Impact of Mahila Samakhya on Social and Economic Change:

Evidence from Diverse Research

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Introduction

This presentation will be about

- Impact of Mahila Samakhya
 - using Quantitative studies
 - using Qualitative studies
- Redefining Empowerment and Education
- The need for MS

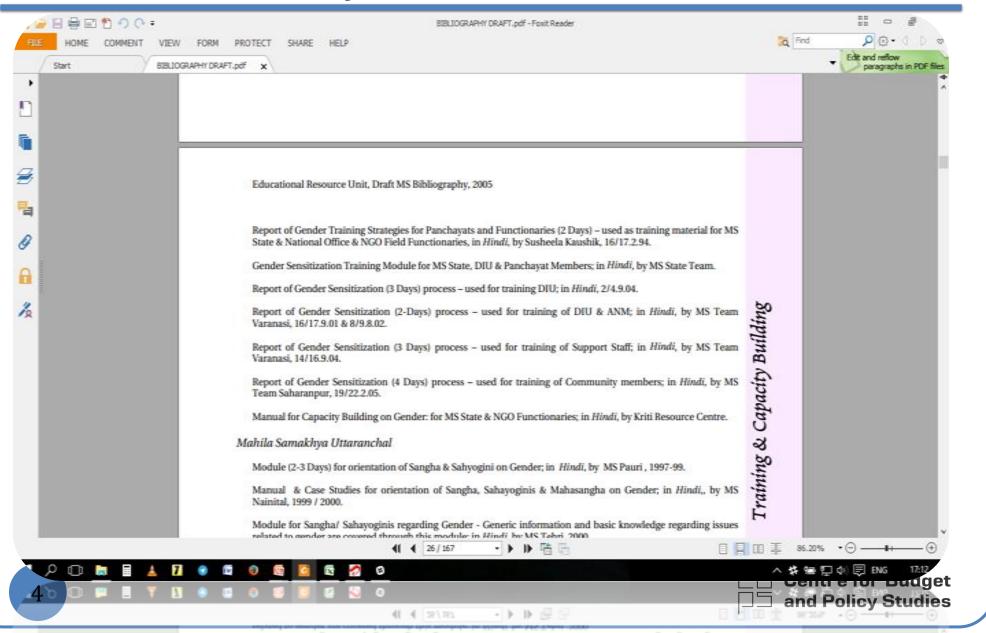


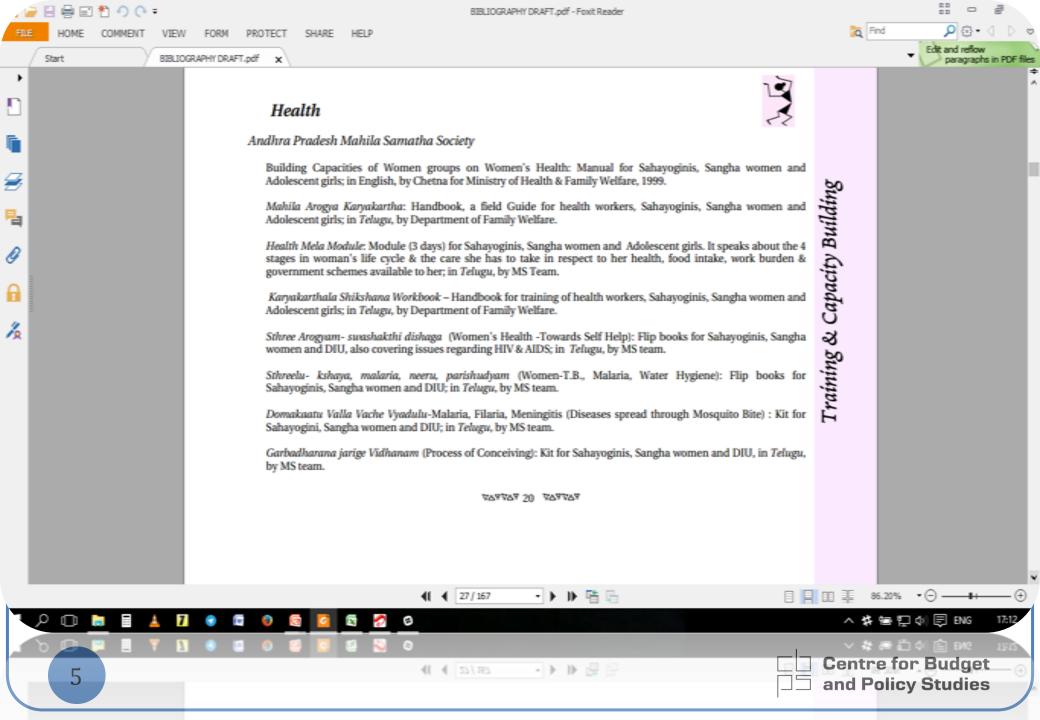
Types of Research

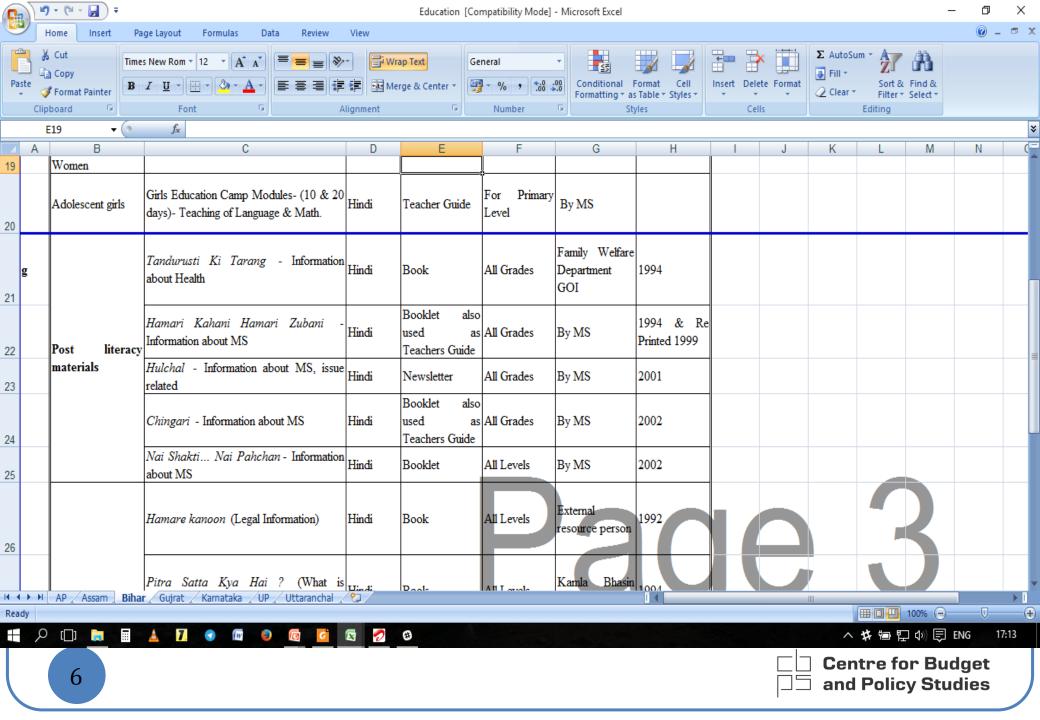
- Summary of research:
 - Independent Research Studies
 - Published Papers
 - Policy documents
 - Articles
 - Dissertations
 - etc.

