



**Shroffs
Foundation
Trust**



MAHILA KISAN SASHAKTIKARN PARIYOJANA (MKSP) –AN ASSESSMENT REPORT OF SHROFFS FOUNDATION TRUST’S ENGAGEMENT WITH MKSP

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The first meeting at Shroffs Foundation Trust block office with Maganbhai and his team helped us to understand the entire structure of the organization as well as the MKSP strategies. This helped us to transcend from understanding through secondary literature into the experiences of direct engagement of the staff of SFT. The commitment and dedication of the staff was very much apparent as much as the spirit of innovation and iteration. The enthusiastic sharing of all block level staff on the last day was such a revealing understanding of the socio cultural context of the lives of the tribal people and the shifts that are happening in the current realities.

We would like to make a special mention of Ms. Shruti Shroff, managing trustee, SFT who despite her ill health spent a considerable time with us to share her experiences. We would also like to thank Mr. Vikas Vaze Mr. M. A. Makwana, Mr. Shriprakashsingh Rajput, Ms. Prabha Palasgaonkar for their valuable insights.

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Executive Summary

In rural India, a large number of women are engaged in the agricultural sector. However, there remains a wide gender gap in access to resources, participation in decision making and income and wages for agricultural labour work. Within this context, it is the tribal women who are particularly deprived and marginalized even though they play a critical role in agricultural and allied activities. This leaves tribal women and men with differential marginalities and vulnerabilities within the context of existing rural poverty and deprivation.

In an effort towards addressing such marginalities, Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT) is working towards holistic and sustainable development of the poor and marginalized communities of Vadodara in Kutch and Chhotaudepur district of Gujarat. The present study is an assessment of the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) as implemented by Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT) in Gujarat. MKSP, a sub component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), a Government of India initiative was initiated with a vision to improve the status and entrenched patriarchal gender roles of rural women, particularly women involved in various agricultural activities in the year 2010 - 11. MKSP thus aims for inclusion of these women by creating various opportunities for them including livelihoods promotion and empowerment. MKSP in Gujarat is being implemented through a public-private model and within this Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT) is implementing the program in two tribal blocks in Gujarat. The program is located in 61 villages in Chhotaudepur and 30 villages in Jetpur-Pavi. SFT works with a holistic and convergence approach towards this goal based on the MKSP guidelines and framework.

The villages in these two blocks are in very remote locations with scarce infrastructure and transportation facilities leading to both spatial and social marginalization. SFT began intervention in these areas almost two decades back with intensive interaction and mobilization of the people in these communities. Increased interaction with State functionaries and Institutions to remove discriminatory attitudes and behavior towards the tribal people in this region led the foundation for developmental work in the area. Over the years, a holistic and sustainable development program was conceptualized and implemented. MKSP has been a building block on this foundational work done by SFT.

Social change and empowerment is a gradual process. However, the insights drawn from the field and the analysis show a process of transformation at various levels. With respect to the implementation of MKSP, a key outcome is a gradual acknowledgement of the women by other members of the community as productive individuals having their own agency. Capacity building and training forms an important component of the program, which helps in local leadership and entrepreneurship development, and also expansion of women's agency from coping and survival towards a pathway of free and creative agency.

While MKSP in this area has been able to achieve certain level of agricultural rejuvenation and sustainable practices, improvement of livelihoods and empowerment of women; SFT

needs to continue and deepen its work with investment in gendering the strategies and additional innovations.

The assessment has revealed that the strategies of MKSP need to be continued as the grassroots cadres including the CRPs needs further support and nurturing. Empowerment is a process which requires sustained strategic intervention and involvement. Therefore withdrawal of MKSP at this stage will hinder the process and leave the women without any further solutions to their existing practical and strategic livelihood needs.

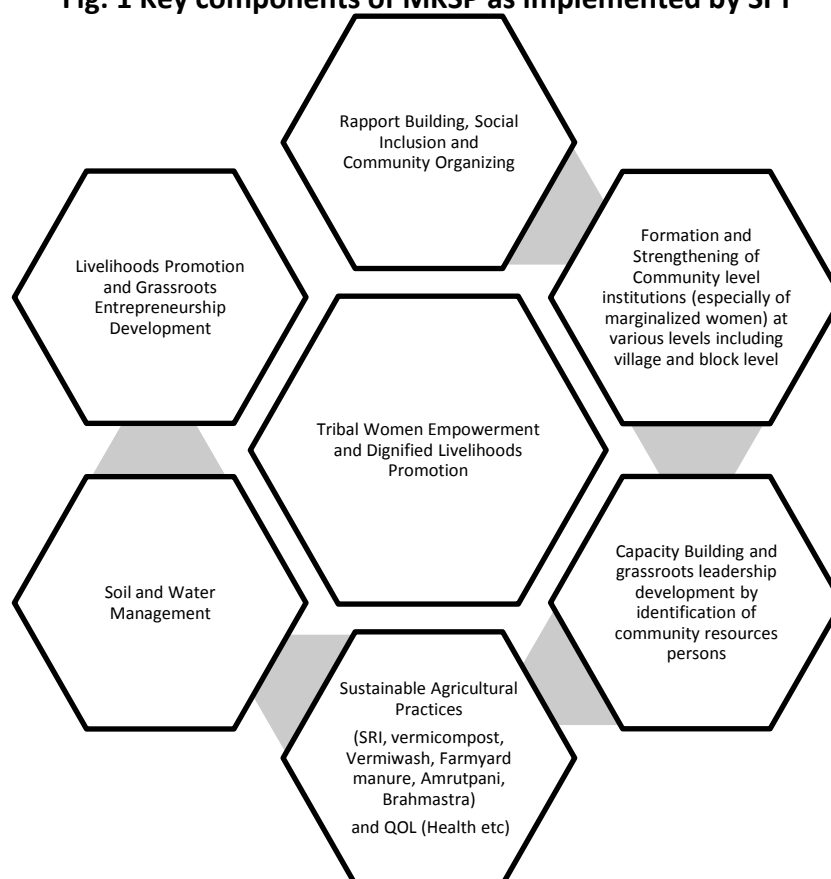
Section-I

Overview and Methodology

1. Introduction

The present study is an assessment of the Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) as implemented by Shroffs Foundation (SFT) in Gujarat. MKSP, a sub component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), a Government of India initiative was initiated with a vision to improve the status and entrenched patriarchal gender roles of rural women, particularly women involved in various agricultural activities in the year 2010 - 11. More than 80 percent of rural women are engaged in agricultural activities...[agriculture](#) support system in India strengthens the exclusion of women from their entitlements as agriculture workers and cultivators (<http://www.mksp.in/>). The program thus aims for inclusion of these women by creating various opportunities for them including livelihoods promotion and empowerment. MKSP has been initiated by Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT) in two tribal blocks of Gujarat specifically in 61 villages in Chhotaudepur and 30 villages in Jetpur-Pavi. SFT works with a holistic and convergence approach towards this goal based on the MKSP guidelines and framework. The key components of the program as implemented by SFT include the following (Fig. 1).

Fig: 1 Key components of MKSP as implemented by SFT



2. Genesis and History of Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT)

Shroffs Foundation Trust believes in the power of the community and the belief within each individual of the community to change circumstances of poverty and difficulty. The vision and mission of the organisation is:

“To assist the village population in improving their productivity, efficiency and creativity through services and goodwill, with support of industries, academic institutions, voluntary and government agencies and with the guidance of competent and committed experts by knowledge, inputs and effective management of available resources viz. land, water, energy, livestock and people. To upgrade the quality of lives of everyone in the villages: the children, the youth, women, men and the aged, mainly through their own involvement, interest and initiative.”

Keeping the above mission in mind SFT has been led by visionary and charismatic leadership of Ms. Shruti Shroff, managing trustee and her team members to ensure a just society and sustainable livelihoods. The approach of the organisation in working in these remote areas of Chhotaudepur and Kutch in Gujarat has been to focus on the women of the community. The initial efforts were tough as the tribal people of these areas were suspicious and also branded as thieves and robbers by the State. Regular visits, meetings and discussions with women, men and other stakeholders in the community built trust and partnerships. The first few interventions were on improving the health and livelihood status of the communities. Collectivising the artisans to improve quality of products that they already were skilled in and also enabling entrepreneurial skills on the one hand and on the other mobilising women into Mahila Swasthya Sangathanas were some of the many strategies adopted to begin work in the area. All these required considerable innovation and interface with the State as well as corporate sector stakeholders, which SFT was able to do because of their own corporate linkages and entity. Shroffs Foundation Trust (SFT) now is a regional non-governmental organization primarily working in Vadodara district and a part of Kutch district in Gujarat, India. It was established in the year 1980 under the Bombay Public Trust act 1950 as a result of philanthropic endeavour of the Shroff family, leading industrialists from Gujarat. Its core philosophy is captured in the slogan ‘Seva, Sadbhav and Vikas’. This is used to focus on working towards a poverty free society, which is fair and just. It aims at holistic and sustainable development of the poor and marginalized communities of Vadodara Kutch and Chhotaudepur district of Gujarat.

With a strong foundation built over almost 20 years, the MKSP was initiated in the specific tribal locations of Chhotaudepur and Jetpur-Pavi, to deepen women’s engagement in agriculture and allied work to enhance their livelihoods and reduce poverty. The clear slogan and aim of SFT being to create a society that is:

- Garibi Mukht (Poverty free)
- Nyay Yukt (Fair Justice)
- Shoshan Mukht (Exploitation free)
- Poshan Yukt (Healthy and Nutritious)
- Pradushan Mukht (Pollution free)

Keeping this approach, SFT has been implementing the State program of Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP).

3. Key Perspective Adopted for the Assessment

The key theoretical perspective underlying the assessment has been an understanding of people centered social innovation in gender and livelihoods. Social Innovation today is emerging as an alternate pathway in development perspective and practice and gives an insight into the strategies and solutions for complex social realities and problems. BEPA (2011)¹ defines social innovation as, ‘innovations that are social in both their ends and means’. According to Murray et al (2010)², social innovation is understood as new ideas and action that address unmet social needs. Implicit within this understanding is the potential of social innovation as a process of social change. As mentioned by Moulaert et al (2014)³; ‘Socially innovative actions, strategies, practices and processes arise whenever problems of poverty, exclusion, segregation and deprivation or opportunities for improving living conditions cannot find satisfactory solutions in the ‘institutionalized field’ of public or private action.

