



**Annual Report**  
**July 2022 to March 2023**

<b>Name of the project</b>	<b>Project Shakti</b>
<b>Duration as per current agreement</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul 2022 to 30 <sup>th</sup> Jun 2023
<b>Reporting period</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Jul 2022 to 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2023
<b>Type of Report</b>	Annual Report

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## Glossary

AWC Anganwadi Centre

CDPO Child Development Project Officer

ICDS Integrated Child Development Services

KVK Krishi Vigyan Kendra

PRA Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRI Panchayati Raj Institution

SDG Sustainable Development Goals

SHG Self Help Groups

## 1. Background

Project Shakti is the flagship community development project of McCain Foods (India) Private Limited. The overarching objective of this project is improving the livelihoods of women through farm and N-farm activities currently ongoing in six villages of Mehsana and Kadi blocks of Mehsana district of Gujarat. It is implemented by Cohesion Foundation Trust.

Mehsana is an important district in the state of Gujarat, situated close to Gandhinagar, the state capital. According to Census 2011, the district has a population of about 2 million and a literacy rate of 84%. However, the district has been classified as a Gender critical district by the Women and Child Development Ministry. The child sex ratio of Mehsana is amongst one of the poorest in the state of Gujarat.

Many clusters of industries have developed in various parts of the district and one of the clusters falls in Baliyasan area. The plant of McCain Foods India is situated in the Baliyasan cluster. The villages are situated on both sides of Ahmedabad- Patan Highway #41 and typically wear a rural-urban outlook. There are more than 200 persons employed with McCain on a regular basis from the four project villages.

Being situated in a gender critical area, and McCain Foods being a socially responsible company, it decided to work on the upliftment and empowerment of rural women in six villages nearby the plant. Initially starting its work in four villages, Baliyasan, Ambaliyasn, Bhasariya and Jagudan from Mehsana block, two more villages Laxmipura and Adundara from Kadi block were added in 2021 and gradually two more villages, Kochva and Ditasan from Mehsana block were also added during this reporting period. AT present the project is being implemented in eight villages. McCain has predominantly been working on women's empowerment issues in these villages in partnership with various non-profits and has addressed the livelihoods of women in a systematic way. During this reporting period two more villages, and were also added. The total numbers of households in the 8 villages are 4739 and the population is 24870 persons.

The various communities residing in these villages are Desai which is a pastoralist community, agriculture and small-scale business; the Parmar community is engaged in industrial jobs and labour work; Thakors are engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry, labour work and small scale jobs. Raval and Prajapati community are engaged in agriculture, small businesses and industrial jobs. Datani community are engaged in goat rearing and labour work. Banjara community is mainly nomadic tribes and are engaged in labour work. Suthar community is mainly engaged in carpentry work whereas Darji community is engaged in tailoring and industry jobs. There are very few households of Muslim community which are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry.

When Cohesion partnered with McCain in 2018-19, there were 18 SHGs and as of March 2023 we have formed 73 SHGs (908 members) and 7 women farmer groups (86 members). Women have started realizing developmental gains from the credit and savings and that's why there has been consistent increase in the membership. Project Shakti has been able to improve livelihoods and income of women (Financial Empowerment). The project also seeks to balance the gender equation in the villages by sensitizing men, women, boys and girls equally.

## 2. Project Shakti + SDGs



Skill-based trainings to women and men so that they become capable of earning or augmenting their incomes



Health camps for raising awareness regarding common diseases and their treatment. Focussing on anaemia and malnutrition in girls and women.



Investing in community water projects and promoting better water and sanitation practices



Providing support to women to take up non-farm activities to supplement their household incomes



Reducing income disparity between men and women through self-employment and encouraging entrepreneurship in women. Women are encouraged to be more mobile in order to gain access to resources which were normally denied to them or were beyond their reach due to traditional societal practices.



Working towards educating the community about domestic violence, female foeticide and inclusive governance, where women are given their rightful place in village level institutions. In a world that is getting increasingly divided, no one can deny the role of women in building an inclusive society. Project Shakti focuses on building the capacities of women of all castes to find lasting solutions to inequality and insecurity.

### 3. Goal, Objectives & Interventions

**GOAL:** To bring about social change and improved livelihood through empowerment, capacity building and gender sensitization of both men and women.

#### OBJECTIVES

**Objective 1. Enhance soft skills of women and girls to take up vocational skills in the future so that they are employable or can be confident of being entrepreneurs**

- Intervention 1. Vocational skills training
- Intervention 2. Forward and backward linkages

**Objective 2. Improve livelihoods and income of women and adolescent girls; formation of SHGs to strengthen women's empowerment and skill development**

- Intervention 1. Farm-based livelihood activities
- Intervention 2. Non-Farm-based livelihood activities
- Intervention 3. SHG promotion (formation, meetings, trainings)
- Intervention 4. Entrepreneur development and promotion

**Objective 3. Improve quality of lives of women and girls by creating interventions to improve gender sensitization**

- Intervention 1. Gender sensitization programs
- Intervention 2. Creation of people's organizations (Bal Panchayat and Youth Groups)

