

# **Together We Can: The Role of Women's Action Groups as Agents of Social and Economic Change in India**

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## **Research Design**

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# Together We Can

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- Deprivation of Women in India
- Mahila Samakhya
  - Started in 1986
  - World's largest government funded women's empowerment programme
  - Around 1.2 million women across 10 Indian States.
  - Mobilize poor and lower caste women in rural India.
  - Holistic in nature.
  - Anecdotal evidence in support of impact.

# Measures of Economic and Social Change

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- Labour market outcomes:
  - Labour force participation, weekly hours worked, nature of occupation, type of wages etc.
- Economic status:
  - Income, wages, savings, assets, and debt.
- Gender inequalities in the labour market (male-female comparison): Wage structure for individual members of the household
- Factors affecting past and future labour market outcomes:
  - Adult women: highest level of education achieved, literacy in native language, literacy in English and Hindi, financial literacy etc.
  - Female children and adolescents: school attendance, highest level of education achieved, hours worked during school-year etc.
- Awareness:
  - Access to and awareness, enrolment and utilization of entitlement programs and other sources of financial security.
- Community participation:
  - Awareness and participation of village and community issues
- Empowerment:
  - Women's rights and freedoms, attitudes towards gender violence etc.

# Research Questions

- Does the MS approach improve labour market outcomes for women in low income contexts?
- Does the MS approach decrease gender inequalities in the labour market?
- Does the MS approach improve potential for future labour market outcomes for women in low-income contexts?
- Does the MS approach increase women's access to and utilization of entitlement programmes and other sources of financial security?
- Does the MS approach and process lead to greater gains in these economic outcomes (as listed above) for women, as compared with traditional targeted programming, like self-help groups?
- What are the factors / processes of the MS approach that play a role in advancing women's economic empowerment? How are these factors / processes similar or different from other economic empowerment programme models? How are these factors / processes similar or different across *sanghas* and states?
- What are the various barriers to economic empowerment of women that the MS approach helps women overcome? How are these barriers similar or different from those targeted by other economic empowerment programme models? How are these barriers similar or different across *sanghas* and states?
- How can the MS approach be strengthened to advance women's economic empowerment outcomes further?

# Method and Scope: Snap Shot

Characteristics	Karnataka	Bihar
Methodology used	Mixed	Mixed
Quantitative Method	Randomized Control Experiments	Quasi-Experimental (Propensity Score Matching)
Number of district covered	1	1
Sample size of households	3000 (1500 intervention and 1500 non-intervention)	3000 (1500 intervention and 1500 non-intervention)
Rounds of survey	Three (baseline, midline and endline)	Cross Sectional
Quantitative estimation strategy	Difference-in-difference	Least Square Dummy Variable
Type of qualitative methodologies	Participation observation, FGDs, Interviews, and Case studies	Participation observation, FGDs, Interviews, and Case studies
Target sample for qualitative methodologies	4 clusters (with 10 villages in each cluster)	4 clusters (with 10 villages in each cluster)
Target FGDs	5 (minimum) per village	5 (minimum) per village
Target Interviews	10 (minimum) per village	10 (minimum) per village
Target Case Studies	10	10

# Estimating the Immediate Impact of Mahila Samakhyas

- Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) in Karnataka

State : Karnataka  
District : Haveri
























District	1						
Cluster	30	(5)	(5)	(5)	Intervention		
		(5)	(5)	(5)	Non- Intervention		
Village	300	(50)	(50)	(50)			
		(50)	(50)	(50)			
HH	3000	(500)	(500)	(500)			
		(500)	(500)	(500)			

# Estimating the Long-term Impact of Mahila Samkhyas

- Average effect of Mahila Samakhya vary by duration of exposure adopting a Quasi-Experimental Approach (PSM) and Cross-sectional survey.



State : Bihar

					3	District		
Intervention	(5)		(5)		(5)		30	Cluster
Non- Intervention	(5)		(5)		(5)			
	(50)		(50)		(50)		300	Village
	(50)		(50)		(50)			
	(500)		(500)		(500)		3000	HH
	(500)		(500)		(500)			

# Ethnographic methods

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- State level Engagements
- District/Taluk level Engagements
- Village Level Engagements
  - FGDs
  - Semi-structured interviews
  - Case studies



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Thank you