at 2-3% compared to baseline. The proportion is almost same even for control group.
- The project was successful in creating basic awareness on meaning and purpose of financial services such as banking, insurance and pension. However, there was still no clarity among beneficiaries between 'saving' and 'investments' or finer nuances of insurance products.

## **2 Individual level impacts: Impact on women**

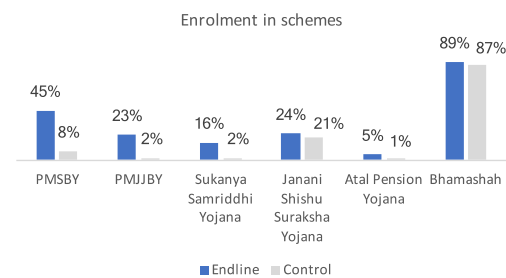
- The project has been quite successful in building confidence of women on banking transactions. 54% women in FGDs mentioned that they felt more confident on financial matters and in dealing with external stakeholders.
- Women having done banking transaction on their own without aid from any male member increased to 95% in the endline from 76% in the baseline. The same proportion was 63% for control group.
- The proportion of women using ATM cards was 13% for endline compared to 3% in control group.
- 44% of the women in FGDs mentioned of having shared learning among their family and friends.
- Other indirect indicators used for assessing women's awareness on financial matters (such awareness about bank balance, awareness of school fee) also indicate improvement in endline.
- The project does not seem to have impacted higher level economic indicators. No change was seen on proportion of women involved in income generating activities, proportion of women working in semi-skilled or skilled jobs, average income of working women and asset ownership of women within household.
- On financial decision-making, the qualitative findings suggest greater participation of women in financial matters at household level. However, the final decision-maker still remains the male member.

## **3 Household level impacts**

- The project has created awareness on financial record-keeping. 19% of the endline beneficiaries mentioned of maintaining budget diaries. But considering it to be a focused

intervention within the project, the uptake and utilization of budget diaries was found to be lower than desirable. Most people maintained diaries inaccurately limiting its utility.

- The project does not seem to have impacted (at least by the time of endline survey) the financial vulnerabilities in terms of income and expense shocks that people faced. Most people in the endline were by no means better prepared for such volatilities compared to control group or at the time of baseline.
- On long-term financial planning too, it was observed that people are still not clear about setting life goals and having a plan for achieving them. 75-80% of the respondents in the endline mentioned of having no financial plan for key life cycle goals like children higher education, children marriage, old age or sudden emergency. This proportion was similar in baseline and in control. There was almost no uptake of long-term investment products.
- Financial Health Counselling was done under the project more as an exit activity and was not found to be very effective, most people did not understand how to use Financial Health Card.
- The project was quite effective in spreading awareness on various financial and welfare schemes of government. CRISIL Mitras as well as Sakhis were instrumental in helping people get access to these schemes and in helping people avail benefits. Sakhis and CMs helped people in resolving issues by engaging effectively with community on one hand and with the government officials on the other.



#### 4 Community level impacts

- At the community level, the project was successful in engaging with various stakeholders at the local level and in creating an overall conducive environment for financial inclusion of people.
- The project trained a team of CRISIL Mitras (CMs) as well as *Sakhis* in financial literacy curriculum who are mainly local rural youth. The project has thus created a cadre of youth who can engage in similar activities in the future too.
- The Business Correspondents (BCs), insurance agents and even local bankers were aware of *Mein Pragati* project, showing good level of engagement with stakeholders. BCs and bankers mentioned that they have felt significant improvement in women's confidence supported by the project.
- Project helped in building trust of community on BCs. BCs mentioned of their own business going up due to project, as people came for enrolling for various financial and welfare schemes.
- Social Security Melas (SSMs) were regularly organized by HPPI. SSMs were quite effective in building trust between community, government officials, bankers and financial services' agents.

- SSMs were also instrumental in spreading awareness on government schemes and in enrolments.

### **Key constraints in the project**

- Geography of project was quite scattered, making it operationally very difficult for CMs to manage their work schedules.
- Due to high work pressure, scattered geography and low remuneration (as reported by CMs), there was high staff turnover at CM level.
- Apart from high staff turnover, there were also frequent transfers of CMs resulting in breakage of continuity and difficulty in maintaining rapport with the community they worked with.
- Since, there was no remuneration for *Sakhis* and they had to work completely on voluntary basis, the continuity of their efforts beyond project period is doubtful.
- While project had high impact on direct indicators like basic financial understanding and enrolments, people still lack clarity on social security and financial planning.

### **Learning**

- Having *Sakhis* is a good idea from sustainability perspective, however, their training should be more elaborate to give them confidence to continue to operate as professionals. *Sakhi* model should be given more time, resource and overall weightage within the project as they are critical for continuity beyond project life.
- *Sakhis* should be promoted as local information and support professionals. Their model should be promoted on fee-for-service basis rather than voluntary basis.
- The project geography should be carefully chosen and resources should be adequately deployed considering the operational challenges.
- Financial Health Counselling should be conducted as individual family's counselling and not as a group exercise. It should be targeted towards helping a family to identify its:
  - Key life goals
  - A plan for achieving those goals
  - Enabling family to assess their current financial status and progress
  - Sensitizing family towards key financial risks and the concept of social security
  - Help family covered for as many risks as can be done within limited resources available
- FHC should be done not as the last component of training but should continue along with the training
- SSM is effective platform and the practice should be continued in the future projects.

## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Context**

CRISIL Foundation in partnership with Humana People to People India (HPPI) is implementing a project, “Mein Pragati” - A Financial Capability Building project in Alwar, Dausa and Sikar districts of Rajasthan. The project will cover 324 Gram Panchayats in 16 blocks. Total beneficiaries targeted in the project are 81,000 to be covered in two phases. The first phase of the project targeted 36,000 beneficiaries, this phase started in June 2016 and concluded in September 2017. This report is the endline report of Phase 1. The report assesses the change the project has been able to bring and the impact on the beneficiaries.

In the first phase, HPPI reported of training 36,542 women. These were members of various SHGs spread across Alwar, Dausa and Sikar districts of Rajasthan.

## 1.2 Methodology

At the beginning of the Phase 1, the baseline data was collected to be compared with the endline data to assess the impact. However, due to certain project constraints, there was significant change in the actual beneficiaries of the project and from whom the baseline data had been collected.

Due to this constraint, it was decided to compare endline data with a control group too, to enhance confidence in the findings. Thus, the endline report compares data with baseline as well as control group. On certain indicators which were added in the endline, data was compared with the control group.

Since, the project will be having a second phase, the baseline data for the second phase was also collected, this data was used as the control group for Phase 1 endline.

During the baseline, the sample size had been derived statistically and the sample size was decided to remain same in the endline.

### Estimation of total sample for Phase 1

$n = \frac{\frac{t^2 PQ}{d^2}}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left( \frac{t^2 PQ}{d^2} - 1 \right)}$	<p>n = the sample size required  t = value of the t distribution at the desired level of confidence. (For n &gt; 30, the t distribution approximates the z distribution. At 95% level of confidence, this value is 1.96.)  P = Proportion in the first class, value takes as 50%  Q = 1-P is the proportion in the second class; value becomes 50%  d = margin of error; 0.04</p>
<p>n= 591  Design effect (dff) taken as 3  Final sample = 1,773 or ~ <b>1,800</b></p>	

During baseline, the sample size was 1,946 SHG members distributed across 60 villages. During endline the minimum sample size targeted was also 1,800.

This sample was decided to be proportionately distributed across districts and training Life Cycles as the actual beneficiaries of Phase 1 were distributed. Thus, overall project data of 36,542 beneficiaries was taken and was cross tabulated across districts and Life Cycles, the table below shows the distribution.



**Distribution of beneficiaries in Phase 1 across districts and life cycles**

Database	LC-1	LC-2	LC-3	LC-4	Total
Alwar	8,758 (24%)	7,785 (21%)	3,319 (9%)	6,408 (18%)	26,270 (72%)
Dausa		1,559 (4%)	3,648 (10%)	3,001 (8%)	8,208 (22%)
Sikar			2,064 (6%)		2,064 (5%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,758 (24%)</b>	<b>9,344 (25%)</b>	<b>9,031 (25%)</b>	<b>9,409 (26%)</b>	<b>36,542 (100%)</b>

The sample for endline was targeted to be distributed in the same proportion across districts and Life Cycles as the above table.

The actual sample achieved for endline was 2,030 and the actual distribution of sample was as below:

**Actual Sample (n=2,030) distribution across districts and LCs**

Sample	LC-1	LC-2	LC-3	LC-4	Total
Alwar	24%	23%	10%	13%	70%
Dausa	0%	3%	8%	13%	24%
Sikar	0%	0%	6%	0%	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Sample as proportion of beneficiary population of Phase 1**

	Total for Phase 1	Endline Sample	Sample proportion
Beneficiaries	36,542	2,030	5.6%
Villages	961	57	5.9%
SHGs	2,889	185	6.4%

**Geographic distribution of sample**

Districts →	Alwar	Dausa	Sikar	Sample size (n)
Survey ↓				
Endline	1,423 (70%)	480 (24%)	127 (6%)	2,030
Baseline	1,720 (88%)		226 (12%)	1,946
Control	1,034 (51%)	987 (49%)	-	2,021

**Sample selection**

Once the sample size for each Life Cycle and district was decided, the sample villages were randomly drawn from the overall database of 36,542 members provided by HPPI. Within the villages, SHGs to be surveyed were randomly selected.

M2i drew a 'Primary Sample' of villages and SHGs and also took 'Secondary Sample' to act as replacement in case the survey team, for any reason, is not able to visit a primary sample village or SHG.