**Objective 4. Natural resource initiatives to enhance livelihoods and to end gender discrimination**

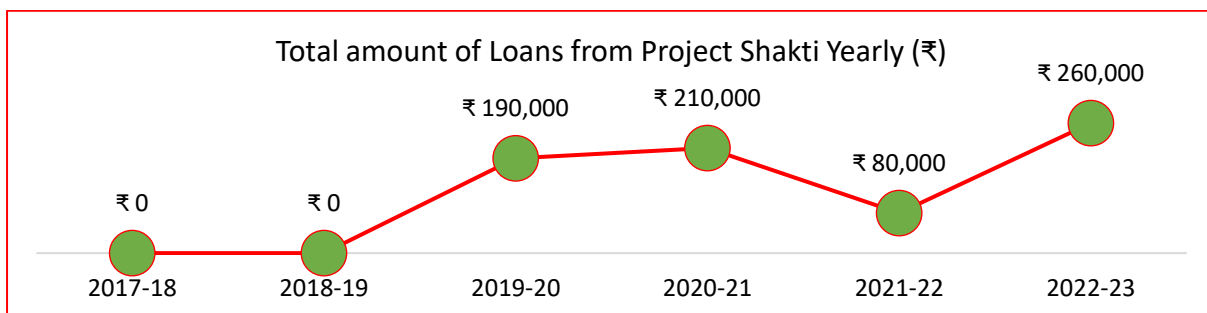
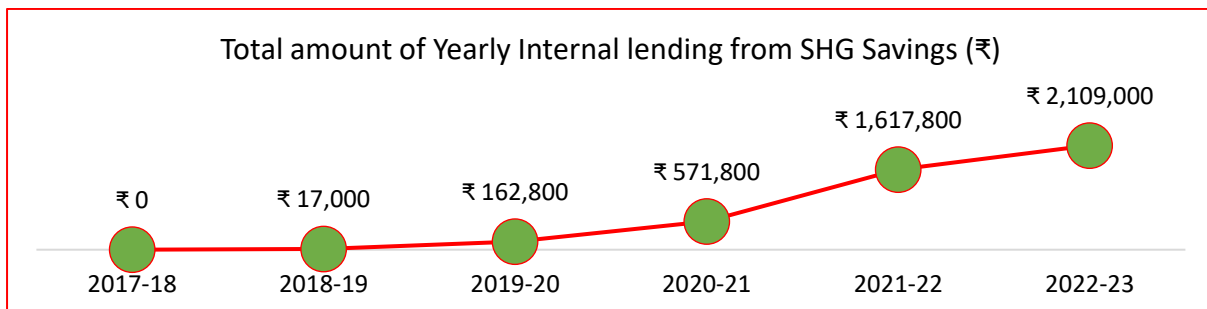
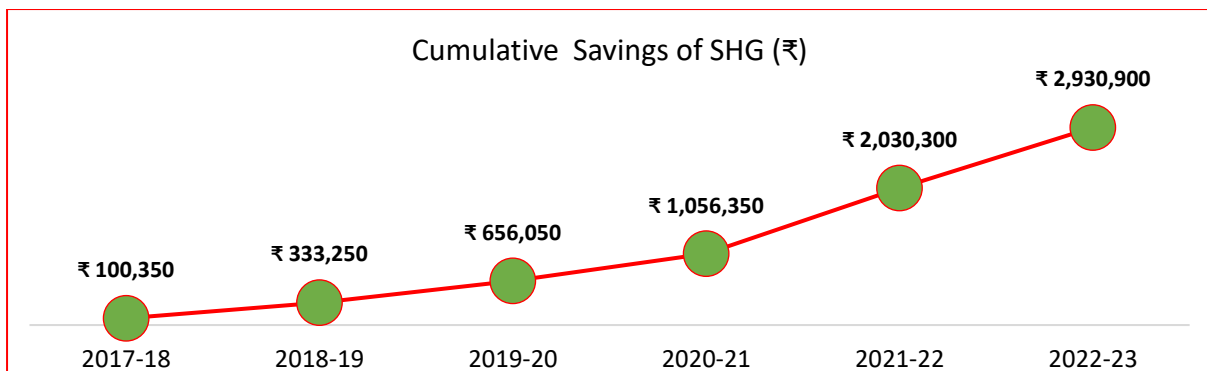
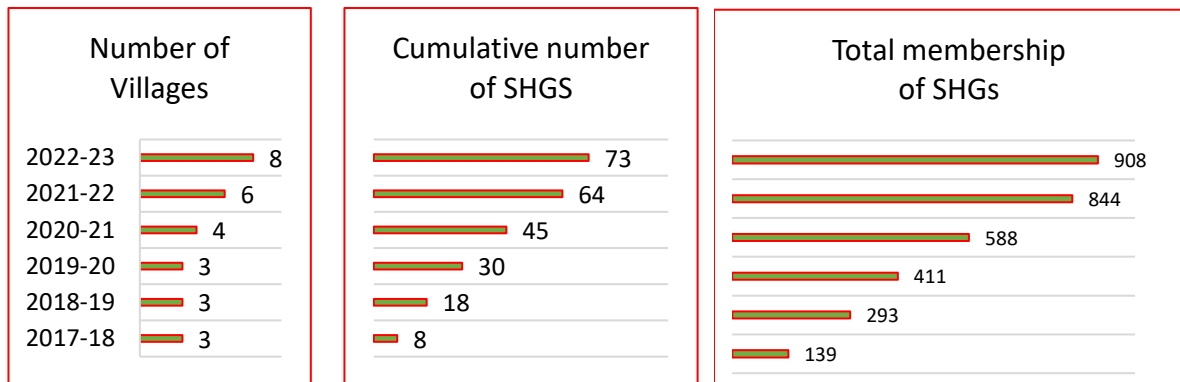
- Intervention 1. Tree plantation
- Intervention 2. Rejuvenation of community water sources as second intervention

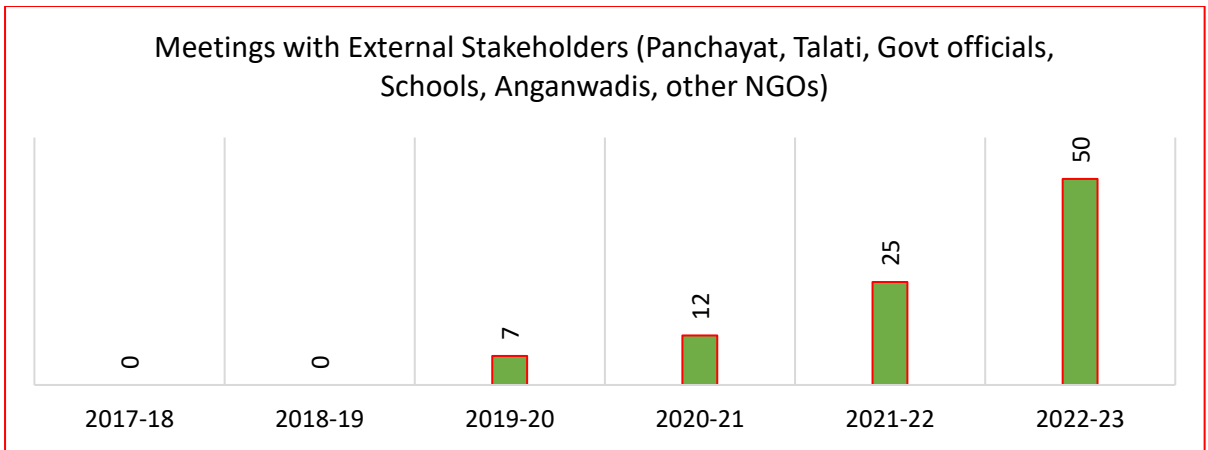
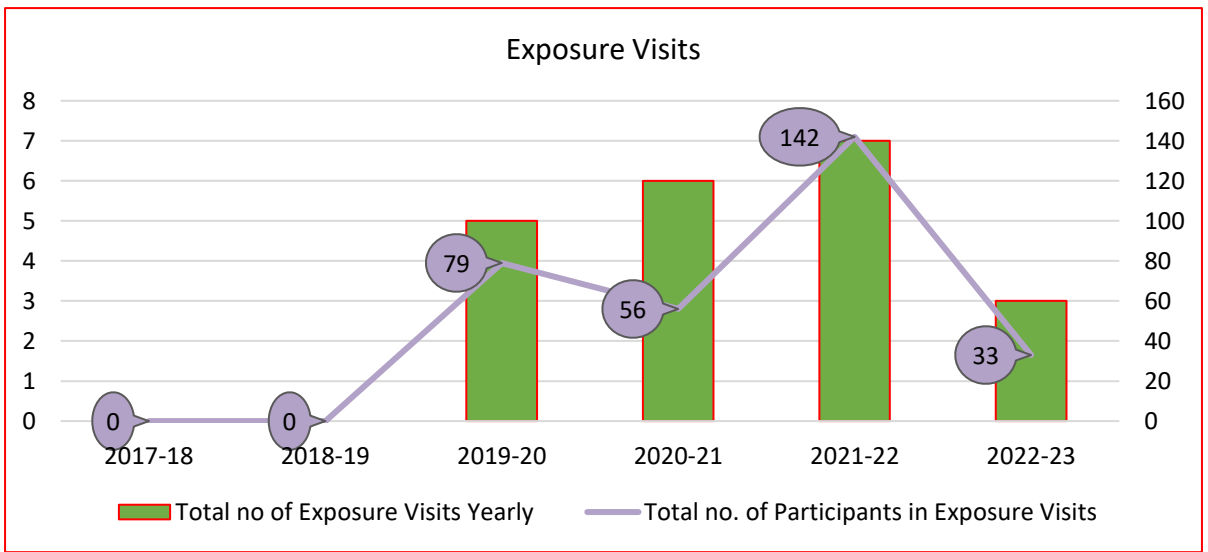
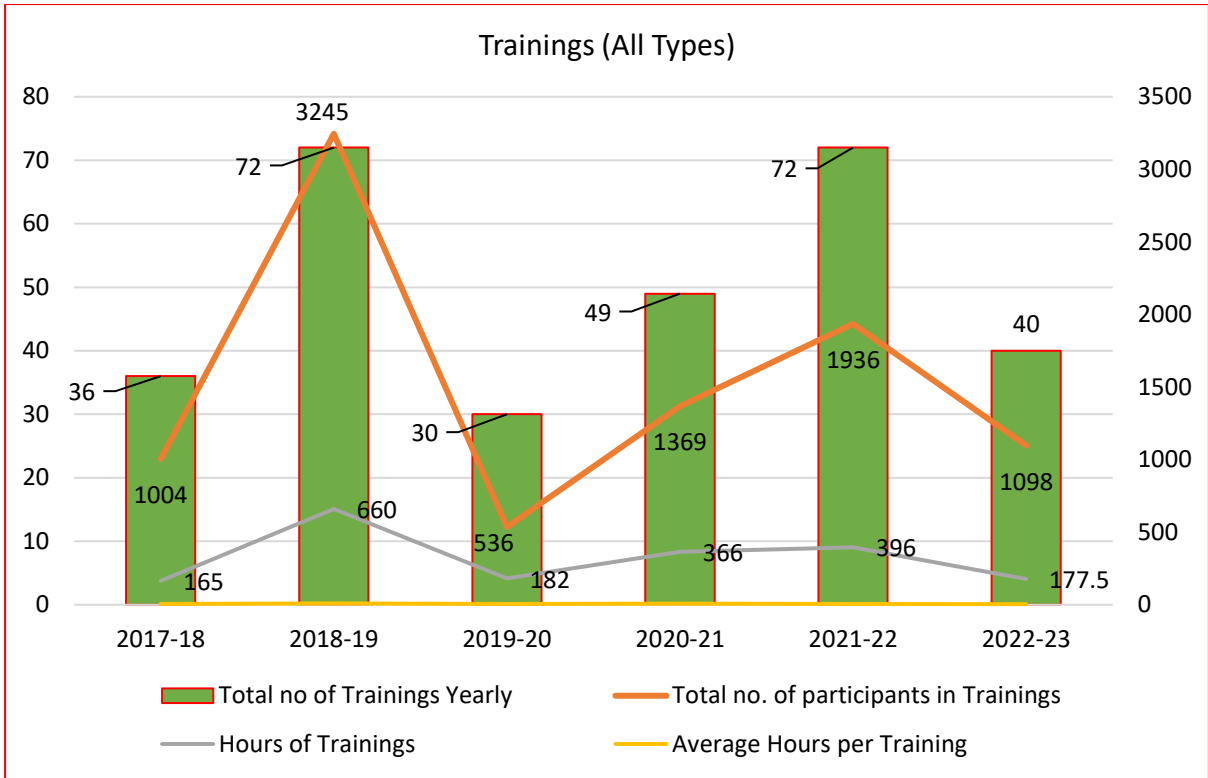
#### OUTCOMES