In the context of the present assessment, ‘Social Innovation’ has been understood as:

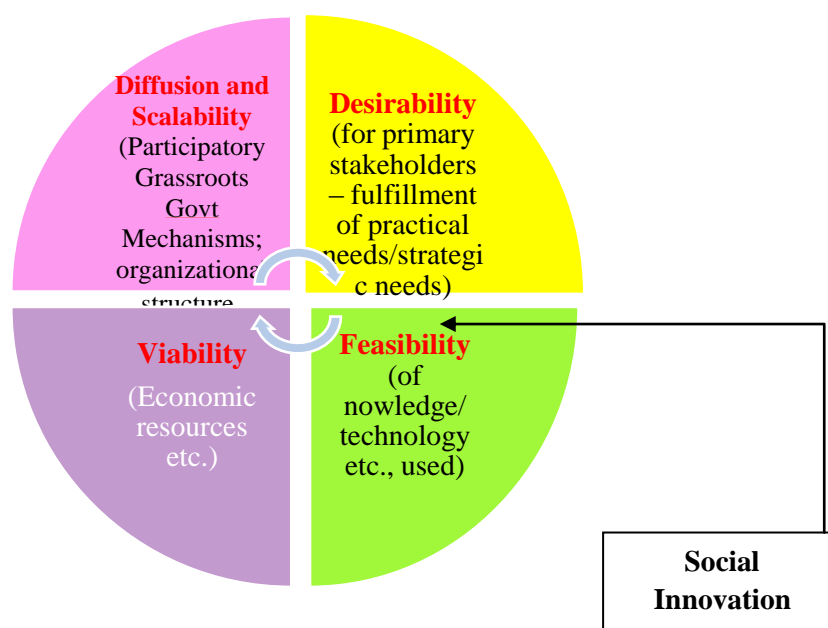
- A new combination of practices/strategies
- Implemented by certain actors or constellations of actors;
- Social change (different dimensions) with the goal of better coping with needs and problems than is possible by use of existing practices.

Based on the above understanding and a gendered perspective, the key dimensions that has been primarily focussed during the assessment includes (as mentioned in Fig 1): Desirability- Desirability has been understood as fulfilment of practical and strategic needs with respect to the objectives of the program and contextual realities of people and spaces in the implementation area. This has been understood from the perspective of the primary stakeholders.

- a. Feasibility – Feasibility has been looked at from an understanding of availability, use and access of local knowledge, appropriate technology etc.
- b. Viability – Viability of the program has been looked at from an understanding of economic sustainability.
- c. Diffusion and Scalability - This has been looked at from an understanding of effective implementation of participatory processes including participatory grassroots governance mechanisms and simultaneously, organizational structure and culture of work with reference to community engagement.

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1. BEPA (Bureau of European Policy Advisors) 2011. Empowering People, driving change: Social Innovation in the European Union. Luxemburg: Office of the European Union.
 2. Murray R., Caulier- Grice, J., & Mulgan, G. (2010). The open Book of Social Innovation, Social innovator Series: Ways to design, develop and grow Social Innovation. The Young Foundation: London.
 3. Moulaert, F., MacCallum, D., Mehmood, A., & Hamdouch, A. (2014). The International handbook on Social Innovation. Collective Action, Social Learning and Trans-disciplinary Research. Cheltenham: Elgar

Fig: 2 Social Innovations in MKSP



The gendered understanding and analysis helped in understanding the differential experiences and needs of women and men, especially with a focus on practical and strategic needs. 'Gender analysis focuses on understanding and documenting the differences in gender roles, activities, needs, and opportunities in a given context. It highlights the different roles and learned behaviour of men and women based on gender attributes. These vary across cultures, class, ethnicity, income, education, and time; thus, gender analysis does not treat women as a homogeneous group or gender attributes as immutable.' (<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSOCIALDEV/Resources/31773941167940794463/ParticipationSourcebookMethodsAnnex.pdf>)

Caroline O.N. Moser and Caren Levy (1986) defines strategic and practical gender needs/interests as, 'Strategic gender interests then are derived from the analysis of women's subordination and deriving out of this the identification and formulation of an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organisation of society in terms of the structure and nature of relationships between men and women to those which exist at present... In contrast, practical gender interests arise from the concrete conditions of women's positioning by virtue of their gender within the division of labour'.

4. Methodology of Assessment

To ensure that all aspects of the MKSP could be covered in a short duration and details of not just the program but also people's experiences could be captured, the following process was adopted:

Table: 1 Assessment Process for MKSP Evaluation

No.	Assessment Component	Key Activities
1.	Program Description	Secondary Literature/Document Review
2.	Understanding Field and Organizational Context	Field Visit, Engaging with Various Stakeholders and Field Interactions, Focus Group Discussions (TISS faculty and students)
3.	Implementation and Innovation	Gathering Understanding, Information and feedback
4.	SWOT Analysis and Way Forward	Analysis, lessons learnt and sharing of information

5. Sources of Data Collection

Secondary data was gathered through review of secondary literature/relevant documents.

Primary data was gathered through informal and formal interactions with different stakeholders at the organizational and community level. Some of the methods used for the same included group interviews, in depth interviews using interview guide, oral histories, case studies and participatory methods including village meetings, workshops etc. also used participatory gendered tools like daily clock to understand women's work profile.

For organizational level primary data, key stakeholders interacted with included trustees, specific program staff, field level staff etc. For gathering of community level primary data, stakeholders interacted with included specific target groups (vies-a-vies the program) and other community members and key informants.

SECTION II

CONTEXT OF ASSESSMENT

A SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Organizational Context

SFT has worked on multiple dimensions of community development for the past 37 years including various developmental programs related to water and soil conservation, agriculture improvement, health, education, literacy, handicraft development, animal husbandry and various income generation activities in about 1058 villages in Vadodara district and Banni area in Kutch district in Gujarat. To achieve its goal of providing self-supporting development benefits in the tribal areas, the trust operates out of four centres, Rangpur and Jetpur-Pavi in Chhotaudepur, Ekalbara in Padra in Vadodara district and Banni in Kutch district of Gujarat with its headquarters at Kalali, Vadodara. The trust believes in community based institution building of the poor and marginalized communities and cooperative development.

A key feature of SFT is its direct hands on work with the local communities. These communities were spatially marginalized from access to resources and socially marginalized because of their societal exclusion. Further, gender discrimination within and outside the communities overlapped with such social and spatial marginalization creating multiple layers. In the initial years of its establishment, the organization and especially its founder worked relentlessly to build rapport with people and to organize them. It was not an easy task, essentially when people had lost trust in the so-called 'mainstream'. Such deficiency of trust was the result of people being at the 'crossroads of development' where their traditional knowledge/culture was not accepted and they were often exploited. Simultaneously, they were denied access and opportunities of a better quality of life. Caught between both ends, it was a life of continuous struggle for the people. At this juncture, the commitment of people at SFT helped them to establish trust and rapport with people which further helped them to identify peoples' needs from their perspective and this led to a series of programs and programs being implemented and diffused today by SFT.

7. Contextual Understanding of the program Implementation Site

The organisation works with the Scheduled Tribes of Gujarat state. This region is also called the 'eastern belt' of tribes in Gujarat has been recently declared as a separate district consisting of six Tribal Blocks of Vadodara District in Gujarat, is located on the border of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. The area is one of the most backward areas comprising predominantly of tribal population living in abject poverty. Main occupation of local population was farming, collecting and selling raw forest produce and migrating in search of labour work in lean periods. The area is inhabited mainly by tribal communities like Rathwas, Bhils, Nayakas, Dhanaka and Harijans, majority of them living below the poverty line. Being remote and most neglected area, people have lived in poverty and deprivation for years. Illiteracy, shortage of water and lack of infrastructure added to their woes. There was chronic water shortage in spite of 850-900 mm rainfall per year. Other problems related to agriculture are soil erosion due to massive deforestation and no knowledge about methods of soil and water conservation; dependency on monsoon for agriculture leading to forced migration in lean seasons. In addition, lack of knowledge about methods and techniques of

farming, selection of crops conducive to soil, absence of market linkages and so on led them to a vicious circle of money lenders, debt and further poverty¹. The lack of means for alternate livelihoods was compounded by the fact that literacy rate was very low, especially among women and girls. Ill-equipped schools, non-attendance of teachers and parents' apathy towards education accounted for a high rate of school dropouts. In terms of health related issues, one could barely find a healthy individual above the age of 50 years in this area. Lack of awareness about health services and illiteracy made them seek treatment from 'bhuvas' and un-trained traditional birth attendants rather than mostly non-functional PHCs. National Health Programs had minimum achievement in this area. The population description of the area is given in the table below:

Table 2: Demographic Details of Chhotaudepur and Jetpur Pavi

Details		Jetpur Pavi
Total Villages	142 villages	210 villages
Total Households	41830 HH	41621 HH
Average Family Size	5.7 persons	6 persons
Total Population	241377	225894
Male	121337	116158
Female	120040	109736
Total ST Population	211506 (87.62 %)	175183 (78%)
Male	106064	89810
Female	105442	85373
Total SC Population	7861 (3.25 %)	5463 (0.2%)
Male	4060	2562
Female	3795	2668
Literacy Rate	36 %	9.58 %
Male	42.55 %	4.41 %
Female	29.38 %	9.35 %
Total Area	76,144.72 hectors	80,563.16 hectares
Total Forest Area	23345.18 hectors	9247.57 hectares
Total Irrigated area	6250.90 hectors	17854.48 hectares
Total Non Irrigated area	29904.16 hectors	34318.74 hectares
Non cultivable area	8106.76 hectors	5100.57 hectares

Source: Census 2011

As can be seen from the table above both Chhotaudepur and Jetpur-Pavi blocks are inhabited by largely by Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes and the literacy rates are very low more specifically among the women.