In the actual survey, M2i team indeed had to make replacements and had to use 'Secondary Sample' in significant number of cases.

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Replacements</b>
No. of villages replaced	13 (23%)
Respondents in replaced villages	215
Respondents changed in other villages	454
Total respondent sample replaced	669 (33%)

Key reasons for replacement of villages/SHG members were as below:

- Dissolved SHGs
- Deaths
- Marriage
- Not available due daily wage work
- Migration
- Member not agreeing to be interviewed

### ***Qualitative data***

In addition to quantitative survey, M2i team also collected qualitative data through FGDs and interviews. Following number of FGDs and stakeholder interviews were conducted.

#### **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>No. of FGDs</b>	<b>Members participated</b>
Beneficiaries	15	162
Husbands	10	65

#### **Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders**

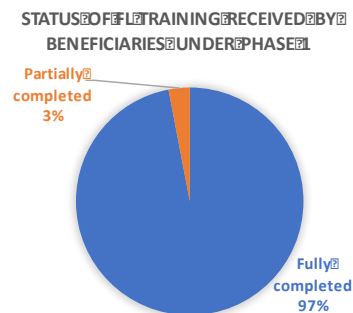
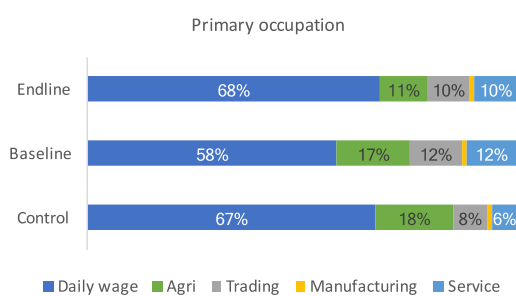
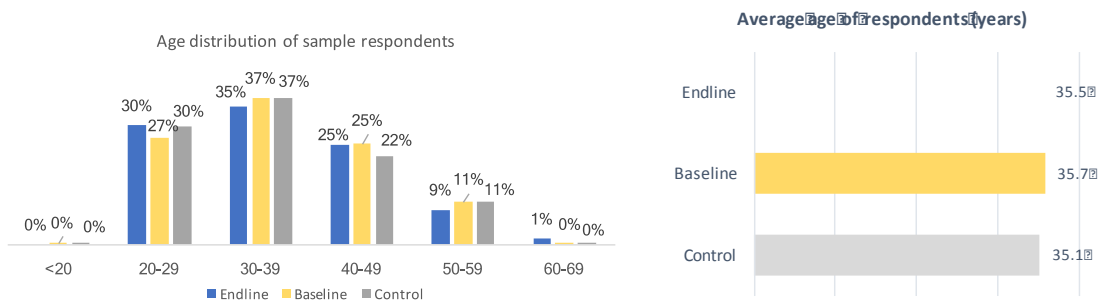
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>No. of interviews</b>
Sakhis	40
CRISIL Mitras	20
BC + bankers	8
Sarpanch	3
Post office officials	4
E-Mitra	8
Others (Government officials, insurance agents)	3

### ***Endline study limitations***

- The baseline and endline respondents got significantly changed.
- There was some difference in profile of endline and control group members. The control group members' economic profile was lower than those of Phase 1 members. Further, control group members were part of Aajevika project and most were not members of MFIs unlike the baseline members.

The endline findings therefore compares data both with both – the baseline and the control group. On certain indicators, wherever relevant, comparison with only control group has been done. The findings were also corroborated with qualitative discussions to derive conclusions.

### 1.3 Profile of respondents in surveys



## FINDINGS

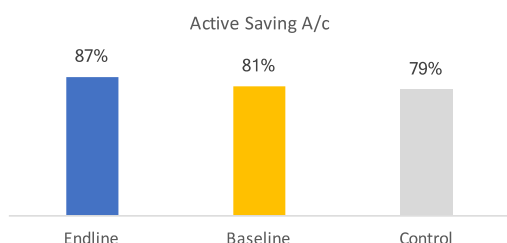
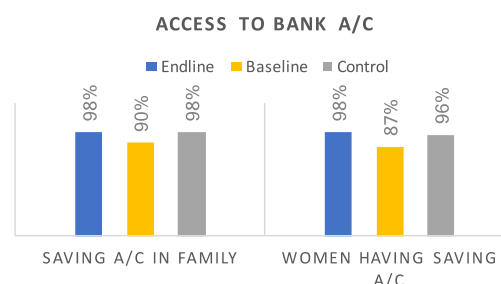
## 2 Access to And awareness on financial services

### 2.1 Access to financial services

The endline findings show that the project has been effective in improving access to certain financial services among project beneficiaries, although the increase in access is not even across all financial products.

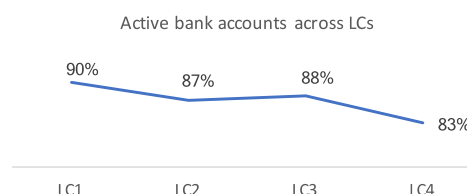
#### Bank accounts

The comparison of endline data with the baseline, suggests marginal improvement in access to basic bank accounts within family as well as for women holding bank accounts. Since, access to bank accounts was already high in baseline there was not much scope for improvement on that front.

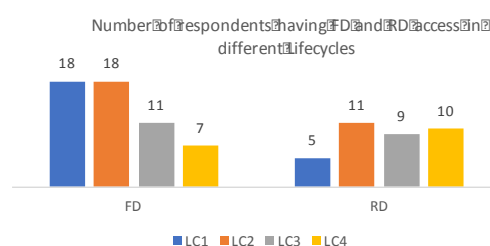


As far as activeness of the bank accounts is concerned, the data again suggests some improvement in endline over baseline as well as when compared to the control group. The data shows increase in proportion of active loan accounts in endline and the difference is statistically significant (*Z-test of proportion*

*shows significant difference of endline data from baseline as well as from control group at 0.05 significance level).*

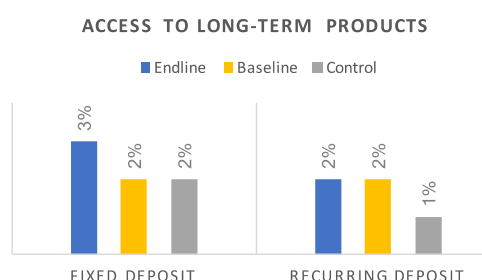


The activeness of bank account data of the endline showed some trend when analyzed over Life Cycles. People in LC1 had higher active accounts compared to people in LC4. In case the increase in activeness in bank accounts is due to the project intervention, then the data suggests that the impact of training may not necessarily happen immediately but may translate over a period of time.



#### Long-term banking products (Time deposits and Recurring deposits)

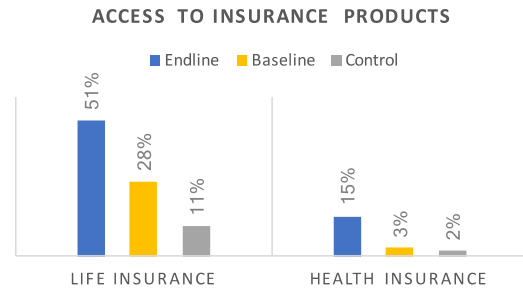
The data suggested no change in adoption of long-term financial products offered by banks such as Fixed Deposits and Recurring Deposits. Such products are important from the perspective of long-term financial goals. Thus, lack of adoption of such products also reflects that there has not been much improvement on financial planning at least in terms of adoption of such financial products. The uptake of FDs and RDs remained unchanged with only around 2% to 3% of



respondents having it in the endline, which is same as that in the baseline as well as in the control group.

### **Insurance**

There has been significant improvement in adoption of insurance services. The endline data shows that 51% of the respondents had accidental or life insurance and 15% had health insurance. This is considerably higher compared to baseline or to control group data. Thus, the change is highly likely because of the project intervention and was also corroborated by the qualitative findings. The figures above are independent of the insurance benefits that one may have under Bhamashah scheme. However, it was also observed during FGDs that awareness of people on benefits of Bhamashah and the process to avail benefits was low.



One of the major reasons for increase in insurance services was high adoption of Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY). Awareness created about the scheme by the project coupled with its low premium of Rs12 per annum resulted in high adoption. In the endline sample, 45% of the respondents had enrolled for the scheme. Another insurance scheme called Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) also showed increase in enrolments. 23% of the respondents reported of having availed the scheme. However, the adoption of PMJJBY is lower compared to PMSBY, primarily because of its higher annual premium of Rs330. Qualitative discussion with community as well as with officials revealed that since this market segment is highly price sensitive, most people go for lower premium without considering the actual benefits or understanding the difference in the two schemes. Even officials at banks and post offices generally inform more of PMSBY as it has higher chances of being taken up.

**In endline PMSBY and PMJJBY enrolments surged**

**PMSBY enrolment – 45%**  
**PMJJBY enrolment – 23%**

FGDs with community also showed that most people are not much aware about the difference in the two schemes and are primarily driven by the premium amount for availing the scheme. Nevertheless, the project was successful in enhancing social security of people.

FGDs with community also showed that most people are not much aware about the difference in the two schemes and are primarily driven by the premium amount for availing the scheme. Nevertheless, the project was successful in enhancing social security of people.

**PMSBY:** PMSBY is an accidental death and disability insurance scheme. The cover amount is Rs2,00,000/- (two lakh) in case of accidental death or permanent full disability or a sum of Rs. 1,00,000/- (one lakh) in case of partial but permanent disability. The premium amount is Rs12 to be renewed annually.