**Outcome 1:** With improved livelihoods women will have a basket of farm and non-farm livelihoods to support their core source of income/ state of no income, this in turn would increase incomes, access to basic amenities and strengthen community level institutions.

**Outcome 2:** Social change would improve gender relations, reduce gender discrimination, reduce female feticide, improve child sex ration and reduce abuse and violence.

## 4. Objective, Intervention and Case studies







Objective 1: Enhance soft skills of women and girls to take up vocational skills in the future so that they are employable or can be confident of being entrepreneurs



Recognition and felicitation of community members for their social development efforts



Sewing Training

## Intervention 1: Vocational skills training



**Tejalben Khumansinh Thakor, 30 years, Baliyasan- A role model to other women**

A day in Tejalben's life starts with household chores, sending children to school, cooking and taking care of farm activities. She never stepped outside the house for any other reason than these chores. Her family includes her husband, a daughter and a son. She never thought that she can do anything more than her routine. Financial dependence on husband and zero mobility always bothered her. In January 2020 when she became aware of the activities of Project Shakti, she joined the group and attended various trainings and capacity building activities. She started to save regularly in the group savings. She underwent through leadership trainings, gender trainings, government schemes and linkages trainings. These trainings made her realised the potential for learning tailoring and establishing it as a micro enterprise. When Project Shakti started Tailoring training in Baliyasan in December 2021, she joined the two-month training. She is now expert in stitching cushion covers, pillow covers, blouses, purses etc. She gets orders from her own village and outside also. She earns around INR 6,000-7,000 per month.

She enjoys the financial independence that she has gained and does not have to ask for money from he husband for petty things. With the savings and income of the tailoring work she has purchased her own gold jewelry and also has purchased jewelry for her daughter. She likes the fact that she goes out, meet other women, participates in Gram Sabha and motivates other women.

**Rationale:** Vocational skills help to increase employability. As we were working in the villages, we realised that women had great potential to learn some of these skills and they were interested in using these skills for generation of alternate employment. The project also has a key objective of empowering women and adolescent girls by improving their skills to be gainfully employed and making them more confident.

**Target:**

- Continuing Shakti Computer Classes during the school vacation.
- To celebrate International Women's Day as days of significance

- Government scheme awareness and enrolment campaigns in all 8 villages

**Achievement during the Reporting Period:**

- 600 students from three villages benefit from the classroom learning using computers
- International Women's Day and World Water Day were celebrated together on 21<sup>st</sup> March

**Expected Outcome:** McCain donated 37 computers for Project Shakti during the year 2021-22 with an intention to train the village youth, both boys and girls on basic computer skills. It was planned to continue these classes during this year for promoting computer literacy for both girls and boys, making them more aware by instilling the feeling of equity for men and women.

**Actual Outcome:**

**Shakti Computer Classes:** McCain has donated 37 computers for Project Shakti with an intention to train the village youth, both boys and girls on basic computer skills. Through the classes the project is promoting computer literacy for both girls and boys, making them more aware by instilling the feeling of equity for men and women. The computers given by Project Shakti to the Schools of Adundara, Jagudan and Baliyasan benefitted 600 students through classroom learning during the reporting period. The regular classes will start in the next reporting period in April as the children did not have any vacation during this reporting period.

40 Women who were given training for mask making during the previous reporting period have continued their work.

Project Shakti facilitated the linkages with Mission Mangalam launched by the Gujarat Government and as a result 5 SHGs of Bhasariya have been linked to the Mission Mangalam. A Village Organization-VO was also registered. The SHGs have received INR 30,000 each as first instalment to start their own micro enterprise.

9th March is celebrated worldwide as International Women's Day and 22<sup>nd</sup> March as World Water Day. It was decided that all the relevant government departments should be involved to celebrate the day in the project villages but as the officials are busy on that day in their departmental celebrations the Women's Day should be celebrated on 21<sup>st</sup> March, when everybody can participate. For optimum utilisation of resources it was decided to have a common event for Women's Day and Water Day. On 21st March International Women's Day and World Water Day was celebrated where 250 SHG women from the project villages participated. The programme was attended by various government officials and representatives of other NGOS including but not limited to District Development Manager-NABARD, Gujarat State Rural Livelihood Mission, Water and Sanitation Management Organisation, Women & Child Development Department, Nari Adalat, Anarde India. The programme celebrated the achievement of SHG women recognising their efforts to break the barriers of gender stereotypes and become socially and economically empowered. The officials from government department talked about various schemes of the departments and how women can benefit from these. The Sakhi Mitras which have been promoted by the project talked about how they have evolved as leaders. They said that they are much more confident than before as they can speak in front many women which they were not able to do in the past. During the day 4 SHGs were felicitated as best SHGs through awards. Six women arranged stalls for display and sale of the items they were trading.