Due to the agro-ecology conditions of the area agriculture in this part is mostly rain fed. Per capita income of people living in this part is much lower in comparison to the State average. As a result, other indicators of human development like literacy rate, women literacy rate are poor and IMR, MMR are also high. Due to high variability of monsoon rains, low moisture holding capacity of soils, absence of developed aquifers due to the hard rock substrate and

¹Detailed programme Report of MKSP, Shroffs Foundation Trust, Oct 2014

high run-off due to the undulating terrain, agriculture has been fraught with high risks. The average landholdings are 1.04 hectare with very little irrigation facilities, thus a majority of the landed population can be categorized as small or marginal farmers. A typical farmer would have his land distributed in small parcels across the catchments, thus each piece of land would have its different challenges and assurances. In agriculture, Maize, paddy, Cotton and Pigeon pea are the major crops. Productivity of all the crops is in the range of two-third to half the national average. Even in years of “normal monsoons” with overall rainfall around the long-term average, farmers are often faced with the specter of total crop failure due to long dry spells at critical junctures in the crop cycle during the wet season when almost 90% of the crops are cultivated. Most of these families are not able to produce enough food from their own land, due to issues such as lack of knowledge or skills, low quality of land and water resources, lack of access to capital and other inputs, or their inability to plan systematically due to the uncertainties. Thus farm related livelihood was supplemented by agricultural wage-labor or with seasonal migration to nearby districts and livestock rearing, which mainly serves as a buffer.

People migrated during Rabi and summer season to different parts of the state like Surat, Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Bhuj, Ankelshwar and Saurashtra as daily wagers, agricultural labors and construction workers. As soon as Kharif season ends most of people would migrate to different places in search of employment. Children and women are most affected as parents migrate, children are taken along them and their education is affected while in case of women, their health is badly affected due to drudgeries of work and lack of health facilities around.

Based on the baseline survey² before MKSP was initiated it was found that women in these communities were active in agricultural work, but had very little knowledge about new agricultural practices. They faced quite a lot of gender discrimination despite extreme drudgery and continuous engagement in household work. This had negative consequences on their health and nutritional conditions. Manual activities such as transplanting of seedling, weeding, harvesting, transporting the harvest, threshing, drying of hay, etc. are mainly done by women. Everyday schedules of women comprises of waking up at around 5 am to finish cooking, cleaning and feeding of children before going to work by 7.30 am. They are able to go to bed only at around 10 pm. Despite the fact that women are major producers of food in terms of their time spent in agriculture and allied activities and the value they add to the overall activity, they remain less visible as farmers, in comparison to men. In majority of cases, women did not have any role in decision-making in the household, or pertaining to agricultural sector and even in important family matters. At times, men considered it disgraceful to accept the decisions of women. In majority of cases restricted mobility of women due to cultural taboos and their lack of time due to the heavy workload were identified as causes for low exposure of women to specialized farming techniques.

²Baseline Report for MKSP Jan-2014

SECTION III

PROGRAMMATIC ANALYSIS – UNDERSTANDING KEY DIMENSIONS OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

8. General overview of the MKSP program as implemented by SFT

The Mahila Kisan Shashaktikaran Program has been conceptualised as part of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) of the Government of India in 2011. The program is to be implemented by the State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) of identified states in India. The SRLM is expected to identify interested and capable NGOs which have the capacity to train and implement the program in different parts of the state either directly or through other NGOs.

SFT is the PIA in Gujarat and implements the program directly in the two mentioned districts. Under MKSP the PIA is expected to follow the below mentioned strategy:

- a) Use of locally adopted, resource conserving, knowledge-centric, farmer-led and environment-friendly technologies;
- b) Coordinated action by communities and community based institutions such as the women self-help groups, their federations, NGOs and farmer groups, farm schools, farmer field schools and others;
- c) Inculcating community mobilization skills among women in agriculture thereby demonstrating and articulating the benefits of the sustainable agricultural methods to them;
- d) The MKSP will enhance the skill base of the women in Agriculture to enable them to pursue their livelihoods on a sustainable basis. Capacity building of women and skill up gradation through handholding, formal and vocational courses will be emphasized;
- e) The MKSP will strategize in a manner to target the Poorest of the Poor and most vulnerable women such as SC/ST, minorities, landless and the Primitive Tribal Groups;
- f) While identifying the target group, priority should be given to women-headed households (single women), resource poor households, and women groups engaged in Agriculture and allied activities (promotion, production, processing and marketing);
- g) Participatory approaches and bottom up planning will constitute the core values of the MKSP.

Keeping this mandate spelt out in the NRLM, the MKSP program of SFT is being implemented in 61 villages of Tribal Block and 30 villages of Jetpur Pavi Tribal Block. MKSP comprises of 7320 women farmers who are organized through 644 women SHGs from both the blocks.



The major objective of the MKSP is to ensure that:

- Families have sustained agricultural income.
- There is increased food and nutritional security in the community
- There is an increase in the area under cultivation & cropping intensity
- Improvement of skills and performance by women in agriculture
- Increasing access to land, inputs, credit, technology and information;
- Increasing market access and information for better returns
- Improving soil health and fertility for sustained agricultural livelihoods
- Greater visibility of women in agriculture as an interest group
- And drudgery reduction of women and their work through improved tools / technologies

The program has been built upon the extensive work that SFT had done since its inception and work in the area and hence the strategies for MKSP focused on a holistic community based approach with women as the key stakeholders in the entire process. Some of the main strategies adopted for MKSP are:

a) Institution Building

Formation and development of village level and cluster level Women Farmers federations; federate the cluster level federations with block level apex body/ federation. According to the geographic situation 91 village level organizations and 12 cluster level federations were formed and further linked with the existing apex body named Shardadevi Gramudyog Society. At the same time SFT developed and established systems and procedures related to administration, accounts, human resource, development of business plans and its implementation, statutory compliance and overall institution building.

b) Cadre development

In form of Community Resource Persons (CRP) and building their capacities – Progressive women farmers were identified by intensive community exercises. These Community Resource Persons were capacitated through intensive trainings along with exposure visits with a vision to strengthen their agriculture practices and enhance their capabilities as a community trainer for enhancement of sustainable agriculture practices. 120 CRPs were trained and equipped with skills to scale up the impact of the program.

c) Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture practices

72 Farm Schools were established and equipped with training and education material, soil sample collection facilities for soil-testing, demonstrations were held of drudgery reduction tools, Vermi-Compost, FYM and bio pesticides. The women farmers got knowledge and exposure at village level.

- Training and Education on sustainable agriculture practices is a focused area of intervention. Land and Water Management, Integrated Nutrient Management, Integrated Pest Management, General Problem Management related to agriculture continues to be the key aspects of these interventions.
- SMS based extension services for women farmers to access information on weather, cropping practices and market rates etc.
- Soil testing, analysis and recommendations to women farmers to improve their agricultural practices.
- A Seed Security program to promote local seed preservation practices and their propagation in agriculture
- Vermi-compost and Farm Yard Manure – Promotion of balance between organic and inorganic agricultural inputs
- Farmers Diary - (Khedut Pothi) Technical guidance to the farmers.
- Agriculture based livelihood interventions such as – trial and demonstration of good agriculture practices, replacement of varieties, use of bio-fertilizer, crop spacing, kitchen vegetable garden etc.

d) Demonstration on Bio Pesticides and other technical inputs

Demonstrations were done to prepare and use bio pesticide and growth material by using local material like animal dung to popularize it and reduce use of chemical materials, also to clean the village of 'Ukardas'. Various demonstrations continue to be conducted to promote Integrated Crop Management (ICM), inter cropping, and bio pesticides, ultimately to promote the low cost and sustainable agriculture practices.

e) Soil Health Management

Soil testing has been conducted for about 70% of targeted women farmers for scientific guidance to improve soil health. Vermi-compost and Farm Yard Manure units provided to all targeted women farmers as demonstration units.

f) Appropriate People Centric Technology for Drudgery Reduction

A set of small machines like mini maize Sheller, mini rice mill, mini paddy thresher and small hand tools were made available for demonstration and livelihood at cluster level to create awareness among the women farmers.

g) Operational Fund of Producer Federations

The support covers operation cost for three years and other costs related to business development planning etc.

h) Social Audit

A joint team of community people, program authorities and experts conduct social audit to measure the success and impact of the program.

i) Public information disclosure

Public display of program information is made through wall writings, transparency boards, leaflets etc. Sharing of information related to program at government authorities and Gram Sabha is also done on a regular basis. Since the work of SFT in the two blocks is very old, sustained and regular the foundation for implementing MKSP the foundation had already been laid.

j) Water conservation techniques for Agriculture

As the area is heavily dependent on rainwater for farming, many farmers face water scarcity in the other seasons. SFT along with other organisations like Rotary Club, Gujarat Green Revolution Co. Ltd and Gujarat CSR Authority has carried out various activities like building of check dams, gully plugging, nala plug, land levelling, deepening of ponds, lift irrigation and developing wells to sustain and conserve water for farming.

9. Key Innovation Solution

The core idea of the program is empowerment and capacity building of the women farmers in the Jetpur-Pavi and tribal blocks of Gujarat focussing on overall development, sustainability and empowerment of the tribal communities in these blocks.