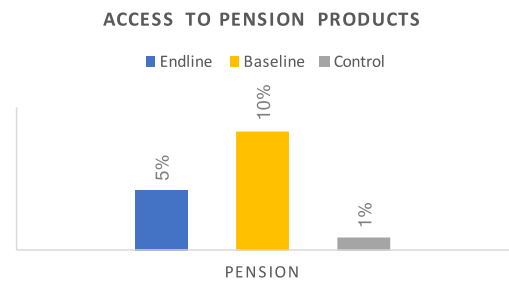
**PMJJBY:** PMJJBY is a life insurance scheme that covers death by any reason. The cover amount is Rs200,000 and the premium amount is Rs330 to be renewed annually.

### **Pension**

The data on adoption of pension products did not show any change. In fact, there is a drop in endline compared to baseline. This is also because, in endline during the survey, people mentioned some local scheme of government at panchayat level which provided pension to people and hence around 10% people mentioned of having pension schemes.

Overall, there has not been any change in status as far as pension schemes are concerned. But, it must be

noted that there is high enrolment in Bhamashah scheme under which there is a component of pension.



### **Awareness on Bhamashah**

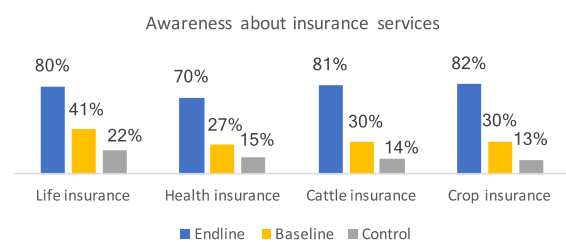
Bhamashah card provides one single platform to avail benefits of various government schemes and the ability to get direct benefit transfers (DBT). However, the awareness among the project beneficiaries on the benefits of the cards and the process of availing these benefits was found to be low. In FGDs people mentioned that they know there are benefits with Bhamashah but could not explain the precise schemes and benefits of the card or the process to avail it.

## **2.2 Awareness and adoption of financial services**

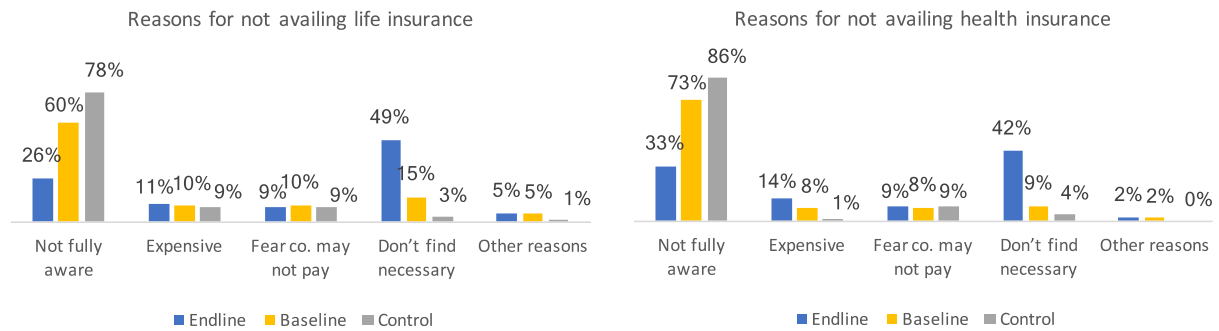
Discussions with people showed that awareness and access to basic bank accounts is now high. Most people have bank accounts and due to direct benefits transfers (DBTs) and payment of MGNREGA in bank accounts, the accounts are also reasonably active. The profile of most of the people showed that they were wage labourers and involved in MGNREGA works.

As already discussed, people have less awareness about more advanced banking products such FD and RDs and hence even their adoption is low. People still have not developed understanding on financial planning and goal setting and to systematically work towards it.

The awareness on insurance has increased as people do understand the basic concept of insurance. Most people during qualitative discussions as well as in quantitative parameters admitted of understanding the concept of insurance services. The data suggests significant increase in number of people in endline mentioning that they understood insurance and its benefits. The difference in endline data is very conspicuous when compared to baseline or control groups.

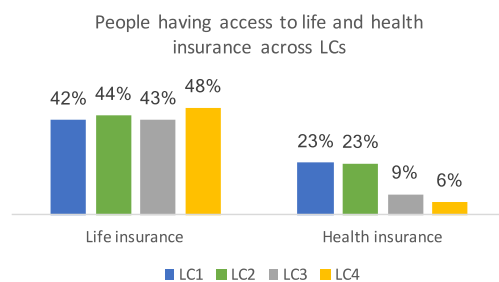


The data also showed interesting trend when asked on why people had not taken insurance cover, from those who had not taken insurance.

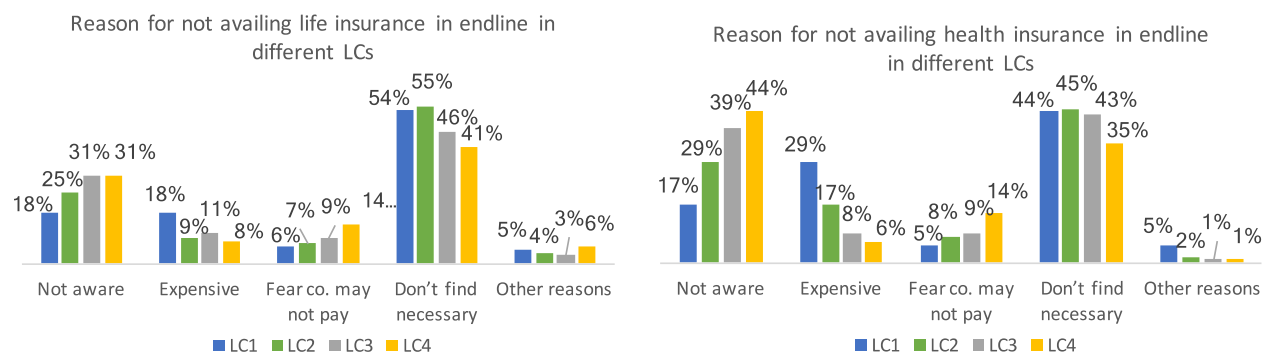


The baseline and control group data, as in can be seen in charts above, showed high proportion of people mentioning lack of awareness as a reason for not availing the insurance services. However, in the endline, people who had not availed the insurance mentioned “Don’t find it necessary” as the reason rather than lack of awareness as a reason. This shows that in the endline people had heard about insurance and are aware of its benefits. However, the response also tells that people still do not have full understanding of risk cover and social security.

The endline response were again looked on a temporal scale by comparing the responses across Life Cycles; this also showed a trend. It was found that while on access to life insurance is almost uniform across life cycles, there is higher adoption in health insurance among people from LC1 and LC2 compared to LC3 and LC4.



This is consistent with the trend showed by activeness of bank accounts seen in the earlier section. The data indicates that generally it takes time for people from getting a training to adopting a product. The data is showing that with basic awareness on financial products, people are able to appreciate its benefits over a period of time and may adopt it in due course. Thus, adoption may not happen immediately in all cases. This hypothesis is further corroborated by the fact that even, on asking reasons for not adopting insurance product across Life Cycles showed a similar trend. People in LC3 and LC4 had higher proportion of people mentioning awareness as a reason for not availing insurance product compared to people in LC1 and LC2. Thus, people take time to assimilate learning and then finally adopting a product.



The qualitative discussions and the data shows that adoption of insurance services is driven by the following key factors:

- Conceptual awareness about insurance service
- Awareness about the insurance schemes under which people can enrol
- Premium amount
- Demonstration (witnessing the benefits first hand)

All the above factors play a role in adoption of insurance services. It was observed that, in villages where people got insurance claims influenced others too, even if they were not directly project beneficiaries.

### **Case of Meera Devi**

Meera Devi is a member of a SHG in Rajgarh, she is also an Anganwadi worker and is one of the project beneficiaries. Under the project, she took life insurance for her husband under PMJJBY. However, as fate would have it, soon after taking the insurance cover, her husband took ill from which he could never recover. After he passed away, CMs under the project helped Meera Devi to get insurance claim. The claim amount helped Meera Devi stabilize her life economically and to get back to her own feet. After the incident, Meera Devi started actively propagating benefits of financial products and her own story inspired many in her village to enroll for insurance services. Today Meera Devi is well-known in her community and an inspiration for many.

## **2.3 Conclusion: Awareness and access to financial services**

The endline findings suggest significant improvement in awareness and access to financial services among the beneficiaries, particularly on life insurance services. While basic banking services on saving accounts already had high penetration, life insurance services got a significant boost. Key driver for insurance products were awareness, premium amount and ability to see benefits first hand.

The data suggests an interesting trend that even if people do not immediately adopt a financial product, with awareness, they may do so over a period. The data trend shows higher number of enrolments for LC1 and LC2 compared to LC3 and LC4.

The project created awareness among members on key financial services, although people still do not have full awareness of details of schemes and finer nuances of risks.

Further, adoptions of investment schemes or long-term products such as FD, RD or even pension products were still very low. People are not able to differentiate and appreciate saving products from investment products and their purposes.