Cohesion as Sector Partner for Integrating Jal Jeevan Mission in its work carries out water related awareness in 8 villages on a regular basis. As discussion on importance of water saving is done in many meetings, a behavior change has been observed as women are more aware of the amount of water they use in their routine work. They try to bring the change in their household also.

## Intervention 2: Forward and backward linkages

**Rationale:** Effective backward and forward integration for farm and non-farm activities and to link women and community with different government schemes for their better future and sustainability.

**Target:** Following activities during the reporting period:

- Reaching as many families as possible and link them to various schemes during the project period of one year through 8 Campaigns on Government Schemes.
- Linking SHG women with government schemes in 8 villages

**Achievement during the Reporting Period:**

- 344 women from 8 villages were made aware of various schemes which they are eligible for and they were completely unaware of these.
- 5 SHGs of Bhasariya have been linked to the Mission Mangalam.
- Rapport building has been done with different departments such as NABARD, Women and Child Development, Lead Bank etc.



### Expected Outcome

It is expected and planned from the beginning that for better future and sustainability of the efforts establishing linkages with the government programs is required. Once made aware of these entitlements and benefits the community will gradually avail these on their own and the flagship schemes of government will reach the intended beneficiaries.



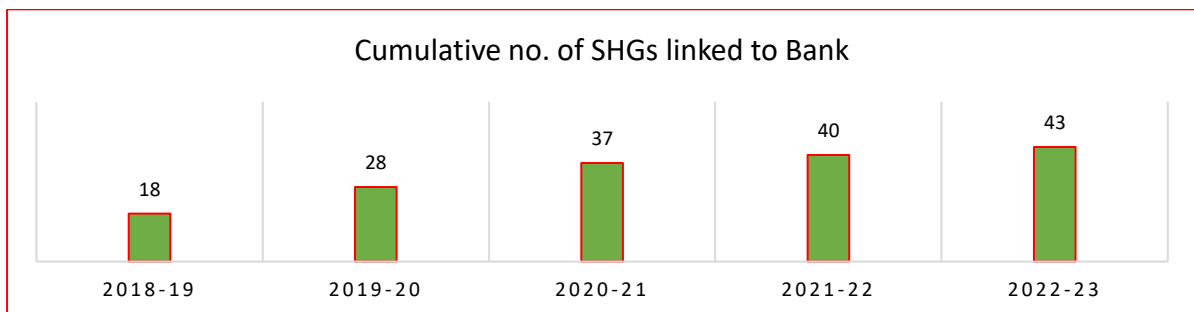


### Actual Outcome:

Overall, there is an increased awareness on government schemes and entitlement. This whole process has sensitised the extension workers of the Gram Panchayats and they have started taking active interest in filling up the forms at village level. Some very extremely vulnerable women were identified and during the next semester they will be supported to apply for these schemes.

Awareness campaigns were carried out in all project villages. The campaign helped in identifying the 344 most vulnerable women and they were completely unaware of the government benefits they are entitled for. The types of schemes which were explained during these campaigns were:

- Widow Pension-INR 1,250 per month
- Kunwar Bai Nu Mameru Scheme for preventing child marriage- INR 10,000
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- INR 1,61, 000 in instalments for construction of house on owned land, Households who fall under Below Poverty Line can apply.
- Disability Pension- INR 700 per month
- Vali Dhikri Yojana to promote girl child's education. A girl gets INR 4,000 in grade I, INR 6,000, in grade 9 and INR 1,00,000 when she turns 18 years. Families below INR 20,0,000 annual income are eligible.





SHG Women Stalls on International Women's Day



Multiple stakeholder participation on Women's Day

During the reporting period 50 meetings with External Stakeholders such as Panchayat, Talati, Govt officials, Schools, Anganwadis etc. were carried out.



Objective 2: Improve livelihoods and income of women and adolescent girls; formation of SHGs to strengthen women's empowerment and skill development



**Chetnaben Thakor, 20 years, Laxmipura village, Kadi Block**

#### **Seeing is believing**

It takes time to understand the importance of savings and credit and be a part of Self Help Group. This is true for Chetnaben who is from Laxmipura village. She is young and recently married. Earlier she was not willing to join SHG when Shakti team visited Laxmipura. But Shakti team decided separate strategy and started forming Women Farmers Group at village level. Chetnaben became a part of Women Farmers Group and took training on sustainable agriculture practices. She is a farmer and she works on farm apart from daily chores. Her husband is having a mobile shop nearby Laxmipura at Kadi town. But her family condition is not that good as farm incomes are very unpredictable. Shakti team decided to orient their families and her father in law wanted seeds of Beans (choli) which Shakti team facilitated for him and told him to come to collect the seeds as well as see the work of Shakti Project at baliyasan. Her father in law visited Baliyasan during Diwali and he was very much impressed by the Pop-up store which was installed at the McCain Plant. Seeing that how women are benefitting from savings and credit he encouraged Chetna and thus she made he own group.

Three months ago Chetna established Vishwas Self-Help Group and with a monthly savings of INR 100. She underwent leadership training. She has also received Kitchen Garden kit. She has sown vegetables and she is hopeful that this will ensure quality food for her family.

## **Intervention 1: Farm-based livelihood activities**

**Rationale:** Agriculture is the main source of livelihood in this area. Therefore, the project empowers farmers, both men and women and enhance their agriculture incomes and make them farm based entrepreneurs by undertaking innovative demonstrations as well as establishing market linkages.

**Target:** Following is the list of activities to be carried out during the reporting period:

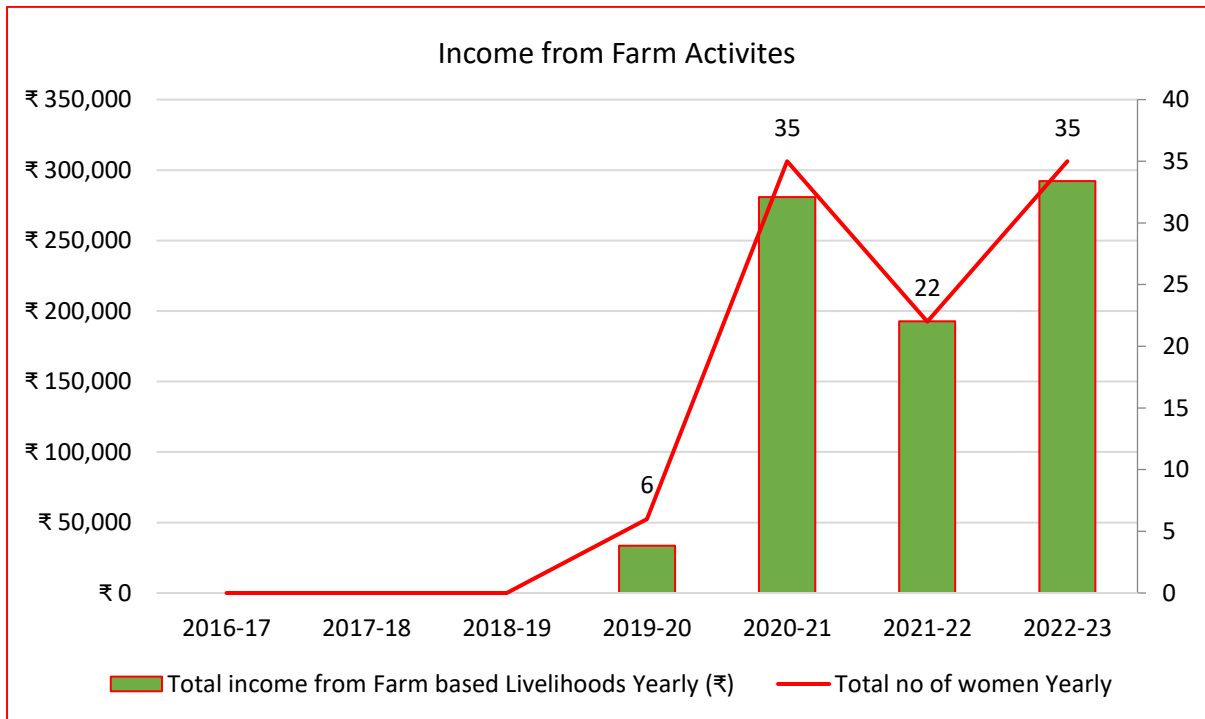
- Promotion of 8 farm based micro-enterprise models for SHG women
- Horticulture promotion with 9 farmers
- 2 Exposure Visits within the state for Farm based livelihood
- 2 Training on better practices for saving input cost in cotton farming
- 15 Biological pesticides, Fertilizer preparations, Vermin Compost, Compost pit