9.1 Key Concerns Addressed by the program in Agricultural Practices and Output

- Use of large amounts of chemical inputs and hybrid seeds
- Soil Degradation

- Lack of knowledge on climate resistant farming
- High cost of credit
- Less bargaining power of women farmers in the market
- Unsustainable agricultural practices

SFT introduced sustainable agriculture practices, which are holistic and ensure regular livelihoods and incomes for the communities through the year. Some of the key practices are:

a) Vermi-Compost:

Vermicomposting is basically a managed process of worms digesting organic matter to transform the material into a beneficial soil amendment. Vermi-compost are defined as organic matter of plant and/or animal origin consisting mainly of finely-divided earthworm castings, produced non-thermophilically with bio-oxidation and stabilization of the organic material, due to interactions between aerobic microorganism and earthworms, as the materials pass through the earthworm gut. There are several benefits of Vermi-Compost since it's produced by using earthworms and it is hundred percent organic. There are no harmful chemical needed to make Vermi-Compost.³ Vermi-Compost improves soil aeration and enriches soil with micro-organism. It also attracts earthworms already present in the soil. Earthworms restore and improve soil fertility and increase crop productivity by the use of the excretory products Vermi-Compost. It also enhances germination, plant growth and crop yield. Vermi-Compost has the biggest advantage of great social economic significance is that the food produced is complete organic, safe and chemical free. It enhances size, color, smell, taste, flavor and keeping quality of the flowers, fruit, and vegetable and food grains. Vermi-Compost gives 30% to 40% additional yields of crops over chemical fertilizers. Vermi-Compost has greater water holding capacity due to humus contents and reduces the requirement of water for irrigation by thirty to forty percent.

b) Farm Yard Manure (FYM):

FYM refers to the decomposed mixture of dung and urine of the farm animals along with the litter and left over material from roughages or fodder fed to the cattle.

c) System Rice Intensification:

The concept of System of Rice Intensification (SRI) focuses on managing the soil, water, plants and nutrients in a balanced relationship, enabling maximum growth of rice plants. SRI increases rice production and raises productivity of land labor, water and capital through different practices of management (Dhakal, 2005).

³Source: TISS Student report of SFT (Batch2015 – 17)

d) Bio Fertilizers (Amrutpani) and Pesticides (Brahmastra):

Bio fertilizers are the products containing carrier based (solid or liquid) living micro-organisms which are agriculturally useful in terms of nitrogen fixation, phosphorus solubilization or nutrient mobilization, and to increase the productivity of the soil and/or crop (National Center of Organic Farming, 1985). Bio fertilizers are low cost renewable sources of plant nutrients, which supplement the need of plant nutrition and reduce the use of chemical fertilizers. These can be used from seed treatment to soil application. Bio fertilizers generate plants nutrients like nitrogen and phosphors through their activity in the soil in a gradual manner.

e) Mixed Cropping:

Mixed cropping is also known as intercropping and crop rotation. It is the growing of two or more crops at the same time on the same field. Planting more than one crop will allow the crops to grow and work together on the same piece of land. Multiple cropping helps to improve soil fertility and it also increases crop yield. In this type of farming the products and the wastes that are from one crop plant helps in the growth of the other crop. As general practice small duration crop (Pulses) and long duration crops (Cotton) are grown together, the pulses crop fixes nitrogen in the root, which benefits the other crop, Also the harvesting of short duration crop completes before long crop reaches at flowering stage; it avoids competition and supplements each other. Mixed cropping is the cultivation of two or more crops simultaneously on the same field. Utilizes the farm area more efficiently. Mixed cropping results in potential increase for total production and farm profitability than when the same crops are grown separately

f) Multiple Vegetable Cropping:

Vegetable cropping is important for small farmers because it creates a regular source of income and to best avoid the risk of crop failure multiple cropping is promoted. Vegetable cropping enhances the nutrients in the farmers' diet. Multiple cropping means two or more crops are grown in succession on the same land every year.

The program has been successful in addressing most of the problems related to farming by educating the women farmers about sustainable agriculture and also encouraging them to practise the same. With these practices, the rate of chemical inputs had decreased considerably, which also led to the decrease in the expenditure on farming, the fertility of the soil has increased and the production has also considerably increased.

9.2 Key concerns in the status of women in the region before the initiation of the program—

- Women were largely engaged in labour work in agriculture/animal husbandry.
- Limited knowledge about agriculture.

- No or very less decision making power in both public and private spheres.
- Nutrition issues in women and children.
- Women's contribution in the family was not recognized.
- No involvement in Gram Sabhas.
- Lack of skills and capacities of women

Changes in the Lives of Women

While women continue to practice farming and animal husbandry the shift is in the reduction of drudgery of the work in their lives. With new improved and natural farming practices the yield of the crops have increased and thereby their incomes. Some of them have used the additional income to buy cattle and goats and supplement the incomes from farming and selling the produce. With introduction of nutritive crops the nutritional levels of the families have also improved especially of the children.

Their recognition as productive members of the households has worked toward improving their self-esteem and decision-making capabilities. This has in turn enabled them to run their own Farm schools with SFT support and community level visibility as leaders in the farming sector.

Voices of the MKSP Women Farmers

- ***“Pehle 20 mann makka hota tha, ab 40 mann hota hai”*** exclaims Gauriben (CRP of Dholivav). The use of chemical fertilizers earlier had led to the degradation of soil, but after the use of bio-fertilisers and natural pesticides the quality of soil has also improved. The number of times that was irrigation required for a crop has also reduced. Earlier 8-9 times the field had to be irrigated, which has now reduced to 5-6 times per field. The moisture holding capacity of the Vermicompost used in the field has been a major reason in reduction in the number of times irrigation required.
- Rathwa Kokilaben says, ***“Gaon me paani kam hone se kheti me pareshaani hoti thi. Par ab vermicompost daalne se paani ki zarurat kam ho gyi hai”***. The increase in production being visible, had led to the other villagers who are not part of MKSP to follow these techniques. It has also increased the women's role in decision making especially with regard to farming. Earlier, women used to work just as workers under the instruction of their husbands, but now they have a say in techniques used in farming.

With the initiatives taken through the MKSP programme, women's knowledge regarding sustainable agricultural practices is being appreciated and recognized by their families and the community as a whole. They have more decision making power related to

9.3 Grassroots Innovation and Institutionalization of Community Based Institutions

The program offers the establishment of women led institutions like farm schools where women are provided knowledge and technologies for sustainable agriculture practices so

that there is enhancement of income, more visibility among the women farmers. These Farm schools work with the existing Self Help Groups formed by SFT in its early work to ensure outreach and spread of knowledge and practice of agricultural practices.

9.4 New Knowledge and Training for women farmers

While working with the women farmers, SFT realised that while training programs both off-site and on-site helped them to adopt new practices and also generate confidence, there was still a need to prepare appropriate written material which they could use as ready reference as well as training for other women in the community. SFT undertook an intensive exercise to therefore develop such relevant material. Most of these have been disseminated in the form of booklets, posters and picture books and also used in the Farm Schools by the CRPs. A quick glance at all the materials shows that they are related to the new agricultural practices like crop cycle, natural farming methods and related training material which promote sustainable agriculture.

9.5 Role of Appropriate and Women Centric Technology

Technology has played a major role in the program with the use of sustainable farming techniques such as Soil Testing, SRI, Inter-cropping, Soil and plant nutrient management, Vermiculture etc. The program has been successful in increasing the productivity of crops, fertility of the soil and income generation among the farmers. Use of mini tools like rice mills and maize Shellers for drudgery reduction has also reduced burden of work on the women.



Picture 1. Mini Maize Sheller



2. Woman Operating Rice Mill

9.6 Key Innovative Approaches of SFT that led to development of MKSP as a context specific innovation solution

SFT's approach in the implementation of MKSP has been innovative specifically with its convergence of programs from different government and business stakeholders and more significantly ensuring the participation of the beneficiaries of the program that is women farmers at the grassroots levels. Some of major findings in the assessment are as follows.

SFT believes in peoples' participation and local knowledge systems of the people. The idea of linking farm produce to markets beyond the villages for commercial purposes was based on the hard work and output of the women's farmers and their demands for the same. The success in farming and increase in productivity, therefore led to the development of the Shardadevi Gramudyog Utpadak Society (SGS)- a cooperative, which now also undertakes food processing and selling of the same to big firms. The production process is managed by the CRPs.

Some Case Illustrations

Community Resource Persons Voices:

Kapilaben is a CRP in village Devaliya. She has studied till 9th standard. She is also the ASHA worker. Her SHG has 9 group members. Her husband had received tractor in subsidy from the SFT. The second CRP Leelaben is a graduate and she has 21 group members. Both Kapilaben and Leelaben have been CRPs since three years. MKSP has helped them to learn vermicoposting as well as prepare fertilizer Amrutpani and pesticide Bhramastra. They have installed biogas in their houses, which is used for cooking purpose. Both felt that while MKSP has enhanced their livelihoods the village should have better road connectivity, there should be more water facilities, schools should function in a better way, there should be an ambulance for emergencies and alcoholism should be (banned) in the village because it had caused problems in the community.

SHG Members' Voices

Tinaben was one of the members of the SHG. She couldn't continue the practice of Vermicompost because of water scarcity and the wild pigs used to destroy the vermibed every time but she did make FYM which was organic and also effective. She bought Vermiwash, Vermicompost etc from the CRPs. She said that there was a huge difference in the production of crops by using organic fertilizers and it was healthy too. She also said that they were taught to take samples of soil for soil testing in the laboratory, which was in SFT office. She grows various vegetables, rice and maze in the farm

Rekhaben is the 'mantri' of the SHG named 'Khor' there were 13 members in her group. She had studied till 12th standard. The group was special because it had got recognition from the government that it was one of the better working groups because they worked in a continuous process, which is why the group was told to take the responsibility of the sanitation scheme by MGNREGA which was done by the Gram Panchayat in other villages. The members had access to bank where they went in a group. The relationship among the group members was good so they helped each other when in need. She makes Vermicompost and gives vermi- compost to her group members in free of cost while she received some other products from them

The nature of the innovation is that of 'Grassroots Innovation and Institution Building' facilitated by external actors (SFT). The continuous capacity building, meetings and

participation of the women stakeholders with the CRPs and organisation mentors have worked towards this institution building (see Fig 3).

Fig 3 Shardadevi Gramudyog Utpadak Sahakari Mandali



SFT's participatory approaches as well as efforts to address connected problems emerging from the field have supported the implementation of MKSP. The entire region of Chhotaudepur and Jetpur-Pavi is water scarce and hence the agricultural practices introduced by SFT were based on production of such crops like maize, which consume less water. Many women farmers had stopped the practice of Vermicomposting due to lack of water and space. The MGNREGA was leveraged to create water bodies and tanks to ensure regular water supply. With increase in incomes several women bought milch cattle which further adds to their monthly income and nutritional needs.

In village Oliamba using different concept of MKSP program the production of crops has been doubled. There is greater unity among the women of the village and hence which also led to the awareness of their rights. The women now have a say in the way of farming, and the decisions are made by both male and female. Women's participation in Panchayat has been increasing and they are able to keep their demands in front of the Gram Sabha. The women have been actively participating in building toilets for their houses. Most of the women hold bank accounts and now are able to do signatures.