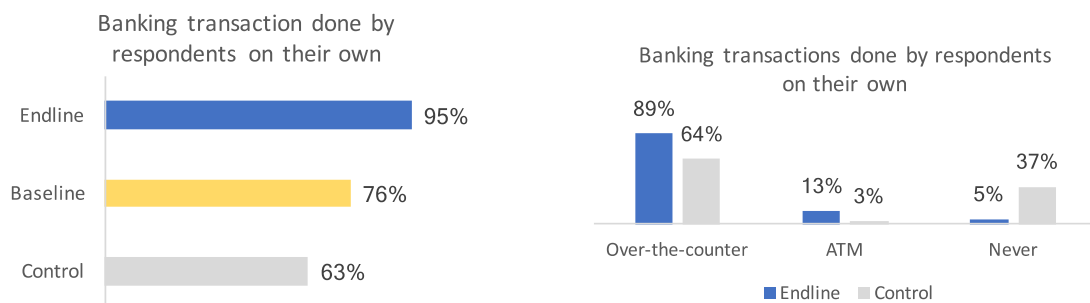


### 3 Individual level impacts: Impact on women

#### 3.1 Banking transactions done by women on their own

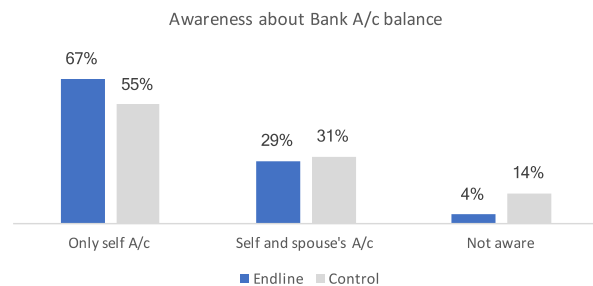
95% women in the endline mentioned of having done banking transaction - withdrawal or deposition of money in bank – without aid from any male member. This proportion of women is significantly higher when compared to baseline or control groups.

Most of the women had done transactions over-the-counter but a considerably higher proportion in endline, had also done transactions using ATMs. The quantitative data and the qualitative findings clearly suggest that there has been a positive impact of project on women’s ability to conduct basic banking transactions on their own.



#### 3.2 Awareness among women about bank account balance

As women could carry out basic banking transactions, there was also now a greater awareness among them about bank balances. The awareness of bank account balances was found to be high among women in the endline, at least of the bank accounts in their own name. Thus, the project has contributed towards creation of an environment where women were in greater control of their finances.



The project has created heightened awareness and sensitization on financial aspects and empowered women to be able to transact on their own.

#### 3.3 Women’s confidence and comfort on financial matters

Quantitative data on women doing transaction on their own and their awareness about bank balances (as presented above) shows increased confidence of women in carrying out financial transactions.

Open-ended interaction with women during FGDs and interviews of bankers showed that women had indeed gained in confidence. 54% women during FGDs<sup>1</sup> mentioned that they felt more confident and were now able to carry out financial transactions without any help or hesitation.

**54%** women in FGDs mentioned that they felt more confident in dealing on financial matters.

The women mentioned that now they understood financial products and their benefits. In fact, 44% of the women members in FGDs reported of sharing their financial learning with family and friends.

**44%** of the women in FGDs reported of sharing financial learnings with friends and family.

The same fact was mentioned by the bankers and also husbands of the members. Husbands mentioned that they were able to learn about various government schemes and financial products from their wives. Women mentioned that they were now more vocal on financial issues and could participate on financial matters within their families.

### Quotes of SHG members during FGDs

“We now ask for receipts for any transaction”

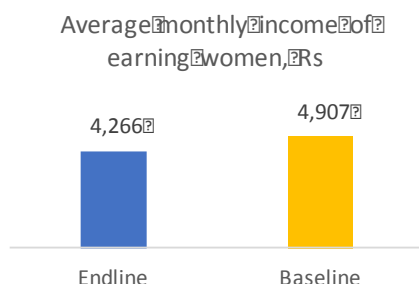
“If a banker tries to avoid us we go as a group to make ourselves heard”

“If somebody tries to mislead us, we tell them we know about the scheme and its benefits”

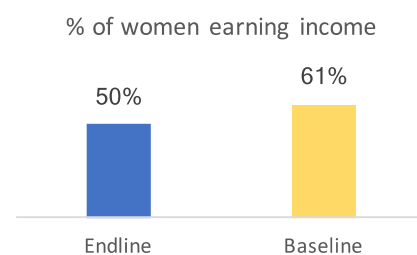
“Since we now know about the financial products and schemes as well as the processes to avail them, we approach the authorities with relevant documents so that they cannot reject our case”

### 3.4 Impact on women’s earning status

The data did not show any positive change in women’s employable skill levels or their earning status. 61% women in baseline mentioned of being engaged in some income generation activities, mostly labour,



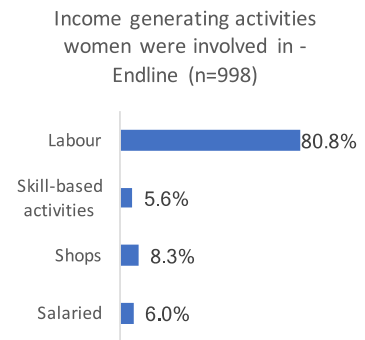
while in endline only 50% women mentioned that.



Further, even the 50% working women were primarily involved in wage labour work and not in any skilled or semi-skilled activities. There was also no change in average earning of women.

<sup>1</sup> 162 women participated in 15 FGDs conducted as part of endline

The project neither had any specific component of skill trainings nor had a direct component of engaging women in income generating activities. Thus, financial awareness alone had so far not translated into women taking up income generating activities on their own. In fact during FGDs women mentioned that the project should have had a component on skill-building so that they could better utilize their financial knowledge for enhancing their incomes. Thus, there was eagerness among some women to work.

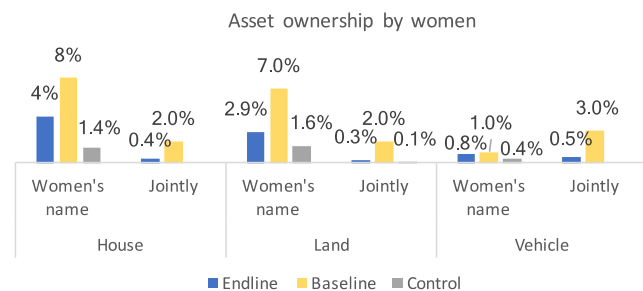


### Quote of SHG members during FGDs

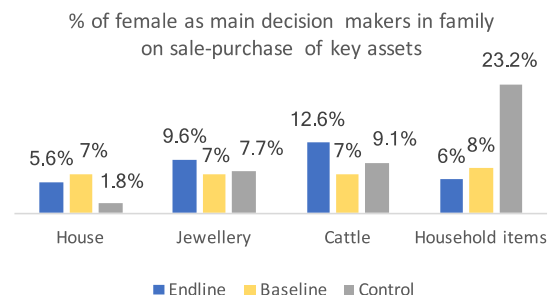
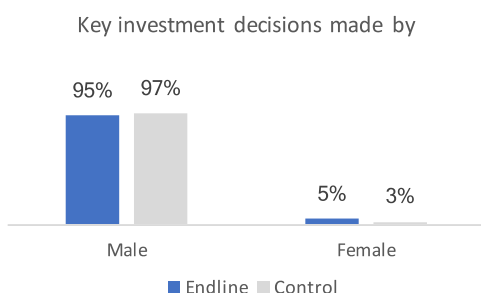
“We now have the financial skills but don’t know what to do with it, we would have liked to be trained and add to income”

### 3.5 Women’s asset ownership and ability to take financial decisions

The quantitative data did not show any conclusive evidence of change on asset ownership as well women’s role in financial decision-making. In fact there was a drop seen in proportion of women having certain assets in their name from baseline to endline. However, the control group had even lower proportion of women having assets in their name compared to endline. Further, the women having ownership over assets were mostly women-headed households.



On financial decision-making too, there seems to be no change on quantitative indicators.



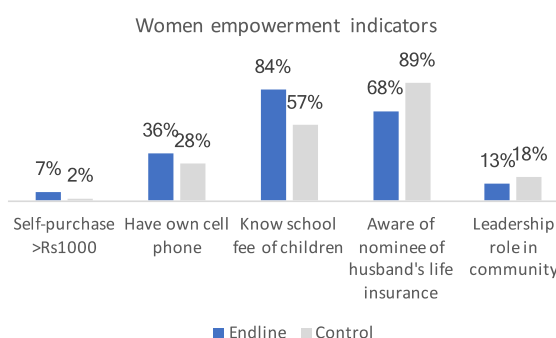
As discussed earlier that due to improved financial awareness among women, anecdotal evidences suggest that women did share their financial learnings with friends and family. Women were participating in financial discussions within family and reported increased confidence on financial matters. Women were also doing more financial transactions on their own. These subtle changes do result in enhanced status of women in the family and her

increased participation in financial matters, even if they may still not be the final decision-makers or may not have still ventured into generating income.

Overall, there seems to be a change which is yet to translate into concrete quantitative indicators. One must also see these results in the social context wherein Rajasthan is one of the low-ranked states on gender equality. It is very difficult to make these deep-rooted social changes through a limited period intervention. The gender bias is so entrenched that even if women may be influencing decisions within her family, it is not socially “appropriate” for her to acknowledge it openly as it may potentially lower the social status of her husband in the society which is not acceptable to woman herself.

### 3.6 Other women empowerment indicators

Other women empowerment indicators showed mixed results. These results were compared with control groups as these indicators were not part of the baseline and were added later. 7% of the women in endline mentioned of having made purchases greater than Rs1,000 without consulting male members, this proportion was very low at 2% in the control group. Even having own cell phone and knowledge of children’s school fee was higher among endline



respondents. These indicators may not be conclusive but again do point to subtle positive change among endline members that were discussed in the previous section.

### 3.7 Conclusion: Individual level indicators

A positive change was observed on quantitative indicators reflecting awareness and confidence of women. This change was further corroborated by the qualitative narratives and anecdotes provided by women and bankers. The project has helped in improving financial understanding of women and their confidence in undertaking various financial transactions. Although, higher level social and economic quantitative indicators on women such as: asset-ownership, financial decision-making, still do not show much change.

There seems to be a subtle change where women are able to participate on financial matters within family and interact with external stakeholders with more confidence.