**Achievement during the Reporting Period:**

- 89 women have been involved in Farm based activities
  - 3 farm based micro-enterprise models were developed
  - Demonstration of cultivation of *Chori* (Long Beans) was done in Laxmipura and Ambaliyasan on 1.2 acres of land.
- 9 farmers have been identified for horticulture promotion and the work will continue in the following reporting period.
- 2 Exposure visits were carried out- One internal and other one at Ramkrishna Trust and Bhujodi in Kachchh
- Trainings could not be carried out due to elections and have been rescheduled in the following reporting period.
- 10 new Vermin Compost beds done with one each in Kochva, Ambaliyasan, Bhasariya and three in Baliyasan and four in Ditasan.

**Note:** Our annual year earlier was from July to June 2023, which was over in March 2023, and most of the activities of farming are done before monsoons. So we were not able to cover all the farming activities during the year. The planned activities will be implemented in FY24

**Expected Outcome:** The men and women farmers should get motivated to adopt the methods of sustainable farming through the demonstrations shown in the exposure visits and trainings.





**Actual Outcome:**

A Seasonal calendar for farm-based interventions with team has been developed. Same is used to develop and line up farm-based activities as per the interventions

Farm based micro enterprise models included one each of Bottle Gourd, Tomato with Brinjal and Chori (Long Beans). The farmers learnt the better practices in cultivation of these vegetables.

The farmers for horticulture promotion were identified at the end of the reporting period. As this is a seasonal activity these farmers will be starting their work in the next semester as per the seasonal calendar.

The farmers have been given seeds, fertiliser, Bamboo, GI wire and other organic inputs



**Exposure Visits:** One Exposure visit was planned to see the work of old SHG villages. 16 SHG women and 2 men of newly added villages were taken to old villages of Project Shakti. They got an opportunity to see SHG group functioning, Marigold farming, multiple cropping in cotton farming, Vermin compost, cutlery and other micro enterprises done by the SHG women of the old villages

The Shakti team also went for an exposure visit to see the work of Reliance Foundation in Patan especially non-Farm activities and non-Farm tailoring units.

12 SHG women and their husbands went to Kukma and Bhujodi to visit models of sustainable agriculture practices, making Biopesticides and value addition in agri-produce.

Total income from Farm based Livelihoods Yearly	INR 2,92,273
Total Yearly Savings from Farm based Livelihoods	INR 54,650

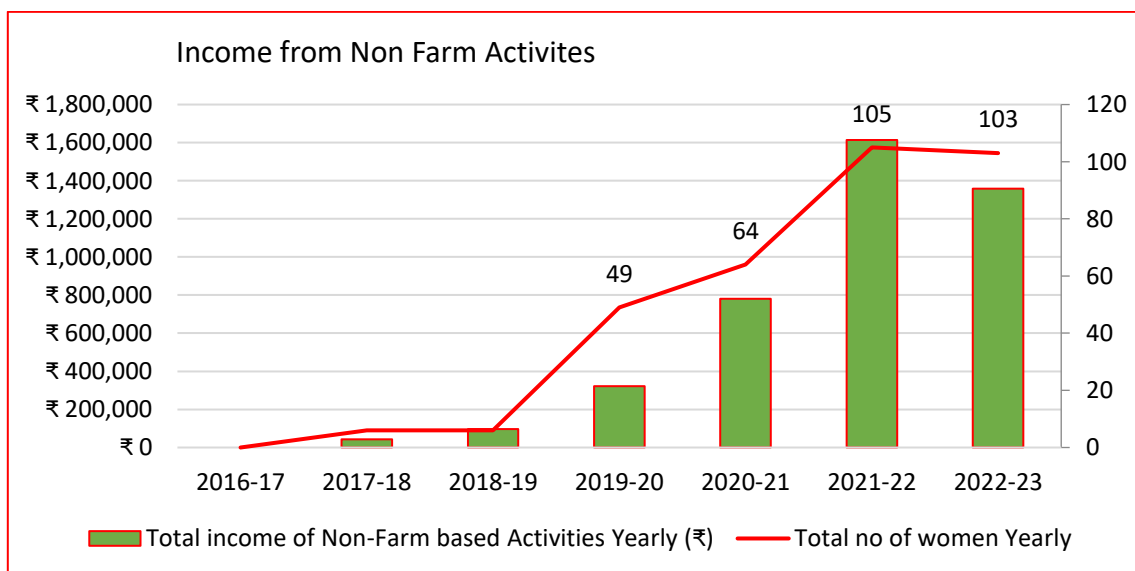
## Intervention 2: Non-Farm based livelihood activities