As the CRP Kokilaben states,

"Pehle jo ugaye, vo khaya. Abhi zayada upjav hone se, use bechkar ham gaai bhains lete hai aur uska duudh dairy m bechte hai"

As the production of crops have increased, now the villagers sell off their surplus and that money is invested for other purpose. In many cases the villagers buy cattle and sell of the milk in the nearby village dairy. Hence there has been an increase in income generation. The

program had also led to environmental benefits. With the use of Vermi-Compost, the soil has been rejuvenated and hence there has been an increase in the fertility of soil. Also, in some villages milk cooperatives have been formed with the women farmers selling the produce to Anand Dairy Cooperative.

The SHGs of the Chhotaudepur and Jetpur-Pavi have been linked with SGS to avail the benefits of micro credit and various livelihood activities. The SGS products are well established and named as **VIVEKA**

10. Implementation Strategies

I. Formation of women's farmers groups and cooperatives

Formation of grassroots institutions and capability development of women formed a key organizing principle and strategy. The main activities undertaken in these groups include awareness generation about the program, role of SHGs and program team, concept building of co-operative societies and participatory identification of CRPs and women farmers etc.

II. Planning and implementation of agriculture based livelihood plan

Participatory and action oriented value chain based identification of gaps in agricultural methods and making plans for interventions. With selection of CRPs and training those with sustainable methods of agriculture who in turn facilitate the learning of women farmers in farm schools.

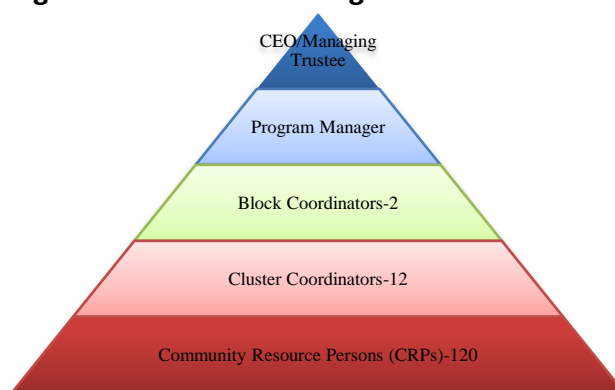
III. Program Implementation Plan and Flow

Creating an internal program management structure for implementations follows. Program Manager: A program managers responsible for the overall work in both the blocks. He is experienced in rural development, agriculture and mobilising community based organizations.

Cluster Coordinators: For each block, two professional staff has been appointed as "Cluster Coordinators with a skill mix of community organization and agronomist. Thus a total of four professional staffs have been appointed. A program Executive based in the block is in-charge of the team leaders and supervises and monitors their work.

Project Supervisors: For each block two professional staff has been appointed with the skill mix of agronomist and development studies/sociology. A team of 120 CRP have been selected and trained for village level activities.

Fig 4: The MKSP at SFT Organisation Structure⁴



MKSP structure and personnel worked in tandem and coordination with the other SFT programmatic interventions and staff and it was executed (3rd year implementation currently hold due to scarcity of funds) three phases over a period of three years. The documentation, human support structure, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are well outlined which is an enabling factor in the implementation of the program. A blueprint of the program implementation manual was prepared by the organization with details of activities, targets and important milestones, resource planning, documentation and MIS systems. This worked as a guideline for the MKSP team (Please find annexed some of the details in Annex 2).

The holistic approach towards sustainable agricultural practices and strategies for institution building has led to not only increase in agricultural production but also it has started a process of greater visibility and empowerment amongst women. Also a process of dignified livelihoods promotion for the poor and marginalized community in the region.

11. Actors, Partnerships, Alliances, and Networks related to the Program

SFT has been working in various villages of Chhotaudepur District and surrounding villages for development of the eastern tribal belt of Gujarat, which includes programs like watershed management and agricultural programs. The company's Managing Trustee (Ms. Shruti Shroff) herself worked at grassroots level by doing field visit along with the present Program Manager (Mr. Mahendra), when SFT started 25 years ago in Rangpur area of Chhotaudepur district. As the level of intervention of SFT increased in the region, their relevance also increased. The government also became aware of SFT and their work in the region. Hence taking into consideration the rapport of SFT with the villagers, the government started implementing various programs in partnership with SFT. There has been a remarkable shift in the attitudes towards the tribal people where once they were viewed with suspicion and lived isolated lives and now there is an understanding and appreciation of their skills and knowledge of the agricultural and cultural practices, which promote sustainability and biodiversity of the region.

⁷PPT shared by SFT

Mr. Magan Bhai, who joined the Chhotaudepur program of SFT in recent years and Mr. Mahendra, who had been working with the villagers for 25 years; along with other staff members were the key persons to initiate the MKSP program. While initially implementing the MKSP program, SFT developed the earlier Community resource persons (who were men) as staff to work as field mentors. These field mentors played an important role in identifying the CRPs for MKSP program, training them and organizing the village members. This was the first few steps that helped to kick start the program.

To encourage these CRPs for social innovation, SFT provided them with performance based incentive about INR 1500. They were also enrolled to various state health benefits like MAA Amrutam card. The CRPs were also provided with loans through microfinance from SFTs Sharda Gramodyog Sahakari Mandali. The continuous training and meetings with the CRPs and flow of information and participation created a sense of ownership among the CRPs. A strong cadre of community based workers and resource persons are the building blocks for the MKSP. The main stakeholders of the MKSP are:

Shroffs Foundation Trust: SFT's dedication to execute community helped program played a vital role in uplifting the conditions of women farmers. Despite of paucity of funds, it stood firm towards fulfilling its responsibilities towards the people.

Tribal Women Farmers of Chhota Udepur and Jetpur-Pavi: The main stakeholders are the women farmers who were affected directly through the MKSP program. They have successfully learnt to increase their crop quality and productivity through several sustainable methods of modern farming. With economic gains and relief from everyday drudgery the women are being recognised as significant members of the families and communities and this in turn is enabling them to proceed towards further empowerment.

SFT's commitment (including that of its founder members) and its ground level engagement and rapport with people is a strong enabling factor. All information is shared with the Gram Panchayats and periodic reports are submitted to the District, State and Centre authorities.

11.1 Choice and role of partners

Two of the major concerns faced while implementing this program were of water scarcity and requirement, of blood since the people are prone to sickle cell anaemia in villages. Hence the additional partners were identified to address these specific problems and ensured support to MKSP and its successful implementation. SFT collaborated with different stake-holders to resolve the issues and these are:

a) Tribal Development Department, Government of Gujarat: The department has supported the MKSP program to a great extent. The Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojna aims at three aspects of Tribal development, which are creation of more employment through productive enhancement in agriculture sector, increase in animal husbandry and dairy based activities and quality skill training for tribal youth. MKSP program has been converged by SFT with all three components. In Chhotaudepur a skill training program for tribal youth has also been started for employment in BPOs.

b) Anand Agriculture University: This University situated in the borders of Vadodara and Ahmedabad imparts knowledge and exposure towards agriculture, veterinary science and animal husbandry and dairy science. The agricultural experts from this University continue to give training and inputs to women farmers as part of the MKSP.

c) Transchem industry (TAL): TAL is a business venture specifically on agricultural products like insecticides and fertilizers. It has been providing the women farmers with agricultural machinery, seeds & knowledge at subsidized rates.

d) Rotary Club, Aasia: This NGO in collaboration with the SFT has done irrigation programs like lift irrigation and constructed group wells in Katarwant village. MKSP Villages has also provided the financial resources to wells, LI, pep line and levelled land for facilitating irrigational activities.

SFT thus looks at multi stakeholder partnerships between Government, Community, other business partners, educational Institutions etc. Such an inter-sectoral partnership is one of the enabling factors for successful implementation of the program by SFT.

12. Gaining Momentum in the Innovation strategy: Barriers and Key Drivers

The initial barriers that SFT faced were the social and spatial marginalization of people where lack of positive development by itself created mistrust amongst the tribal people of outsiders. They had also faced considerable violence from the mainstream society specifically the police as well as people who branded them as thieves and robbers. SFT's committed approach and pro-tribal principle ensure that the distrust was overcome and initial work was started with addressing local problems of health and livelihoods.

SFT had conducted a baseline study before implementation of the MKSP and the problems identified as barriers were the prevalence of high cost input in farming and low output of farm produce, water scarcity and the need for other sources of income. The factors that facilitated the innovation strategy was development of new sustainable farming techniques, which was introduced to the women farmers through the CRPs and establishment of local village level Farm Schools. The CRPs were trained by SFT and mentored by field mentors in their villages. The presence of the Farm Schools led by local women farmers as CRPs has been an excellent strategy for MKSP. The easy accessibility to information, grassroots training and consistent availability of local resource persons have enabled the spread of knowledge, adoption of the sustainable agricultural practices as well as enhanced incomes of the women farmers. The result has been a massive adoption of these techniques by women farmers and it has given positive results.

The key drivers include:

- i. The organisation and women together were the drivers including the support provided by the Government through various schemes.
- ii. The establishment of the farm schools, capacity development of women, leadership development and their becoming 'CRPs', greater visibility and recognition of women

farmers are some of the key markers of innovative strategies and the progress and impact of the work towards implementation of MKSP by SFT.

- iii. Training and development of a cadre of grassroots animal veterinary helpers called 'pashu sakhis' who are also women from the community. Training was conducted by NDDDB (National Dairy Development Board) Department.
- iv. Some of the other success factors include high yield and increase in agricultural production and adoption of sustainable agricultural practices by majority of the members in the community.
- v. Reduction of forced migration from the region is other important success factors.
- vi. Presence of charismatic leadership
- vii. Ms. Shruti Shroff is a charismatic leader of SFT and her commitment is also an important factor, which helped to keep the community together and motivated within the context of their daily struggles. The leadership was also instrumental in motivating people in the organization and keeping their morale high for people centric work

13. Role of SFT-Government Departments Convergence of Programs

SFT has utilised several government programs at its program site for holistic support and community development through MKSP. Table 3 gives the detailed map of these programs.