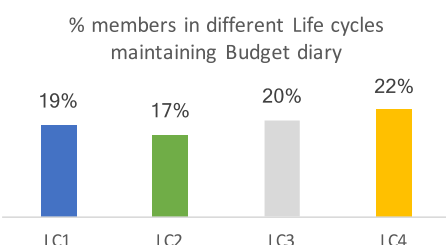
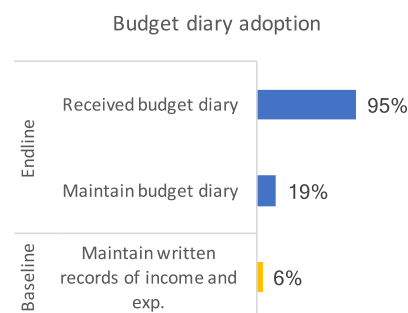
A social context in which the gender-bias is so deeply entrenched, to bring a change or for women and society at large to acknowledge a change openly will take much longer.

## 4 Household level impacts

### 4.1 Short-term financial planning

One of the key inputs during the project was introduction of a 'Budget Diary' to enable people to keep track of their income and expenses. This was assumed to induce better cash management, avoidance of unnecessary expenses and to enhance savings.

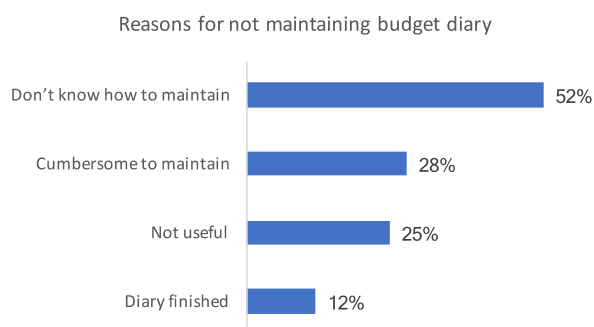
The endline findings suggest that people did indeed receive the budget diaries. There was also adoption of record-keeping practices but perhaps the adoption and utilization was not as high as the project would have ideally desired. This is because budget diary was an objective and a focused intervention.



In the endline sample 95% of the respondents had received the budget diary, M2i team physically verified the diary in 77% cases. Only 19% of the members mentioned of maintaining it, while other either did it in the beginning and stopped later or did not do it at all.

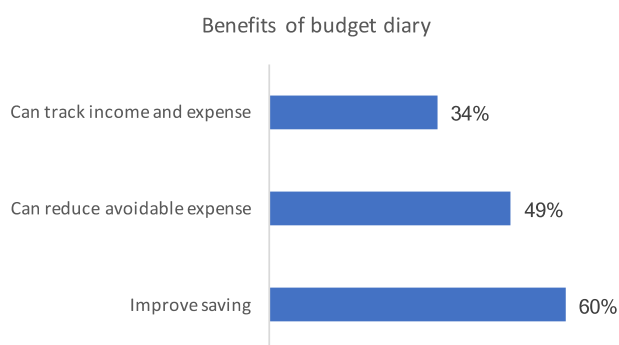
The proportion of members not maintaining diary was more or less even across Life Cycles, although only marginally higher for LC3 and LC4 participants who had received training at the last.

52% of the members not maintaining the diary mentioned lack of understanding on how to maintain it as the reason for not doing it. Other reasons quoted were maintaining it being cumbersome or not useful.



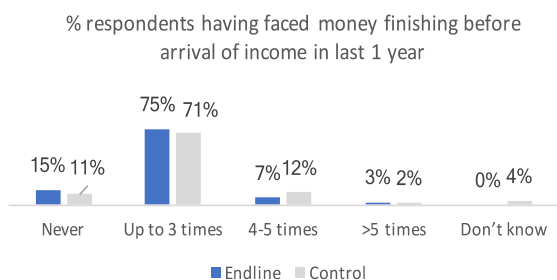
In qualitative discussions during FGDs, women members mentioned various other reasons too for not maintaining the diary, these included:

- Low literacy levels
- Members having got the idea of their income and expenses, now find it redundant to write it every time
- Some members mentioned that the whole exercise was too cumbersome



In physical verification of Budget diaries, it was found that even members who were writing the diary had mostly not made entries correctly and it would be difficult to estimate overall income and expenses from it. Thus, it is difficult to ascertain if members could actually calculate their income, expense and savings from it.

Nevertheless, members maintaining the diary mentioned certain benefits of it, most prominent was the fact that they could improve savings.

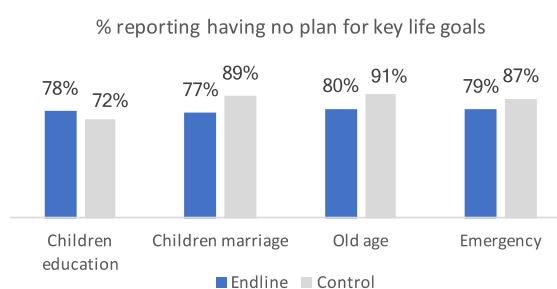


However, certain indicators on financial vulnerability, discussed later in the report, also did not show much change. E.g. the frequency of people's income finishing before arrival of fresh income was same for endline and control. Thus, budget diary did not seem to have much influence in addressing short-term financial vulnerabilities.

## 4.2 Long-term financial planning

The endline findings suggest that there has not been much change in level of knowledge or practice as far as long-term financial goal setting and planning towards achieving them is concerned.

On most long-term goals, respondents had no financial plans. Further, the uptake of investment based financial products such as FD, RD or pension products was only 2-3%, which was same for the baseline as well as for control group.



Even on insurance products, although the uptake was high, it is mostly in PMSBY, which has low premium and is an Accidental Insurance scheme. The enrolment in PMJJBY was low due to higher premium. Nevertheless, project has still made significant impact on building awareness on insurance services and its adoption but has not been as successful on other investment and long-term schemes.

### *Financial Health Counseling*

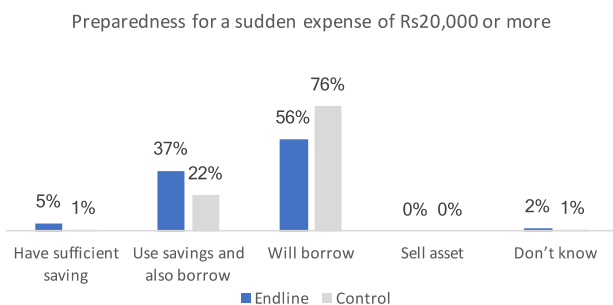
One of the components of the project towards building financial understanding and enabling people to plan for long-term goals was Financial Health Counseling (FHC) and to provide people with a FHC card. The card was to enable people to self-assess their social security levels.

However, the overall execution of FHC was not found to be effective. The FGDs with member and interview with CRISIL Mitras suggested that FHC cards were distributed towards the end of the training life cycle. The financial counselling was not given high weightage and was generally conducted as an exit activity. In many cases, individual counselling was not done and instead people were provided general information in a group. Members in FGDs mentioned that they did not feel comfortable discussing household finances in a group.

FHC cards were also not distributed as envisaged in the project. Often cards were just given to a single SHG member for distribution, who at times did not distribute it. Most people also did not know how to use it. Thus, FHC component did not achieve the desired impact.

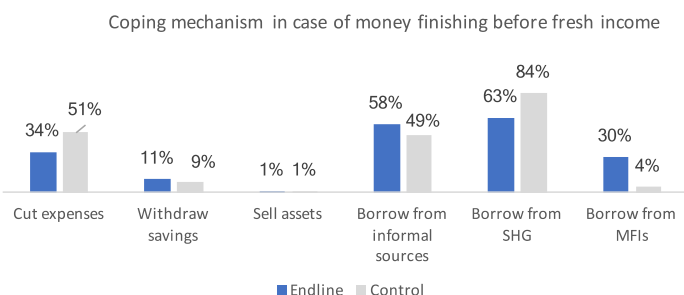
### 4.3 Financial vulnerability

The project had a positive impact in addressing financial vulnerability of people to some extent. The project has created awareness among people on utility of insurance services.



would have to primarily rely on borrowings in case of sudden expense or emergency.

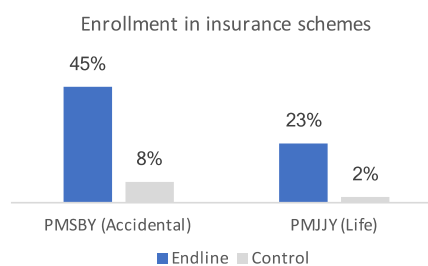
Another indicator used for checking financial vulnerability was the number of instances in the last one year wherein households' cash finished before arrival of fresh income. The data did not show any significant difference between the endline and the control group. Even coping mechanisms for such stresses matched, with most people in endline as well control group relying on borrowing.



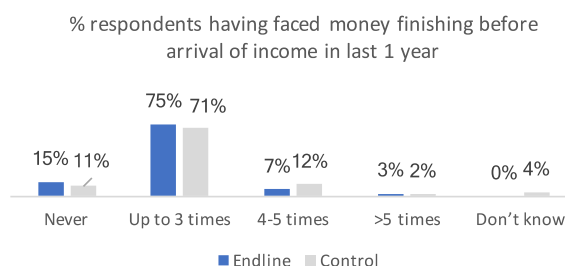
members of Aajeevika SHGs and very low proportion had membership with MFIs.

### 4.4 Financial frauds

People were found to be vulnerable to financial frauds. Although during endline, there was heightened awareness among members about financial frauds and unscrupulous schemes, people may still be susceptible. The endline data and control data although small does not show difference.