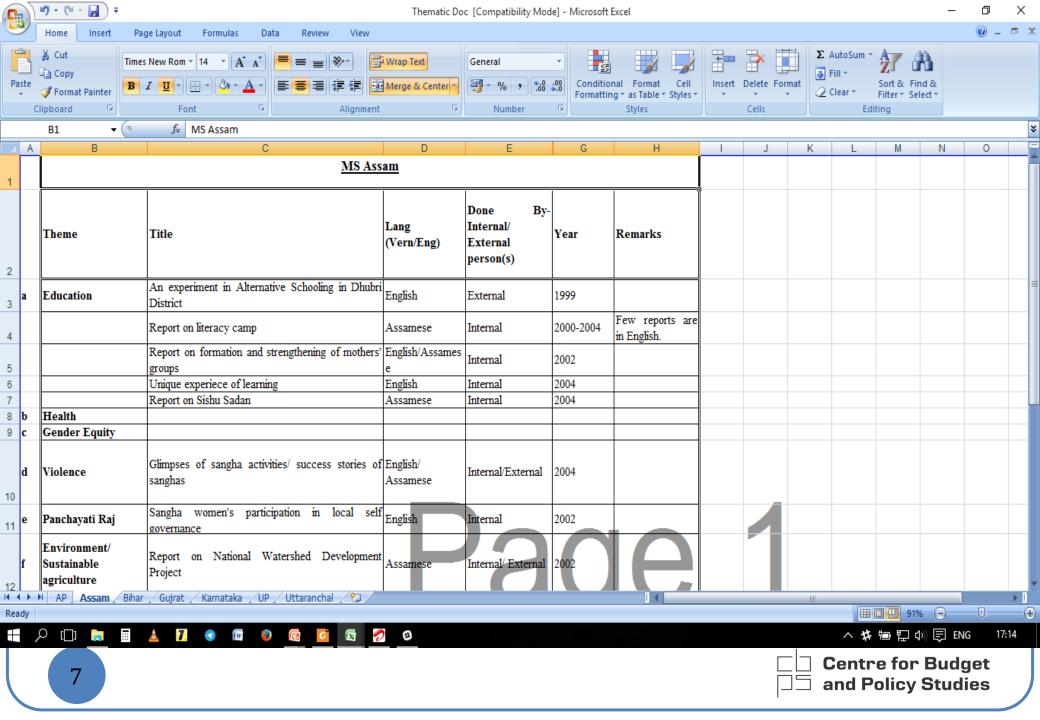


Documentation of MS









Empowerment and Education

"I want to make sure that our daughters and granddaughters are not humiliated by having to make their thumb marks instead of writing their names."

(Jandhyala 2003)



Empowerment and Education

- Quantitative Analysis
 - Empowerment indicators: MS significantly increases women's access to employment outside the home, ability to leave home without permission, and political participation (Kandpal, Baylis & Arends-Kuenning, 2012)
 - Potential to transform: An increase of 20 to 30% empowerment outcomes can be predicted in nonintervention areas if MS is introduced (Kandpal, Baylis & Arends-Kuenning, 2012)



Empowerment and Education

- Qualitative Analysis
 - Beyond literacy: Reframing educational structures and literacy and contesting access to and the power of the text (Ghose & Mullick, 2014; Jain 2003; Joseph 1991)
 - Empowerment as a socio-political process: Process is constantly negotiated, instead of a movement from point A to point B (Batliwala 2007; Ghose & Mullick, 2014; Jandhyala 2003; Chandra, year unknown)
 - Engendering empowerment: Exercising agency and rights as individuals, and validation of women's experience through breaking of barriers of shame and guilt (Bhatla & Rajan, 2003).



Social Networks and Community Building

'The village is ours, this street is ours, this hamlet is ours. Housework is ours, the outside work is ours"

A song from MS Telangana (Guenther, 2014)



Social Networks and Community Building

- Quantitative Analysis
 - Social capital through educational outcomes: MS
 increases parental awareness, participation, and contribution
 to school activities and has a direct relationship with preschool enrollment (Janssens 2004b).
 - Creation of Social Networks: MS able to diversify social networks and create relationships outside of caste and kinship networks(Kandpal & Baylis, 2013)
 - Community building and Trust: MS members have increased trust in community members and strangers; contribution to community projects significantly larger; ability to offset community characteristics that inhibit collective action (Janssens, 2010)



Social Networks and Community Building

- Qualitative Analysis
 - Social Networks: Reorganisation of household relationships, creating sisterhood, capacity building, peer learning, and creating solidarity within communities, especially diverse groups (Behar & Aiyar, 2003)
 - Strengthening community: Community-owned, controlled, and validated decisions; cutting across traditional caste and kinship ties; (Bhatla & Rajan, 2003)



Intergenerational and Spill over Effects

"The Mahila Samakhya members regularly worked for the school, repairing the roof, filling in potholes, and so on. The members of the Village Education Committee, very passive until then, suddenly realized that 'those low-caste women' were actually doing their job. Feeling too proud to let this happen, they subsequently started to organize activities themselves, involving other parents" (Janssens 2010).