Table 3: Convergence Map of Programs of Government Departments & MKSP

Sr. No.	Activity	Total achievements		Department Program/Scheme
		No. of Families	(Rs. In Lakhs)	
1	Soil and water conservation	2250	122.82	MGNREGA
2	Widow pension	14		Samaj Suraksha
3	Old age pension	25		Samaj Suraksha
4	Manav Garima – Tool kits	20		Jilla Udyog Kendra
5	Aadhar Cards	375		
6	Jan Dhan Yojna- Bank account opening	75		Lead Banks
7	Vegetable seed kits	10	0.2	ATMA
8	Nursery of drum stick	40000	9.78	Donors
9	Mini Rice Mill	14	9.78	Corporate CSR
10	Potato Farming	34	11.42	TDD- VKVY
11	Compost Fertilizer	272	2.39	Department of Horticulture
12	Milch Animals	248	112.82	Tribal development dept.
13	Chaff cutter	47	0.71	Dept of Animal Husbandry
14	Travis	17	0.94	
15	Cattle shed	56	12.32	
16	Household Biogas	149	29.8	Gujarat Agro
17	Model village - Katarvant-	74	53.97	Rotary Club of Baroda Metro
18	Bilwant- Safe drinking water program	280	7.13	
19	Certified Seeds	557	12	Gujarat Seed Corporation
20	Livelihood Activities – Earnings	38	5.89	SGS
	TOTAL		269.15	

Besides these programs SFT has also leveraged the ICDS, Asha and ANMs at village levels to support the health needs of the women, men and children which have impacted the overall well being of the people. As and when required subsidies for cattle, tractor and other equipment has resulted in more income, and with better nutrition through MKSP there has been a reduction in poverty. As the MKSP program was being implemented, water scarcity was very evident; hence one innovation was to build Group Wells per 5-6 houses simultaneously. Similarly complementary innovations like watershed development along with implementation of MKSP in the Chhotaudepur and Jetpur-Pavi blocks played an important role in the innovation solution especially livelihood promotion activities in the area.

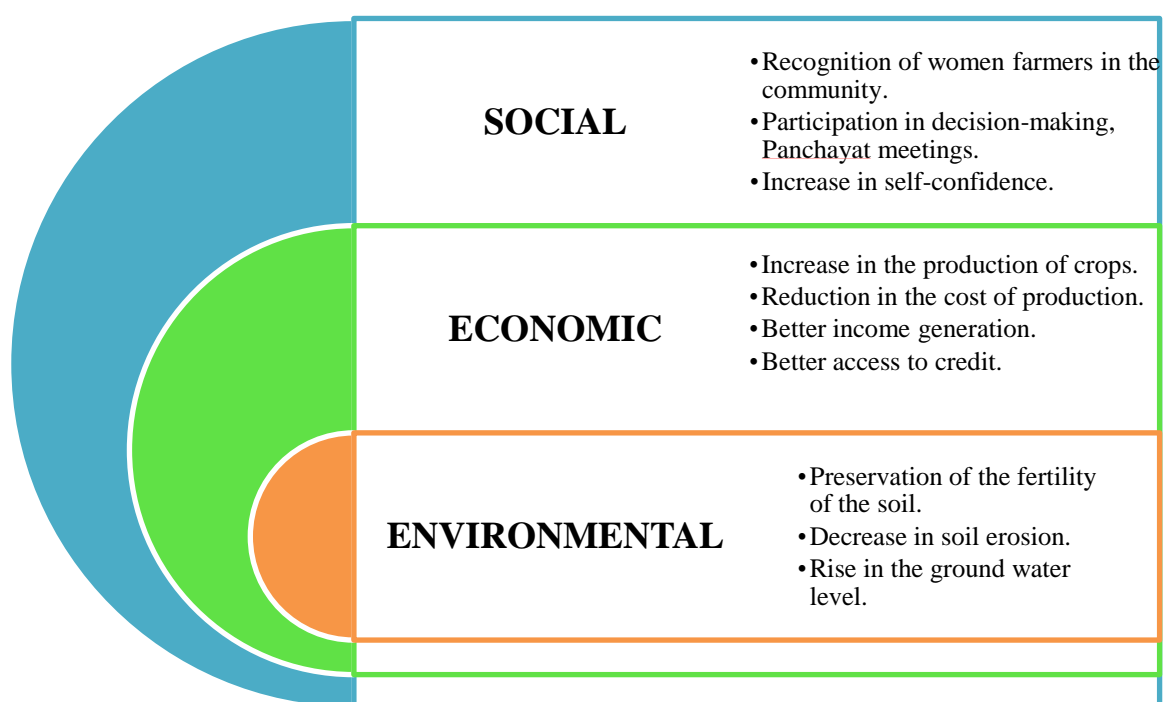
These responsive need based measures along with leveraging of various government programs provided a holistic platform for the MKSP to thrive and flourish and women became active members of both the households and communities.

14. Impact of the Innovation program

The ambition of the key actors is to bring forward the women farmers of the villages and build their entrepreneurship skills and move towards a process of empowerment, so that they can be self-sufficient and their status in the society becomes recognizable.

Fig.5 gives the major dimensions in which women's lives get impacted through MKSP and the resulting social value creation.

Fig.5 Social, Economic and Environmental Impact of MKSP



Relevance of Empowerment and Capacity building for the primary actors and its role in the Innovation program

Empowerment can be considered as the process to acquire “power” individually and collectively. (Among individuals or a community, it designates first and foremost the ability to act independently, but also the means needed and the process of being able to act and make one’s own decisions regarding life and society). If we use this as the framework for empowerment and analyses the MKSP implemented by SFT we find that the program has been able to begin the process of empowerment with the women farmers. At the same time the focus and the strategies have been on economic empowerment and not so much on social and gender empowerment. MKSP has laid the foundation for the empowerment process and there is an opportunity to take this forward with the CRPs as well as the SHG women. Empowerment training and capacity building is the most important factors that improve women’s status.

So far MKSP’s training and capacity building has been towards technical skills and livelihoods enhancement. SFT needs to build upon this with collective mobilisation of women, gender training, knowledge building, increasing women farmers’ engagement with local governance and developing skills of marketing and entrepreneurship. However, it is important to also work with them to not only sensitize them for recognizing the role of women in their families and their lives, but also to take equal share in the household chores and agricultural activities. This will lead to reduction of double and triple burden for women and would pave the way for true gender transformation. There is a need to continue to build upon the work that SFT is doing through the MKSP and strengthen it with ancillary activities to improve men’s participation in livelihoods, household and daily living activities.

SECTION IV:

IMPACT OF MKSP PROGRAM - MICRO LEVEL ASSESSMENT

15. Impact of MKSP in Some Villages: Women Farmers Experiences

15.1 Rathwa Bhikliben, CRP of Rangpur-

Bhikliben joined SFT-MKSP since the inception of the program and since then she has also been trained in handicrafts under the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana from which she earns around 3000 to 4000 rupees monthly. She is also known in the village for making the best “Dhebra” (Gujarati snack) and had once earned 20,000 rupees in 8 days by selling them at a national exhibition.

With training and inputs she is the Community Resource Person of Rangpur and runs a Farm School under MKSP. At her farm school she teaches her group members about how different crops should be grown and how sustainable agriculture must be practised. Her farm school also has pictorial descriptions of the different diseases in crops and other such valuable information because it is helpful for teaching those group members who are illiterates. *One can observe a clear gender relations change in Rangpur for Bhikliben as now male farmers come for the farm school meetings as well. Her husband is very appreciative of her work and also has started helping her in the household work so that she can perform her work as CRP effectively.*

Bhikliben is very enterprising and she undertakes several of the activities besides agriculture and running the Farm School. She makes Vermi wash at her house and along with using it in her crops she sells it at 30 rupees/litre.

According to her with the use of vermi wash the crops and vegetables tastes better. She has maintained a vermi-bed outside her house, which is very productive as she explained that if she uses 1 kg of cow's dung then after 1 cycle she can take out 2 kg from the bed. She buys the earthworms from the other group members and according to her the production of crops doubles with the use of Vermicompost, the water intake of the crops also becomes less and the use of pesticides has also decreased. All these practices have enabled her to increase the agricultural productivity by 20-30%.

MKSP Impact on Rangpur

Rangpur is a part of Chhotaudepur block and is mostly inhabited by the Rathwas. It is the first village where the SFT had started its work in 1995 with the watershed management and other development programs.

The people of Rangpur lived in extreme isolation and difficult conditions before SFT started its work. It required sustained efforts by SFT members to win the trust of the villagers and begin their interventions. As stated by Ms. Prabha (SFT worker) ***“Pehele toh koi vhi bahar wala is gaon mei nahi ataa tha kyun ki yaha ke log bahar walo ko loot lete the par abhi toh aisa kuch nahi hai”*** which means that earlier no outsider used to come to this village as the villagers used to loot them. Today the scenario is very different with adequate agricultural income, livestock and relative prosperity in most households. Additionally with the initiation of micro-finance, a credit society and the increased knowledge of the farmers

about banks they have stopped taking loans from the money lenders. Children have also become regular in school and parents recognise the need and significance of formal education.

15.2 Kanta Ben, CRP of Gabaria-

Kanta Ben has received 6 months training from the Shroffs Foundation Trust and has been successfully running her farm school. The MKSP program has brought an economic impact in her life as her production from farming has doubled over the years with the proper implementation of sustainable farming techniques like SRI, Vermiculture etc. Along with it the cost incurred earlier for farming has reduced to a great extent and the quality of the soil has also been maintained. The program has not only brought an economic and environmental impact but also social impact in Kantaben's life as her husband and her in-laws have supported her and she is able to play an important role in decisions related to farming with her husband. Kantaben's work as the Community Resource Person has been effective in forming SHGs (Self Help Groups). She has maintained a farm school and conducts regular meetings, receives training and in turn trains her group members. She has been imparting training her group members on different sustainable ways of farming. She participates in the gram Sabha meetings and encourages the members to join it to play an important role in the development of the village as a whole.