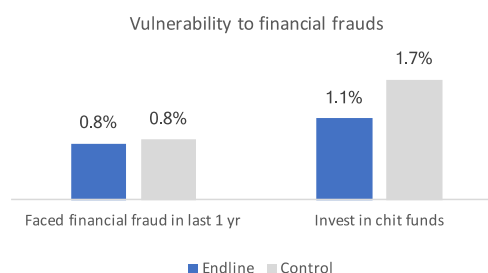


While insurance does provide some social security, there was no perceptible change as far as regular cash flow related vulnerabilities were concerned. People were still not better equipped to deal with liquidity issues and did not have enough saving cushion for emergencies. Most people in the endline mentioned that they



However, in the endline while 30% mentioned MFIs as a source of loan, the control group had only 4% mentioning MFIs as a source and instead had SHGs as a major source among others.

This variation is primarily because, in control group, all members are



In qualitative discussions, it came out that the trainings indeed had created awareness and sensitization on frauds. Members mentioned that they now remain more alert during financial transactions and ask credentials of any company as well as receipts for any transaction.

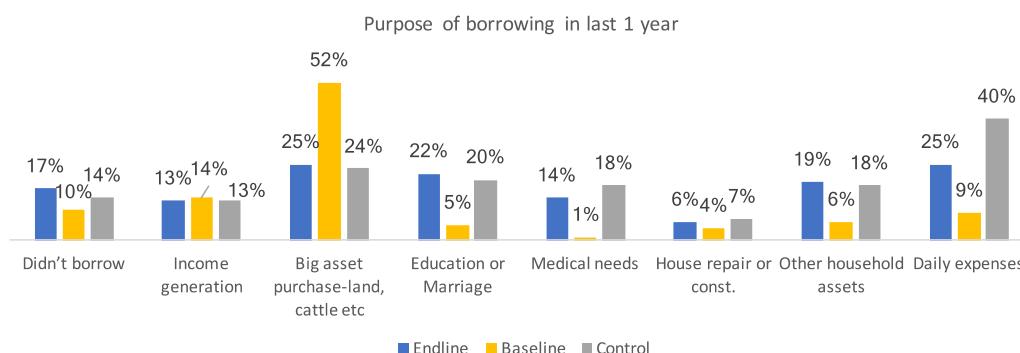
### SHG Members during FGD

“There have been frauds by schemes like “Pearl” and “Sahara”. They took our money and did not come back.”

“After this training we are more aware of such frauds, now we demand receipts for transactions even from banks.”

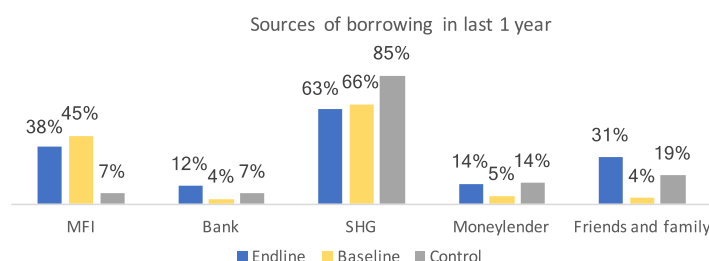
## 4.5 Borrowing behaviour

The borrowing behavior in the endline when compared with baseline or with the control group does not show a positive change in borrowing behavior. In fact, in the endline the proportion of people borrowing for daily expenses (reflecting financial vulnerability) is higher than the baseline, although significantly lower when compared to control group. Borrowing is also high for consumption purposes in the endline.



As far as sources of borrowing are concerned, the endline had higher proportion of people borrowing from informal sources.

Borrowing from MFI was lower in endline compared to baseline. While in control group borrowing from MFI is very low and SHGs came out as the main sources.



The qualitative findings and

respondent profile explain these data trends. These are summarized below:

- Baseline data was collected from members of HPPI and hence all were members of MFI and had higher proportion who had borrowed from MFI or SHG (under BC model groups are called SHG)
- In endline not all were members of HPPI and hence this could be one of the reasons for dip in MFI borrowing.
- After demonetization many members had overdues, resulting in members not able to borrow from MFIs, thus members had to resort to informal sources. This came out during



FGD discussions as well as during the survey. Thus, we see rise in borrowing from informal sources during endline.

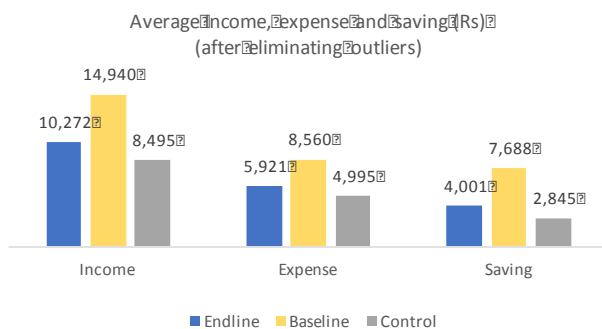
- Control group had respondents from Aajeevika, who were all members of SHGs and had low membership with MFIs. Thus, their source of borrowing was mainly SHG and very low from MFIs.

Overall, quantitative indicators and qualitative discussions with respondents did not point to any significant change in borrowing behavior. In fact, borrowing from informal sources and for consumption purposes had actually increased in endline over baseline, although it was still lower when compared to the control group.

Thus, external factors such as the membership with institutions, demonetization and overdue status of clients seems to have influenced the borrowing patterns.

#### 4.6 Economic impact

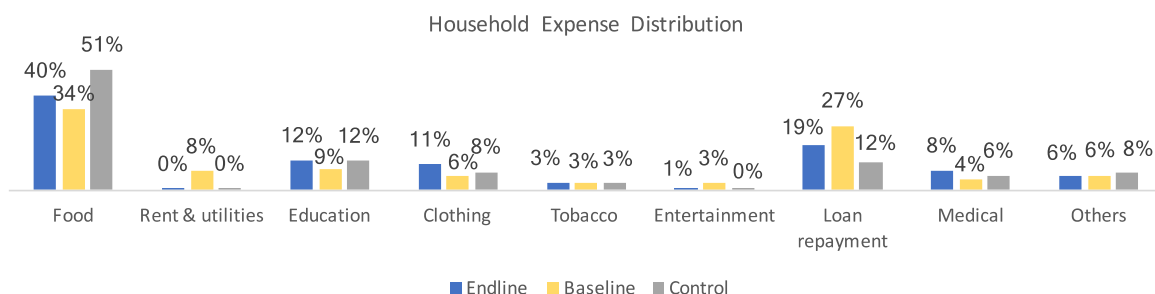
The data on income, expense and saving has not been very clear and conclusive. In order to get an average picture, extreme values were eliminated in all data sets (baseline, endline and control groups). For analysis, the cut offs for monthly income, expense and savings were taken as following respectively:  $\leq$ Rs40,000,  $\leq$ Rs30,000 and  $\leq$ Rs20,000.



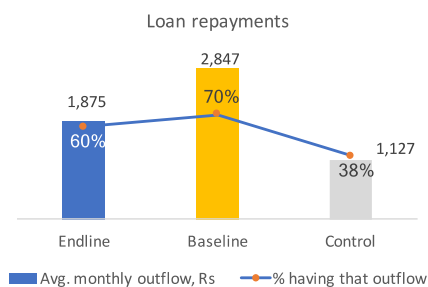
As can be seen from the chart no clear impact on income, expense and saving can be observed. The endline figures are lower than baseline but higher than control group. The self-reported data on income, expense and saving cannot be taken as conclusive evidences for impact and can only be treated as indicative, this is because:

- People find it difficult to estimate monthly income, expense and saving figures as the cash flows are not regular and uniform
- People often deliberately do not reveal the true data on personal financial status
- The respondents in baseline, endline and control in this survey themselves got changed, however comparison of data on common respondents in baseline and endline also does not show any marked impact of project

If we see the distribution of expenses, the data of endline and control group has similarities, although proportion of expense on food is much higher for control group which is reflective of lower income status.

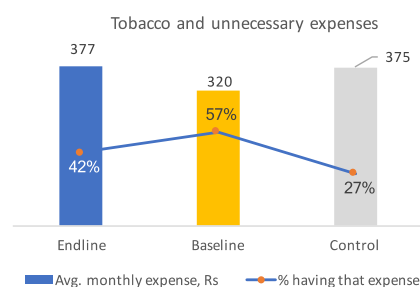


In the endline, loan based cash outflow has gone down compared to baseline. Analysis of loan repayment data shows dip in % of respondents making loan repayments at the time of survey. Also the data on those who borrowed in last one year also shows lower value for endline compared to baseline. The average amount of monthly repayment is also lower for endline.



However, as earlier shown people borrowing from informal sources has actually gone up in endline. Further, there have been some extreme events like demonetization which had significantly impacted borrowing behaviours and delinquency status of respondents. Thus, it is difficult to isolate project impact on loan behaviour and outflow on that account.

On tobacco or other unnecessary expenses, the proportion of people incurring that expense is lower in endline than baseline although the average amount spent is higher in endline. But when compared to control group, the proportion of people incurring the expense is higher in endline but the average amount spent is almost equivalent.



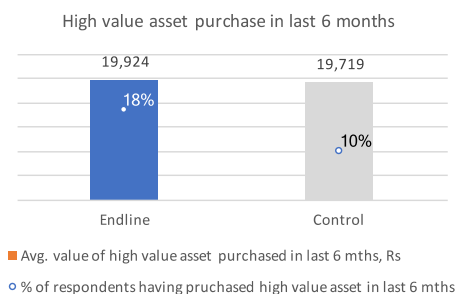
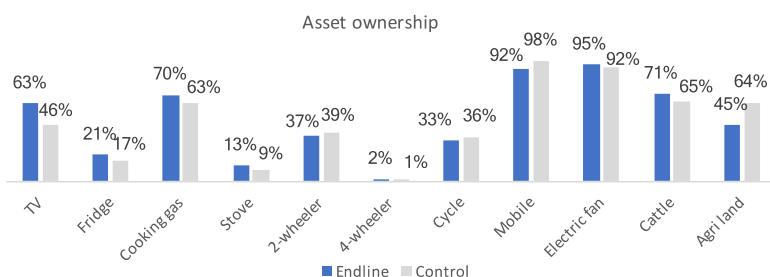
In qualitative discussions with women as well as with husbands, people in endline did mention being more sensitized towards frivolous expenses.