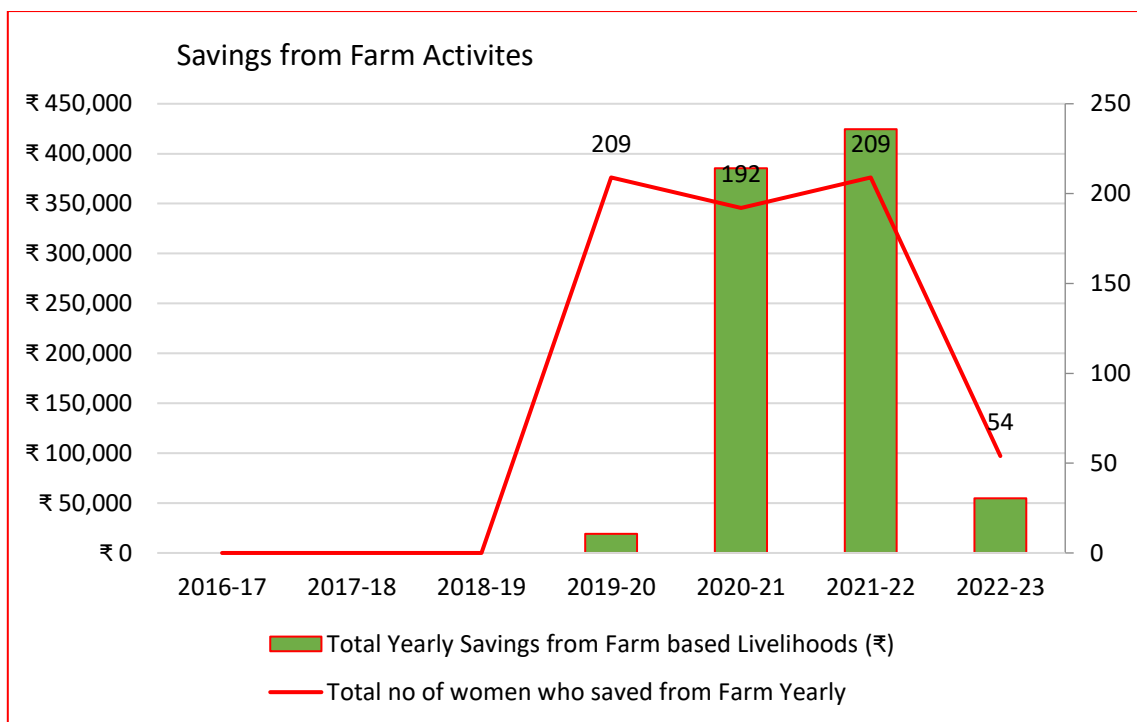


**Rationale:** The main purpose of this intervention is to train and develop entrepreneurs in non-farm activities so that alternate sources of income can be generated.

**Target:** Following activities during the project period of one year

- Livelihood support to the needy families
- Promotion of Non-Farm stitching unit





#### Achievements during the Reporting Period

- 103 women have been part of non-Farm based activities out of which 90 have been involved in regular activities and others are involved in one time activities.
- Diwali pop up stalls by 5 women for sale of home-made snacks and Diwali items
- Identified Consultant for the tailoring unit has started working with women and completed first module of the four-module training.

#### Expected outcome:

- Women use the skills obtained from vocational trainings to enhance their incomes

#### Actual outcome:

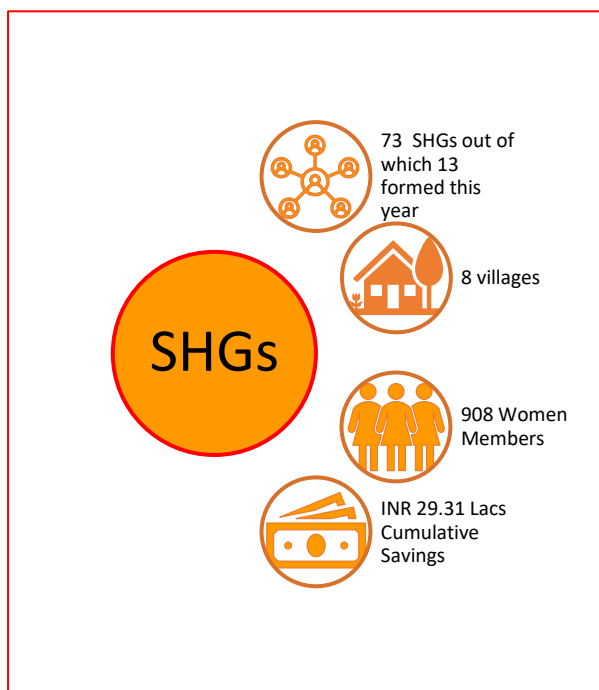
Women from SHG groups have now started thinking out of the box as they have acquired enterprising skills. The trainings related to stitching, culinary skills in making snacks and others have made the women confident. During Diwali they made many products to be sold at Pop-up. In Delhi sale, three women made a profit of INR 7,260 profit through sale of snacks, pillow covers and purses. In Mehsana sale, two women made a profit of INR 12,303 through sale of snacks, Dia, Fireworks and Bakery items.

In last three years of implementation, tailoring has come out as a strong non-farm enterprise which has gathered interest from many women. Therefore, this year plan was to identify the subject expert to take up a lead role in setting up the unit of tailoring and provide hand holding support to women for establishing the same as a successful model. Request for Proposals to identify the Consultant were floated in the network. Finally, a consultant was identified in December. He started the work from January. His key role is to provide training to women on all aspects of tailoring and provide handholding support for backward and forward linkages with the market.

The following table gives details of the various non-farm business activities carried out by women as a result of trainings and the support through revolving fund.

51 women were trained last year with 2 month tailoring course and 2-month beauty parlor course. 32 women out of 51 women are using their skills to make some income. On an average the income received during Jul-Mar is around INR 1600 per month per woman from these activities.

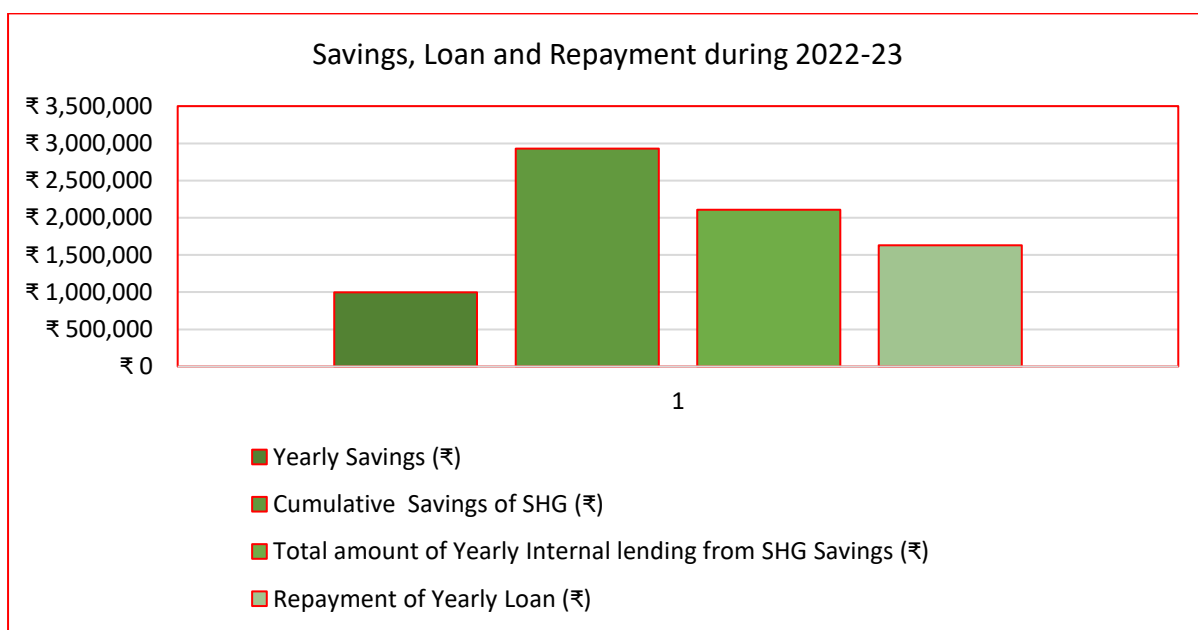
## Intervention 3: SHG promotion (formation, meetings, trainings)



**Rationale:** To encourage women to join Self Help Groups as savings and credits in SHGs help women to rely on such institutions for their financial needs instead of borrowing money from money lenders and get involved in different livelihood generation activities.