Impact of MKSP in Gabaria

According to Mr. Jagan (villager and also a teacher) in the past the people of the village did not have proper clothes to wear and as the village lies near the Madhya Pradesh border the people from MP used to sneak in the village and steal food and other items from the villagers. Gradually with the efforts of SFT and initiation of other development programs the village has started to come out of poverty. The major institutions present in the village are primary school, ICDS centre, Gram Sabha meeting hall, and Panchayat office. There is no health centre in the village so the villagers visit the hospital at Chhotaudepur. With MKSP the women members of the SHGs as well as women farmers who have been attending the Farm School display a greater degree of autonomy and self-esteem. They are able to take decisions regarding the farming practices and also have greater say in household issues. This was quite apparent when compared who were not a part of MKSP program or SHG.

Picture 3. CRP: Kapilaben, Devaliya



15.3 Kapila Ben & Leelaben, CRPs of Devaliya-

Kapilaben has studied till 9th standard and she is the ASHA worker of Devaliya since 2008. Kapilaben has 9 group members in her SHG. Leelaben has completed her graduation and has 21 group members in her SHG. Both have learnt to make the Vermiwash with MKSP- SFT and

sell it to the other members. Both of them are quite empowered and confident about the knowledge that they have gained in three years with the MKSP. They sell the Amrutpani and Bhramaastra to the members which they get from the SGS office. Kapilaben has installed bio gas in her house (Picture 7). Both Leelaben and Kapilaben articulated the need for better road connectivity, water facilities and schools function well.

Impact of MKSP in Devaliya:

Devaliya is a tribal village in Chhotaudepur District. Agriculture and animal husbandry have been their main livelihood occupations since ancestral times. Education has been playing a positive role in the village as the number of educated people is increasing. The village is prone to water scarcity due to which the cultivation of many other crops are not possible. SFT has been therefore initiating water management activities and MKSP with the women farmers for sustainable agricultural practices. The farm schools have been providing appropriate knowledge to the women farmers and they now know the techniques from vermiculture to soil testing. It has also given women the empowerment to take decisions along with their male counterparts. In Devaliya there is a unique institution and that is the presence of a youth club. Pragatpur Swaram, the youth club, which had been there since last five years. There are around 50 members in the youth club of which 18 are girls and 32 are boys.

Meetings are held every week. SFT as part of its holistic community development approach has been training the youth in Chhotaudepur office. The club members have access to various books and sport equipments kept in the office.



Picture 4. Vegetable Farm in Devaliya

Picture 5. Vermicompost ready to be used at Devaliya

The SHG at Devaliya has also been very active and Rekhaben who is the 'mantri' of the SHG named 'Khor' has 13 members in her group. She has studied till 12th standard. The group was special because it had got recognition from the government that it was one of the better working groups because they worked in a continuous process, which is why the group was told to take the responsibility of the sanitation scheme by MGNREGA which was done by the Gram Panchayat in other villages. The members had access to bank where they went in a group. The relationship among the group members was good so they helped each other



when in need. She makes Vermicompost (Picture 4) and gives vermin compost to her group members in free of cost while she received some other products from them.

Picture 6. Biogas Plant at Kapilaben's House in Devaliya



15.4 Sunitaben Kulsingh, CRP of Zoz-

Sunitaben has now got married and her sister-in-law works as the CRP of Zoz village. The village has witnessed a rapid change in the production of the agricultural production after it implemented the new sustainable farming methods and techniques taught to them by the Community Resource Person.

Impact of MKSP on Zoz village:

Zoz is a big village covering four phaliyas namely Holi, Gamand, Bazar and Pujar. Bazar phaliya is situated in the centre of the three other phaliyas hence it has maximum facilities available at the village level. Bazar phaliya has a High School, Primary school, and Gram Sabha meeting hall, Panchayat office and Public Health sub centre. Holi phaliya has a Primary school and an ICDS centre.

The MKSP program has been a boon for the village of Holi phaliya. Farmers who had smaller land holdings were hesitant to adopt the new farming techniques first until they saw the benefits of it in the agricultural produce of the CRP. Vermi compost, SRI (Systematic Rice intensification) and vermi wash were given more importance in the Zoz village.

The women farmers here have become more organised and confident. The input cost in producing agricultural goods has also reduced drastically after using the Farm manure and vermi compost.



Picture 7. Vermicompost bed at Zoz

15. 5Kokilaben A Rathwa, CRP of Oliamba- Kokilaben Arjunbhai Rathwa is the CRP of the Oliamba village. She is a matriculate and very active in various programs of SFT. She played a major role in getting the permissions done for construction toilets in the village. Due to her active participation in various activities she was selected as the CRP of Oliamba village. After getting training from SFT regarding various techniques, she started training other women in the village. She not only makes Vermicompost and Vermi wash for herself, but also sells the surplus produced for an additional income.

Picture 8. CRP: Kokilaben Arjunbhai Rathwa

Impact of MKSP on Oliamba village

Oliamba village in Chhotaudepur district consists more than 90% of the tribal population. Historically the tribal people in the region have been involved in agriculture. The villagers own on an average of 2-3 acres of land. The village has also been prone to water scarcity, which has played a major role in cropping pattern and diet. The people were either forced to migrate or somehow manage with two crops in one season. The male members of the household and community usually took most farming decisions. The women participated in farming as agricultural laborers.



In Oliamba there is prevalence of genetic disorder of sickle-shape anemia among the villagers, which is being passed on from generation to generation.

In Oliamba, the ICDS and primary schools have been actively promoting education and health of the children with support from SFT and the CRP. As Satish Bhai Rathwa, the principal of primary school says, *“Sarkar bohot saare programs laati hai ladkiyon ke numbers ko badhane ke liye. Unko wheat, cycles, scholarships aur Vidya laxmi Bond jaisi suvidhaein dii jaati hai”*

Government has been taking various measures to increase the number girls in school like providing them with wheat, cycles, scholarships and Vidya Laxmi Bond.

Picture 9: Oliamba Primary School

With increased knowledge and skills of farming the women within the village have gained greater confidence and their participation in Panchayats has been increasing. They have been articulating their demands and issues in the Gram Sabha. Most of the women in Oliamba now hold bank accounts and are able to write signatures.



Another interesting dimension is the recognition and need for proper sanitation among the women and they have been actively participating in building toilets for their houses. Since there is no health centre in the village, SFT has ensured that the free ambulance service (108) provided by the government is being used regularly for transportation of patients. The

nearest health center is located at Pathravant village and it provides delivery facility for women and also has OPD. SFT have also made many innovations to converge their other programs with MKSP to address different issues. As the village is prone to genetic blood disorders, there is frequent demand for blood in the area. The nearest blood bank is 100 kms away in Vadodara. As Bina, a nurse in Primary Health Centre states:

“We provide women with iron and calcium supplements. The area is prone to anemia and hence there are cases of blood requirement, for which they have to go to Vadodara. With Blood storage started by Shroffs Foundation Trust, the requirement of blood is met by them too”

Oliamba needs arising from its contextual realities have been addressed by SFT and this has helped in the work of the MKSP especially in reducing drudgery, time and burden of work of the women farmers. There is greater unity among the women of the village and this has led to the awareness of their rights. The women now have a say in the ways of farming, and both women and men make all decisions.

As the CRP Kokilaben states, *“Pehle jo ugaye, vo khaya. Abhi zayada upjav hone se, use bechkar ham gaai bhains lete hai aur uska duudh dairy mey bechte hai”*

As the production of crops have increased, now the villagers sell off their surplus and that money is invested for other purpose. In many cases the villagers buy cattle and sell of the milk in the nearby village dairy.



Picture 10: Farming under MKSP

Picture 11: Vermibed in Oliamba



With sustainable agricultural practices and animal husbandry the program has also led to environmental benefits. There has a distinct increase in the soil fertility, thereby agricultural production, which in turn has led to better incomes, health and educational outcomes of the families in Oliamba.

16. Success Stories of Women Farmers

16.1 Gauriben Rathwa

Gauribeian Jaswantbhai Rathwa (CRP) is 29 years old and has done her schooling till class 7. Her husband's name is 35 years old and has done his schooling till class 12. They have two

children, one boy who is 9 years old and studies in 4th standard, one girl who is 14 years old and studies in the 9th standard. Both her husband and daughter have Sickel Cell disease. Her major occupation is farming and animal husbandry and she has 3 buffaloes, 1 cow, 1 bullock. The family owns 4 acres of land and the ownership is with which Gauriben's father-in-law's.

Picture12. Gauriben with her livestock

Early life of Gauriben:

Her paternal house is in Kavath Taluka and she has 4 siblings (2 brothers and 2 sisters), she is the youngest in her family. Before marriage she did not know much about agriculture or farming practices and it was after marriage that she had to learn it. She said, "**Yaha akey aisa aisa kaam sikhna para jo pehle nahi ata tha,**" which means that she had to learn different things after coming to her husband's house that she had not known earlier. She joined the Self Help Group 8 years ago and has been the Samaj Shilpi for the last 2 and a half years. There are 5 groups with her from the village i.e., Janki, Pragati, Satkewal, Kabir, Saheb and Vividlakshi.



Role of MKSP in Gauriben's Life:

According to Gauriben through MKSP interventions, she has learnt a lot about agriculture and sustainable ways of practising it. Before joining the program the produce from farming could only be used for consumption but now as her produce has doubled due to the use of sustainable ways of farming she also sells the produce and gets an income from it. Being a part of MKSP has helped her to gain self-confidence and also encourage her group members to be more confident; as a result she also attends the Gram Sabha meetings and encourages all her group members to go to these meetings regularly.

After getting trained under the MKSP program she can now independently take decisions regarding farming. Before her father-in-law used to take all the decisions related to farming and she did not have any say on it, but now it is she who takes all the decisions, though she always discusses it with her husband and also listens to his inputs.

Table 5: Changes in Production output, costs and irrigation duration for Gauriben

No.	Item	Before	After
1.	Total production	20-25 man*	55 man
2.	Total cost incurred in chemical fertilizers and other inputs	5000 rupees	500 rupees
3.	Irrigation	8-10 times	6-7 times.