Intergenerational and Spill over Effects

- Quantitative Analysis
 - Spill over effects for Health and Education: MS has far-reaching consequences for MS women, their children, and their community; MS has significant impact on girls in terms of immunization and education within the community (Janssens, 2004a);
 - Non-participating households: Awareness of educational programs higher even among non-participating households; Increase in community trust for non-participating households and villages (Janssens, 2004b; Janssens 2010)
 - Intergenerational effects: Age at marriage increased over time, but more in MS Districts. Educational levels have improved, but significantly more in MS Districts (Bhuwania, Mukherji & Swaminathan, 2016).
- Qualitative Analysis: Greatest impact on girls' education; MS creates structures for sustenance of impact (Jandhyala 2003)



Strengthening Democracy and Political Participation

"They [local administration] have a problem with us because we don't bow in front of them".

(Mangla, 2013)



Strengthening Democracy and Political Participation

- Qualitative Analysis
 - Impact on Political Participation: Transforming political culture, the exercise of power in public space, and creating political accountability through sanghas (Balitwala, 1996; Behar & Aiyar, 2003; Jain 2003; Jandhyala, 2003)
 - Governance: Resisting the bureacratic and 'scheme'-based processes; MS working to move beyond the systemic rules and hierarchies (Mangla, 2013);
 - Strengthening democracy: Providing base for creating consensus based on democratic principles; redefining justice; creating culture of questioning, critical thinking, collective decision-making, and mobilisation on public issues (Bhatla & Rajan, 2003; Chandra, unknown; Mangla 2013; Jandhyala, 2003)



Livelihood and Access to Financial Resources

"We try and hire past MSK learners. They may not have very good literacy or they may even have forgotten, but they have a good perspective on gender issues" (Ghose & Mullick, 2014).



Livelihood and Access to Financial Resources

- Quantitative Analysis
 - Employment: Decrease in women working in domestic work, with an increase in percentage of women working outside the home or running small business (Ghose & Mullick, 2014)
- Qualitative Analysis
 - Livelihood and access to financial resources: Creation of agricultural projects, building on women's experiences and knowledge, accessing common property resources and using seed banks etc. (Jandhyala 2003).



Violence and concepts of Justice

"Aise kaccha faisla nahin karte hum" (Bhatla & Rajan, 2003)



Violence and concepts of Justice

- Qualitative Analysis
 - Arbitration and violence: Impact of women-initiated community responses to gender violence, community-based arbitration forum, and resolution process, presence of sanghas integral to the arbitration process, violence significantly reduced; complete resolution not necessary for significant change in women's self image (Bhatla & Rajan, 2003; Ghose & Mullick, 2014; Jain 2003; Martin, 2014)

Identity and Social Structure

"And by 'better', women meant being able to see things from a point of view which was different, and not necessarily held by family members or society"

(Ghose & Mullick, 2014).



Identity and Social Structure

- Qualitative Analysis
 - Individual impact: Marked changes in social roles and attitudes, emergency of leadership, changes in selfperception; self-reflection practices; greater physical mobility (Das & Agarwal, 2004; Ghose & Mullick, 2014; Joseph, 1991)
 - Caste: Influence on caste relations, and caste identity (Jandhyala, 2003; Mangla 2012)
 - **Family dynamics:** Changing power dynamics through a slow, tentative, and **constantly** negotiated process; creating spaces of autonomy and action within the household (Jandhyala 2003);

Why we need MS

- Different development model: MS not focused on service delivery; Individual not the only beneficiary; Collective as the basis for questioning social norm and creating social change (Jandhyala 2003; Joseph 1991)
- Institutional change: MS process necessary for instituting long term, organic social change, and to support institutional incentives and structures such as RTE, RTI, and the reservation system etc.
- Citizenship: MS has demonstrated the capacity to engage women, girls, and communities to be critical and engaged citizens.



Thank you.