**Target:**

- Regular meetings and trainings of SHG Leaders from 8 villages
- Formation of 20 SHG groups with 300 members
- 4 Trainings for SHG strengthening
- PRA exercises in two newly selected villages
- Visioning with the Federation of SHGs
- Revolving Fund to 4 women







#### **Achievement during the Reporting Period:**

- Regular meetings of 73 SHGs and 6 trainings of SHG leaders conducted
- 13 new SHGs formed with 152 members
- 15 Trainings of 471 SHG members for SHG strengthening, Leaders and Household safety has been carried out
- PRA exercises successfully carried out in two new villages
- Federation visioning has been done in December where 33 members participated
- Revolving Fund from repayment of loans from the previous year has been provided to 4 women

**Expected Outcome:** As we have been working with the SHGs since last four years, there has been increase in number of women wanting to join the group. We have made new groups and it is expected that these women will get independence and empowerment through the membership in the SHGs. Also, they will get involved in various income generating activities.

#### **Actual Outcome:**

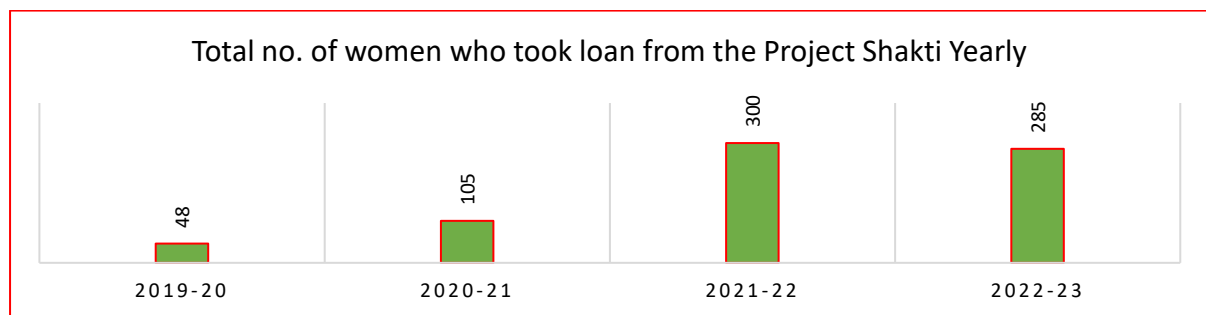
The SHG Leaders have been meeting regularly and this is very important for the sustainability of the project. SHG Leaders are playing an active role in the village development. After becoming the members of SHGs and taking leadership roles within the SHGs, there has been increase in their self-confidence. Every month there are 73 meetings. In some villages it was observed that the members are not able to attend the meetings during day time due to farm work. To ensure participation night meetings have been started. In 18 groups night meetings are carried out. 40 trainings including 9

meetings and one visioning for 1098 SHG members and Leaders were carried out with each training of 4 hours.

PRA was conducted in July for the new villages. Seasonal mapping, Asset mapping and Village profile was prepared. Based on the findings the interventions have been planned.

13 new SHGs were formed in Kochva, Ditasan, Baliyasan and Jagudan. The new groups were provided with basic stationery for the functioning of their group. This included Registers, Cash box and Passbooks.

Revolving fund has been provided to four women. They were earlier doing small scale businesses related to cutlery and saree. It is to be noted that earlier the revolving fund was given from the Project Shakti but this year the amount has been taken from the loan repaid by the members last year. With the fund they are now doing large scale business.



Project Shakti has formed SHGs since many years and the old SHGs have now reached a stage where sustainability of the institution is possible only if there is a long-term vision. Therefore, a visioning exercise was planned with the women groups of Project Shakti. 33 SHG Leaders from 28 groups of 5 villages participated in this exercise. Programme Director of Cohesion, Ms Hiral Dave facilitated the

exercise. The main objective was to engage women so that they can visualize a future for themselves.



Key action points that have emerged out from the exercise are:

- Exposure visits to be planned on identified businesses
- Setting up non-Farm tailoring units
- Work on larger scale for Snacks enterprise
- Focus on Farm-based vermin compost preparation and also joint marketing needs for crops planted by Shakti farmers
- Facilitate skill-based trainings for youths in villages such as computer skills
- Linking bright students with the fellowships and to see that they get career counselling for better scope in further education.
- Government schemes and its facilitation training to be provided to youths so that they can take it up as village-based livelihood
- Shakti Samanvay Federation to be facilitated to ensure that cluster leadership emerges and future planning is done
- Trainings to the Shakti Samanvay Leaders.
- Meeting and networking of Shakti Samanvay Federation with government officials
- Farm and non-Farm individual businesses also to be facilitated.
- Those who are already members and have already learnt something will try to impart their learning to newer members so that transfer of knowledge takes place.



## Intervention 4: Entrepreneur development and promotion



**Rationale:** As the women are engaged in non-farm activities there has been demand from them to start small businesses on their own. The project is trying to support their entrepreneurial skills by providing support through various means.

**Target:** 20 women to be supported for becoming entrepreneurs during the project period of one year.

**Achievement during the Reporting Period:** 17 women including 12 women in tailoring and 5 women in snack making micro enterprise.

**Expected Outcome:** Project Shakti provides women opportunity to become entrepreneurs through skill-based trainings. It is expected that women become entrepreneurs and generate income from their enterprises.

**Actual Outcome:** 12 women have established their small businesses by selling cutlery, bakery items, confectionery and saree sale and beauty parlor services.

5 women from Shakti Gruh Udyog, who have been making snacks expanded their work by selling snacks at McCain plant and also putting up a Pop-up stall in Delhi.

**17 Women Entrepreneurs  
developed during reporting  
period**







Objective 3: Improve quality of lives of women and girls by creating interventions to improve gender sensitization



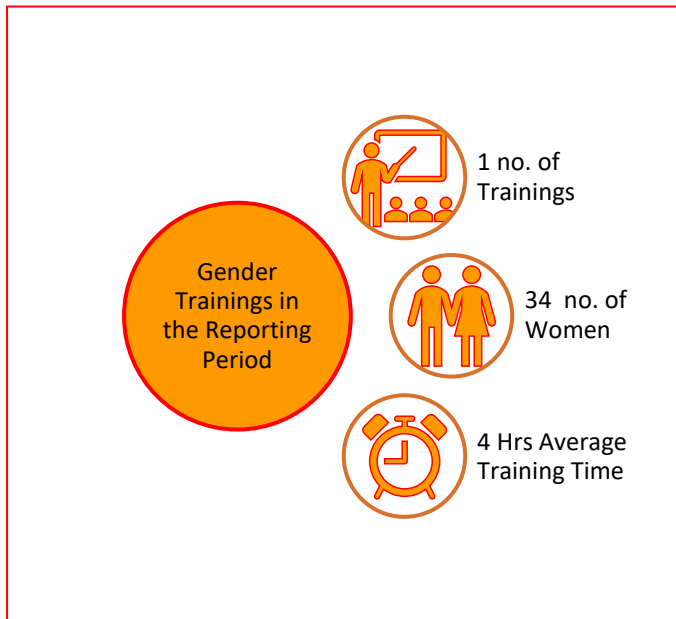
**Vidhiben Nayee, 23 years, Bhasariya village**

**Keen interest and hard work makes Vidhiben a Government Schemes Facilitator!**

Vidhiben from Bhasariya, a young woman wanted to achieve something on her own and not just get married and become a housewife. Her mother works in Nirma company and father works in a hair cutting saloon. She was earlier not aware SHG and importance of savings and credit. She joined Project Shakti facilitated SHG group in Bhasariya. She started doing savings of Rs. 100 in her group and also participated in different trainings on book keeping, record keeping, SHG leadership, government schemes and gender. After all these trainings she developed lot of interest in understanding the eligibility and selection criteria of government schemes. She went into the depth of each government scheme and also visited Panchayat, Block level panchayat offices and district level departments to understand the benefits from the government schemes. She started facilitating widow pension, old age pension, disability pension, Kunwarbai Nu Mameru (For prevention of child marriage) and many other schemes for her village. She became a role model. As on today she has got married and left Bhasariya to go to Surat but she did not leave her skills behind. Even at her in-laws place she is working to facilitate government schemes and has taken this up as a career in her free time. She facilitates and fills forms for the beneficiaries and links them with different departments.