### Member quotes

“Now my wife is taking note of how much I am spending on bidi and tobacco (jokingly says) it has made my life a bit difficult” - Husband of a SHG member in a FGD

“We are now more aware of any unnecessary expenses, even think twice before giving money for ice cream to children” - Women in FGD

The data on asset ownership and high value expense incurred in last 6 months shows higher economic profile for endline respondents as compared to the control group. However, this cannot be treated as an impact of project as the baseline economic profile of Phase 1 respondents was higher than the control group respondents.



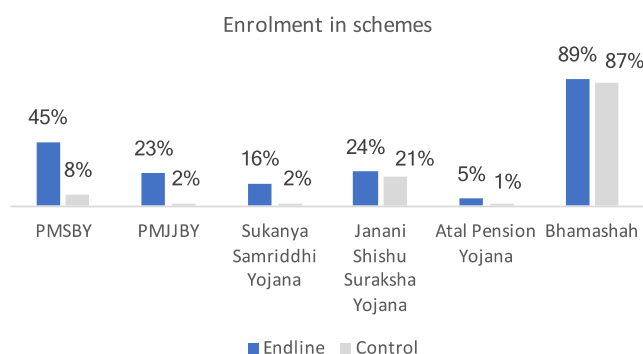
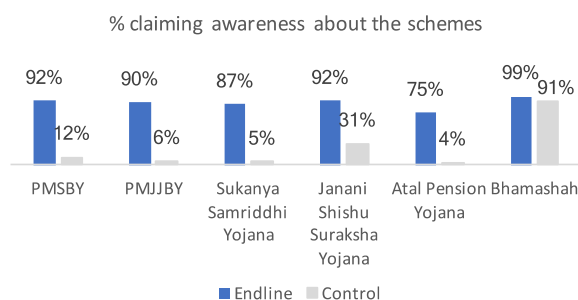
## 4.7 Awareness and adoption of government schemes

There is a significant positive difference in awareness and access to some of the key schemes between the endline and the control group. The endline data was strongly corroborated by the qualitative findings where people mentioned they received information on various schemes during the project.

People also mentioned that CRISIL Mitras and *Sakhis* helped them access various financial schemes and to also avail the benefits. Thus, the project was quite successful in spreading awareness on government schemes and in getting people access to these schemes. PMSBY (Accidental insurance scheme) was the one which showed highest adoption. As discussed earlier, awareness creation coupled with its low annual premium of Rs12 resulted in its high uptake. Even life insurance under PMJJBY also registered high enrolments. Sukanya Samridhhi Yojana showed increase in enrolments.

Bhamashah was one of the schemes which was already highly popular and did not show much variation in enrolments in endline and control.

The findings were further corroborated by BCs, government officials and bankers, who mentioned that due awareness creation there was spurt in people's enrolment for various schemes and for various financial products.



### Enrolments in schemes and support provided by CM and *Sakhi*

CRISIL Mitra Rachana and one of the *Sakhis* Shakuntala played a crucial role in getting high number of enrolments and in helping members get benefits of various government schemes. In the SHGs that they worked with, the duo got 120 members enrolled for insurance products, 40 members enrolled under Atal Pension Yojana and helped 5 members get new ration cards. 6 members in the SHGs had ration cards for the last 3 years but were not able to avail benefits. CM helped these members link their cards to Bhamashah scheme with the help of a local E-Mitra; this enabled members to avail benefits of the public distribution system.

Members of the SHGs with whom Rachana and Shakuntala worked were all praise for the two. They even recalled how they helped in construction of 100 toilets in the village by meeting Sarpanch and could mobilize funds with Panchayat for toilet construction.

#### **4.8 Conclusion: Household level impact**

The impact at the household level is primarily on account of awareness and access to financial services as well as to government welfare schemes, which has clearly improved. As adoption of insurance services has improved, it addresses financial vulnerability to some extent. There was also evidence that people had benefitted because of access to insurance services resulting in its greater adoption.

Qualitative findings suggest that women had become more aware and sensitized to financial issues as well as to financial frauds. However, impact on higher or secondary level indicators is not perceptible. There was still no evidence of change in economic status. There was no quantitative or qualitative finding to indicate any major change in asset ownership, change in income or expense patterns or change in borrowing behaviour. But some anecdotal evidence did point to heightened awareness on curbing unnecessary expenses and sensitization towards savings.

One of the major areas where no impact was seen was the inability of people to plan for life goals as well as for emergencies. The quantitative data suggests lack of planning towards key life goals as well as low adoption of financial products that could help in achievement of long-term goals.

Even in short-term, it was observed that people still did not have very clear saving plans and often resorted to borrowings in case of any income shock or sudden expense; people are still vulnerable to such financial shocks.

One of the key goals for future projects of similar nature should be to build capacities of people towards reducing such vulnerabilities.

## 5 Community level impacts

At the community level, the project was successful in engaging with various stakeholders at the local level and in creating an overall conducive environment for financial inclusion of people.

### 5.1 Creation of a grass-root level functionaries

The project trained a team of CRISIL Mitras (CMs) in financial literacy curriculum; CMs were mainly local rural youth. The CMs were responsible for training of community members. With these trained youth, the project created avenues for them to be able to engage in similar activities in the future too.

Not just a cadre of CMs was created but also the project created a pool of *Sakhis* who were active members of SHGs, ASAs, Anganwadi workers and other active women in the villages. Creation of *Sakhi* was done to provide sustainability to efforts beyond project period.

### 5.2 Impact on financial service providers (BCs, bankers, insurance agents)

The Business Correspondents (BCs), insurance agents and even local bankers were aware of *Mein Pragati* project showing good level of engagement of project with external stakeholders. BCs and bankers mentioned that they felt significant improvement in women's confidence supported by the project. They mentioned that women now insisted for services and were more aware of the processes and documentation required, which helped in serving the women.

**Project helped in building trust of community on BCs.**

**BCs mentioned of their own business going up due to project, as people came for enrolling for various financial and welfare schemes.**

BCs mentioned that the project had resulted in increasing their own businesses as many women came for availing financial services and government schemes. The project created awareness among community about BCs as earlier many people did not trust their credibility. Due to increased awareness about BCs, more people now visited them.

Similarly, *Sarpanch* and government officials were also aware of the project and had been invited to Social Security Melas (SSMs) and to interact with the community. They mentioned that the project had created awareness on financial services not just among the target women but also among community at large. There were instances where people who were not part of trainings also availed services due to greater sensitization and seeing these women avail benefits. Thus, according to these officials the project created demonstrative effect in the community beyond the project beneficiaries.

### 5.3 Effectiveness of Social Security Melas (SSMs)

The Social Security Melas were regularly organized by HPPI. Discussions with project beneficiaries as well as government functionaries and financial institutions revealed that SSMs were quite successful.

SSMs, were helpful in creating awareness and in building trust between community and authorities as they could directly interact with one another. SSMs were considerably important from the perspective of providing access to various financial services and for enrolment of people in government schemes.

### SSMs were effective

- SSMs helped in improving members’ trust and conviction towards different government schemes
- SSM helped in building trust and relationship between different stakeholders and community
- SSMs helped in reducing turn-around time (number of trips have reduced to banks, Sarpanch etc.)

## 5.4 Project stakeholder feedbacks

Feedback of SHG members (project beneficiaries)	
Positives	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project created awareness on financial products and on government schemes.</li> <li>✓ CMs and <i>Sakhis</i> helped people gain access to various government schemes. <i>Sakhis</i> and CMs helped people in getting schemes benefits (insurance claims etc.).</li> <li>✓ Project helped women gain confidence to deal with officials and to carry out financial transactions on their own.</li> <li>✓ Project has given women confidence to be able to share learning with husband, friends and family.</li> <li>✓ Project enabled women to participate in discussion on financial matters in their families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Project did not have any component on skill-based trainings, thus women mentioned they could not utilize these skills to improve their livelihoods or income.</li> <li>✗ The support of CMs was abruptly withdrawn after the project period and there was no one they could consult in case of any doubt or clarification.</li> <li>✗ <i>Sakhis</i> were not available in many villages and many people were not aware of them.</li> </ul>

### Feedback of CMs

Positives	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project CMs own financial literacy levels.</li> <li>✓ CMs themselves adopted financial services and enrolled for certain government schemes.</li> <li>✓ CMs mentioned that it created an employable skill in them and they would be using it in their careers.</li> <li>✓ They now guide people even among their friends and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ The project villages were too scattered and far apart making it logistically very difficult to conduct trainings.</li> <li>✗ Long distances had an adverse impact on efficiency.</li> <li>✗ The work pressure and overall training schedules were too tight, scattered geography added to workload. They could not even come back to an SHG if required.</li> <li>✗ The remuneration was low while work load was high resulting in high level of staff turnover at CM level; almost 50% of the CMs left during the project period.</li> <li>✗ CMs were also frequently transferred resulting in them not being able to build rapport with SHG members and guide them as continuity was broken and they had to start afresh with new set of SHGs.</li> </ul>

### Feedback of *Sakhis*

Positives	Constraints
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Project gave them the opportunity to learn financial skills which was very important and enhanced their self-confidence.</li> <li>✓ Project provided them an opportunity to play leadership role in the community.</li> <li>✓ They could sensitize people on financial frauds.</li> <li>✓ People trusted them and they could share actual stories as they met people. It helped them to enrol people for various schemes.</li> <li>✓ They guided their friends and families.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ Since there was no remuneration for <i>Sakhis</i>, it was very difficult for them to continue. Often they had to spend money from their pocket to even travel.</li> <li>✗ Since there was no remuneration it was difficult for them to travel to different hamlets and hence they could not reach out to SHGs far from their place of residence. In future too it would be difficult for them to continue to guide SHGs particularly those that are far, thus sustainability of efforts is doubtful.</li> <li>✗ In hamlets and villages with no <i>Sakhis</i>, SHG members did not have access to any support provider.</li> <li>✗ Special trainings provided to <i>Sakhis</i> were inadequate, often only 3-4 hours trainings were given. With such trainings they found themselves ill-equipped to train others or to resolve their queries.</li> </ul>

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- ✘ Post trainings they did not have much support from CMs, as CMs themselves were too busy.
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## 5.5 Conclusion: Community level impact

The project had good level of engagement with external stakeholders. The local bankers, banking and insurance agents, local government officials as well as Panchayat functionaries were aware of the project and had been involved in different activities. This had led to direct interaction between the community and those responsible for providing financial services and enrolment in government schemes.