***A Man = 20 Kg**

Earlier the total production from farming used to be 20-25 man which has now doubled to 55 man with the use of sustainable methods of farming. Also the cost in chemical fertilizers and other inputs have decreased from rupees 5000 to 500. Irrigation had to be done 8-10 times earlier, which has now decreased to 6-7 times.

One of the difficulties she has been facing at present is that due to the summer heat the worms in her vermi-bed are not able to survive and thus it is difficult for her to maintain it. This is the case with all her group members too.

Future Aspirations:

She wants her daughter to become a teacher and her son a lawyer in future. Also, as the MKSP program has now come to an end she wishes to continue working with all her group members on something new so that she can continue to do the work and achieve greater success in life and also take her group members along with her. She is also very enthusiastic about receiving training on making dairy products and selling them in the market and firmly believes that if such a program would take place in future she would definitely participate in it and also encourage her group members to join.

16.2 Parvati Rathwa

Parvati Vechat Bhai Rathwa is the member of the SHG in Dholivaav village. She is 47 years old and has studied till 4th standard. She does farming and animal husbandry. Her husband's name is Rathwa Vechat Bhai. He is 52 years old and has studied till 8th standard. He also does farming and helps his wife in her household work. There are 5 family members in her family. She has three children (two daughters of 27 years and 30 years who are married and one son of 25 years). She lives in an extended family with two of her nephews. She owned 2 and a half acres of land but the ownership was in the name of her husband. She owned 10 cattle. There were no health issues in her family.

Early life of Parvatiben:

She lived and grew up in Uchakaran Sankhera Taluka with her mother, father and she has eight siblings. She is the youngest of all. She studied in the primary school but did not continue secondary education because she was not much interested in studying, instead helped her mother in household chores. She had done farming before marriage.



Picture 13. Parvati Ben with her livestock

Role of MKSP:

Parvatiben was married at the age of 15. Parvatiben's husband has been very supportive from the very beginning of their marriage and he also helped her in every work from farming

to household chores. His everyday support in all daily activities in the household and farming has been a positive factor in enabling her to acquire skills through the trainings of MKSP. When MKSP started in the village she got training from the CRPs in the farm school. She was a member since 3 years and attended almost every meeting. She learnt everything that they taught. She said that there was a lot of difference in farming after practicing vermiculture. The production of maize increased to 100maund from 50 man. The cost for chemicals and pesticides reduced from Rs.5000 to Rs.500 but the water scarcity was always a problem for the village. Parvatiben then used SRI and achieved good results and now she grows rice, maize and different kinds of vegetables like peas, tomatoes, brinjal and ladies finger. She has the will and the capacity to continue with the Vermicompost and the agricultural practices even if MKSP is withdrawn from her village. She is ready to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge that would support her. She has a bank account in her name and she operates it with her group members. The following Table 5 shows the change in production costs and irrigation duration:

Table 5: Changes in Production output, costs and irrigation duration for Parvatiben

No.	Details	Before	After
1.	Total production	50 man	100 man
2.	Total cost incurred in chemical fertilizers and other inputs	Rs.5000	Rs.500
3.	Irrigation	8- 10 times	6- 7 times

Future Aspirations:

Parvatiben aspires to build a new house from her savings. She said ‘pesa jama karna hai aur naya ghar banana hai’ she wanted to save money and make a new house. She said that she would like to learn new things in future so that there would be a continuous process of learning. She would also continue to make Vermi-compost and would practice vermiculture as it had given a better result in her farming.

SECTION V: SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

17. Summary and Recommendations

Most of the women in rural India are engaged in the agricultural sector. However, there remains a wide gender gap in access to resources, participation in decision making and income and wages for agricultural labour work. This leaves women and men with differential marginalities and vulnerabilities within the context of existing rural poverty and deprivation. These marginalities further gets sharpened with various inter-sectionalities including the tribal identity as in the case of Rathwas in the program area in Gujarat. MKSP is an effort to address this gap and Shroff Foundation Trust is making continued effort to implement the same.

Social change is a gradual process. However, the insights drawn from the field and the analysis show a process of transformation at various levels. A key aspect that is slowly changing in the program area of SFT where MKSP is being implemented is acknowledgement of the women by other members of the community as productive individuals having their own identity. Capacity building and training forms an important component of the program, which helps in local leadership and entrepreneurship development, and also expansion of women's agency from coping and survival towards a pathway of free and creative agency.

Some of the key factors leading to the success of the innovation solution have been the following.

1. A key factor driving the innovation solution has been the **expressed or latent demand of the context and the people**, which influenced the implementation of MKSP by SFT also led to addressing of practical needs (poverty alleviation, increase in production, increased livelihood security.) It simultaneously led to a movement towards addressing of more structurally entrenched strategic needs like increasing in decision-making power of women etc.
2. **The holistic approach towards creating sustainable agricultural practices** including a) SRI (System of Rice Intensification) b) Vermi-Compost, c) Vermiwash, d) Farmyard manure, e) Amrutpaani f) Brahmastra etc., helped in addressing rapid degradation of the soil, soil erosion, excessive use of chemical fertilizers, low productivity etc. This thus ensured increasing production and poverty alleviation in the remote tribal areas. Since the training for sustainable agricultural practices is given to women; the community is not only realizing the benefits of these techniques but also is able to appreciate the role played by women in the whole process. This has a cascading impact on the women's decision-making power at various spheres including household, farms and community.
3. **Appropriate and women centric Technology** has played a major role in the program with the use of sustainable farming techniques such as SRI, Inter-cropping, Soil and

plant nutrient management, Vermi-culture and mini tools to reduce women's day-to-day drudgery.

4. The organization has played a crucial role in **organizing women and mainstreaming gender issues in the tribal context and in a region**, which was hitherto marginalised from the mainstream development activities. SFT worked with a clear understanding of the contexts of the women's lives, their existing capacities as farmers and keeping them in the centre for all interventions. It is very important to bring together the women in the communities and encourage their participation without which the program cannot be implemented. Women being the major stakeholders in this program, their participation is crucial for fulfilling the main objective of the program i.e., to uplift the status of the women in the society and their empowerment.
5. **Capability development, Increased Livelihood Security** and movement towards **social and economic empowerment of women** has been an important component. The women have been able to acquire the required knowledge and skills for increasing their yields, combining the same with new skills for livelihoods like embroidery and allied activities and using them to raise the incomes of the families. This in turn has increased their status and visibility in the community.

SWOT Analysis of MKSP

The TISS assessment team conducted a SWOT analysis with the management on the last day of their visit and this is a useful exercise to plan further steps to strengthen the work being done by SFT on the ground. The Table below describes the SWOT analysis.

Strengths	Challenges
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Historicity of SFT and embedded work in the region 2. Linkage with well-known partners 3. Cadre of Women Farmers, well trained and enthusiastic-CRPs 4. Participatory Approach and Keeping “women” in the center of the work 5. Commitment, values and belief in peoples capacities 6. Presence of Farm Schools as well as Collectives of Women with emphasis on sustainable agricultural practices. Combination of traditional skills with new innovations. 7. People have adopted multiple sustainable agriculture practices. 8. Credit Worthiness of SFT 9. A Professionally managed organisation with accountability and transparency 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Heavy workload of women at household and agriculture 2. Organizational personnel have limited capacity to generate, assimilate, analyse and use data at all levels of the organisation 3. Insufficient funds for administrative overheads (vis-à-vis professional requirements and contextual realities) 4. There is conflict and dynamics amongst members of some of the SHGs, which are weakening these institutions.
Opportunities	Threats
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Model of end-to-end solution has been demonstrated by SFT (Farming to market) 2. Strategic engagement with industry and knowledge partners 3. Leveraging of Government policies and programs (from subsidy to self-sufficiency) 4. Collective farming 5. There is a demand for Natural Resource Management (NRM) and SFT has demonstrated several models through its practice 6. Increase in women’s status and decision making and their engagement 7. An Ecosystem of change has been set in motion at the household level for women empowerment. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding for MKSP program not being disbursed on time. 2. Withdrawal of MKSP is a threat to the continuation of existing institutions like Farm School, CRPs and SHGs. 3. Village level preferences to shift to city based livelihoods rather than agriculture 4. Shrinking farm sizes and climate change 5. Withdrawal of Government financial support through its programs

Recommendations

1. Working towards continued recognition, assimilation and implementation of new information and knowledge for users of innovation

Diffusion of the innovation solution is an extremely important indicator for sustainability. It is therefore very important for the women from the communities engaged in the groups and institutions to participate fully and actively. The women need to be regular in the farm school meetings etc., and implement the knowledge gained from the schools in their farms. If proper implementation of the knowledge gained is not done, the sustainable practices learnt by the women farmers may not be continued. This would mean loss of the rich work that SFT has done through MKSP in the area.

2. Deepening Gender Sensitive work

Women being the major stakeholders in this program, their participation is crucial for fulfilling the main objective of the program i.e., to uplift the status of the women in the society. However, to transform the overall innovation environment, it is important to sensitize and encourage equal participation of men in the household as well as agricultural and allied work to ensure reduction of double and triple burden for women. In doing so, the ownership and control over livelihood innovations and resources should remain with the women.

3. Sustainability

- a. Continuation of MKSP and timely disbursement of funds
- b. Supporting and strengthening the grassroots cadres including the CRPs nurtured by SFT.
- c. The innovative concept and practice of farm school needs to be recognized and institutionalized through adequate support of funds and knowledge inputs by the Government.
- d. Empowerment is a process, which requires sustained strategic intervention and involvement. Therefore withdrawal of MKSP at this stage will hinder the process and leave the women without any further solutions to their existing practical and strategic livelihood needs.

4. Strengthening Strategies for Livelihood Diversification

- a. While MKSP by SFT has shown the way for sustainable agricultural practices by women farmers, the income generated through the same need a three pronged process including:
 - b. Better market linkages for all products
 - c. Building of collective community social entrepreneurship with the women through training of business plan development, leadership and literacy programs.
 - d. Value based addition, diversification of products that have market demands.

5. Best practice of Convergence of programs of SFT to be continued

SFT has been working in partnership and collaboration with various stakeholders including Government, NGOs and corporate entities. Such multi stakeholder partnership is an important innovative strategy which needs to be continued.