## Intervention 1: Gender sensitization programs

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**Rationale:** To develop a gender sensitive environment in villages where men and women are respected equally, and women are given opportunities to participate in decision making functions within the families and the community.

**Target:**

2 Gender Awareness Trainings to men and women

**Achievement during the Reporting**

**Period:** One Gender Training in Ambaliyasan, Bhasariya, Baliyasan, and Jagudan villages with 34 participants including Leaders, Deputy Leaders and SHG Members.



Gender Training



Adolescent Training in Jagudan



Adolescent Group Meeting

**Expected Outcome:** Through trainings and other interventions it is expected that women get support from men members of the family so that they can establish their identity and choose to be involved in various businesses and income generating activities. Men should support their initiatives by providing support at home so that they get required amount of mobility required for establishing their small businesses. Besides women should get recognition of their roles within the families.

**Actual Outcome:** 1 training was done during last one year, where 34 SHG women participated. It was a four-hour training imparted by a Gender Resource person. The training has helped SHG Leaders and women in understanding the existing stereotypes which increase the gender inequality.



## Intervention 2: Creation of people's organizations (Bal Panchayat and Youth Groups)

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**Rationale:** To develop a gender sensitive environment in villages where men and women are respected equally, and women are given opportunities to participate in decision making functions within the families and the community. Girls become aware of gender roles and how these roles define their own decision making. The children learn about various issues that affect them and their childhood

**Target:**

- 2 Adolescent Girls' Group Trainings
- 3 Bal Panchayat Trainings

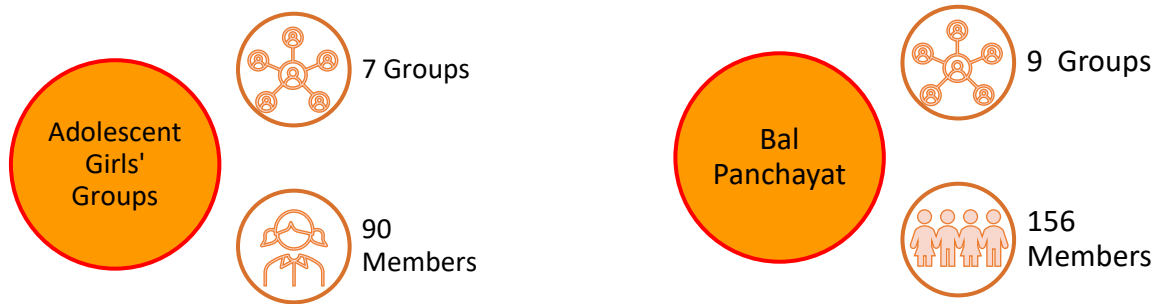
**Expected Outcome:** The Adolescent Girls Groups and Bal Panchayats have a constant inflow and outflow of members as they grow younger. The girls in the adolescent groups generally leave the groups in 2-3 years and new girls join in. Similarly in Bal Panchayats also the children as they move to senior classes, they leave the groups. It is expected that each year new batch of members join in and the one who leave are empowered and informed about their roles and responsibilities.

**Actual Outcome:**

During the reporting period 3 Adolescent Girls Groups were formed with 36 members

Two Adolescent Girls' training were carried out by gender trainer. 53 girls from 3 groups participated in this training.

As the project has formed 9 Bal Panchayats this year including 156 members, all of them were given trainings to bring awareness on health and hygiene. 5 such trainings were carried out to cover all the children.



Objective 4: Natural resource initiative to enhance livelihoods and to end gender discrimination

## Intervention 1: Tree plantation

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**Rationale:** The benefits of planting trees to save the environment, check soil erosion, reduce pollution and improvement in the biodiversity are not unknown to the villagers. Distributing plants for plantation helps in strengthening their belief in the same and also reinforces the commitment of the project to conserve natural resources.

**Target:**

- Plantation of 100 trees with iron cages

**Achievement during the Reporting Period:**

- 110 trees were planted.
- **Expected Outcome:** It is expected that the iron cages will protect the trees from grazing by the cattle and that villagers will take care of the plants. The younger generation will also get motivated to look after the plants.
- **Actual Outcome:** The plantation was done in July. 110 trees of Neem, Borsali (Bullet Wood) and Banyan in 7 villages. The campaign was carried out to bring awareness in 7 villages. The



campaign was culminated in Jagudan with TDO, Sarpanch, McCain team, Talati, Community Leaders, SHG women and Shakti team participating in the event.

## 5. Other initiatives

### *Scholarship:*

Last year 21 vulnerable children were identified from the project villages. They were provided support to meet their educational needs. Tracking of these children is done regularly including tracking of account to ensure regular transfer of scholarship by the payee, sharing of children's progress with the payee from McCain.

### *Learning from Visit to Kudumbashree, Kerala:*

Women from Project Shakti SHG visited Kudumbashree, a community organization of Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs) of women in Kerala during the last reporting period. The effect of that visit was visible when Baliyasan women went to participate in the Gram Sabha. They demanded to participate even after being told by the Talati to leave. They asked for bus service for children and also steps to curb consumption of alcohol in the village. Similar effect is likely to be seen in other villages also. As the *Talatis* (Revenue Officer at village level) were on strike Gram Sabhas have not been carried out in other villages.

### *Visit by McCain staff*

A field visit was carried out by staff of McCain in Bhasariya & Baliyasan villages

### *Miscellaneous Support:*

- McCain expressed interest to donate used fans. A survey was carried out to identify the need. Finally, these fans were distributed in Anganwadis, Schools and PHC. Later an inspection survey was also carried out to assess the electricity wiring safety in the public spaces. 33 such locations have been identified which require renovation of the electricity wiring to make them safe places for the users especially children. Planning to address the issue will be done in the next semester.
- In Baliyasan School, six sitting mats were provided to ensure comfortable environment for students for sitting on ground while doing various activities
- In Ditasan School five Fans were provided to enable a comfortable environment during summer heat.
- Utensils were given in Ditasan, Bhasariya and Jagudan village
- Three Tables were given to Jagudan Gram Panchayat as infrastructure support.
- One storage rack was given to Jagudan Gram Panchayat office.





McCain Staff Field Visit  
Baliyasan



Vikas Development Institute  
Visit



McCain Staff Visit

## 6. Way Forward

The year was a great learning for Project Shakti's interventions and we have decided to move ahead with the detailed visioning undertaken by our team as well as women. We are moving ahead with a scaling up in terms of increased villages which will be done in the coming year 2023-24. We will expand to new 12 villages in Mehsana. Apart from this, Shakti Sangathan (the Community Based organisation) of our SHGs will be strengthened. Larger business of Tailoring unit and Snack making will be taking shape where more women will be employed. Apart from this our learning in terms of Government Schemes has increased and hence we will try to do more campaigns on government schemes in our project area. Similar model of both farm and non-farm based livelihoods will be developed in the new villages. The pillars of Project Shakti –our Sakhi Mitras are becoming role models and they will be now involved in Training new Sakhi mitras of new villages. Innovative practices will be undertaken in farm and non-farm based livelihoods model which will definitely lead to women empowerment. Not only economic empowerment will be taking place but also social empowerment and decision power in women is increased which is a motivation for us.