The interactions through SSMs helped in building people's confidence in dealing with officials, in knowing about various products and schemes and enrolment. Overall, the project was able to create a conducive environment in the community which led to wider dissemination of learning.

The village level *Sakhis* were conceptualized for the sustainability of the project as they could continue to spread awareness, help community in availing schemes and in financial inclusion beyond project period. However, due to lack of any revenue model for *Sakhis*, it is unlikely that they will continue to work beyond the project period. The *Sakhis* were trained to work completely on voluntary basis, but based on the interaction with *Sakhis*, the idea does not seem to be practical. Further, *Sakhis* themselves feel they are not adequately trained and have no support system.



## 6 Conclusion

*Mein Pragati* project was a financial literacy project in which women were trained on financial skills through a structured training module. The project also supported women to get enrolled for various financial as well as non-financial welfare schemes.

The impact of the project has been high on the components which related to direct inputs provided in the project. Thus, we see high impact on awareness levels on basic banking services and insurance. Further, people also gained awareness about various government schemes. Not only did the awareness increase but also the enrolments in various government schemes and financial products went up.

There is evidence that women were able to share their learning among their respective families and friends. The trainings also reinvigorated the SHGs and enhanced women's confidence in dealing with officials. Women not only started understanding financial matters better but also gained confidence in conducting banking transaction on their own.

Due to this enhanced confidence, there are qualitative indications that women participated in financial matters at home. Since, all MFIs and SHGs have women as members and these institutions are a major source of household borrowings, it is practically impossible to isolate women from financial discussions within a family. Project gave further impetus by developing financial skills.

The project was successful in creating an overall positive environment within community by effectively engaging with various stakeholders – bankers, financial agents, government officials as well as elected representatives. *Sakhis* and CMs played an effective role in helping community not just in training and enrolling people in schemes but also in resolving issues for people to benefit from these schemes.

While project had a reasonably good impact on these aspects, the impact was limited in terms of higher level social and economic indicators. The heightened awareness had still not translated in to addressing financial vulnerabilities which people continued to face. The adoption of long-term financial products was still limited and adoption of financial services was restricted to only basic saving products and to some extent insurance products.

People still lacked skills on financial planning and setting life goals. No decipherable impact could be seen on overall economic status of people, asset ownership among women or women's ability to take major financial decisions independently. While women did gain in confidence, the deep-rooted gender biases still exist. However, a limited scope project focusing on financial literacy cannot even be expected to deliver these major socio-economic changes in short span of time, particularly in a state where gender bias is entrenched.

The data on certain indicators, when analyzed on temporal scale (LC1 to LC4) showed that the behavioral changes may not necessarily translate immediately after the intervention and may take some time. Thus, one may expect that the project may have impacts which might manifest over a longer period.

The table below summarizes some the indicators that showed positive changes, those that remained unchanged and those that were inconclusive.

Indicators that showed positive change	Indicators that remained unchanged	Indicators that remained inconclusive or showed mixed results
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness on financial products:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Different types of insurances</li> <li>○ Pension</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Enhanced awareness and sensitization towards financial frauds</li> <li>• Awareness on various government schemes</li> <li>• Access to financial products, particularly insurances accidental insurance, life and health insurance; basic bank accounts</li> <li>• Access to government schemes - PMSBY, PMJJY, Sukanya Samriddhi</li> <li>• Understanding of household finances and budgeting</li> <li>• Confidence of women beneficiaries in dealing with authorities and officials</li> <li>• Confidence of women on financial matters</li> <li>• Ability to conduct financial transaction either over-the counter in bank or through ATMs</li> <li>• Enhanced participation of women on financial issues and discussions; shared learnings with family and friends</li> <li>• Eco-system development: engagement with BCs, banks, local elected leader, government officials etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding ‘saving’ and ‘investment’</li> <li>• Awareness on long-term financial products like FD and RD</li> <li>• Access to long-term financial products like FD, RD and pension products</li> <li>• Social security – people still vulnerable to income shocks</li> <li>• Financial planning towards life goals</li> <li>• Financial decision-making and asset ownership still predominantly with male members</li> <li>• Employability or skills of women</li> <li>• Women earning status or involvement in income generating activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sakhi model under the current form cannot conclusively be said to be successful or whether it will sustain or to what extent</li> <li>• Saving habits of people or change in expenditure patterns remained inconclusive. In FGDs people showed greater awareness and understanding of households budgets and on frivolous expenses but still effect was not apparent in quantitative data.</li> <li>• Borrowing behavior: This showed mixed results. Due to demonetization, many individuals borrowed from moneylenders. Thus, dependence on money lender could not be objectively judged. The indicator was affected by the demonetization event.</li> </ul>

While the overall project impact has been mixed, there are certain learning that can be taken for future similar interventions. These learning have the potential to enhance outcomes and impact; these are discussed below.

### **Project Learning**

- Having *Sakhis* is a good idea, however, their trainings should be more elaborate to give them confidence to continue to operate independently as professionals. *Sakhi* model should be given more time, resource and overall weightage within the project as they are critical for sustainability. (Details in next sub-section).
- *Sakhis* should be promoted as local information and support professionals. Their model should be promoted on fee-for-service basis rather than voluntary basis.

- The project geography should be carefully chosen and resources should be adequately deployed considering the operational challenges.
- Financial Health Counselling should be conducted as individual family's counselling and not as a group exercise. It should be targeted towards helping a family to identify its:
  - Key life goals
  - Help family plan for achieving those goals
  - Enable family to see their current financial status and progress
  - Sensitize family towards key financial risks and the concept of social security
  - Get the family covered for as many risks as can be done within limited resources available (social security)
- FHC should be done not as the last component of training but should continue along with training.
- SSM is effective platform and the practice should be continued in the future projects.

### **Learning on *Sakhi* model**

To provide sustainability to the efforts under *Mein Pragati* project in Rajasthan, a cadre of local village women, called *Sakhis* was created. These were active and progressive women and were willing to work on financial inclusion and linkage initiatives.

*Sakhis* were trained to help people, within their respective villages, to help people get access to financial services and to various government schemes. These women have to work on voluntary basis and would continue the efforts even after the project life.

The end line survey showed that, conceptually the idea of empowering local cadre of people who could help the community beyond project life was good. The case studies and interaction with community showed that *Sakhis* could play and in fact did play an important role in many villages of actively helping people. Villagers also trusted them and sought help from them.

However, the efficacy of *Sakhis*' efforts were constrained by the fact that *Sakhis* had to work completely on voluntary basis. The discussions with *Sakhis* pointed to the fact that the whole *Sakhi* model would be difficult to sustain unless there was some revenue stream for *Sakhis*.

Even for delivering services within the village, it was not just their productive time which was used but often they had to incur expenses. For supporting people to get access to various services or to resolve any issues in availing benefits of a scheme, *Sakhis* need to travel to visit offices, make phone calls, eat outside etc. This required actual expenses to be made, which they had to meet from their own resources. Thus, while *Sakhi* had enthusiasm in the beginning, financial constraints and time constraints with no remuneration, resulted in efforts waning over a period of time.

In large villages with multiple hamlets, people did not even know *Sakhi* as she could not travel to those areas.

Apart from remuneration issues, *Sakhis* also revealed that the trainings provided to them was not sufficient to deliver the services expected of them.

There was a short training of around 4 hours that was provided to them, which was not enough for effectively guiding people. Further, not all *Sakhis* had been formally trained. In the endline survey, there were also *Sakhis* who had not received any formal training.

Thus, *Sakhis* themselves lacked clarity on many issues and acknowledged that they were not technically well equipped to respond to various queries of people.

Thus, to make the *Sakhi* model work in the long-run, there is a need for more investment of time and resource in capacitating these local resources.

Some key recommendations for future intervention related *Sakhi* model are presented below:

- The whole effort needs to be more formalized. This means:
  - Criteria on who could be *Sakhi* (qualification, willingness, family consent, personal mobility etc.)
  - Formal methodology and module for training of *Sakhis*
  - The training has to be on diverse subjects – technical parameters/features of products and services (government schemes, financial products etc.), basic mathematics, record-keeping, communication and soft skills
- Spread awareness among local officials, Sarpanch and other administrative people about *Sakhis*. *Sakhis* can be introduced to these people so that people are aware of them, this will make work easier for *Sakhis*, whenever they approach these officials.
- Build some revenue model so that *Sakhis* feel motivated and the model sustains in the long-run. Revenue model would also ensure the quality of service that *Sakhis* provide and would create accountability.
- Some monitoring and support mechanism for *Sakhis* should be created.