

Summary on Social and Economic Impact of Project Shakti

A Study Conducted by Kantar Republic
FY 2023-24





Shakti Programme Overview and Evolution

- Launched in 2001, Project Shakti is an initiative by HUL which aims to empower underprivileged rural women by creating livelihood opportunities. HUL has trained thousands of Shakti Entrepreneurs (SE) across villages in a bid to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and make them financially independent and more empowered.
- Starting with 17 women in two states, by December 2021, it provided opportunities to nearly 1,65,000 SEs & their families in 18 states, while enhancing HUL distribution reach to villages with as few as 2000 inhabitants.
- SEs are supported by the Rural Sales Promoters (RSPs) who recruit, coach, manage, and maintain a network of 30 to 35 SEs each.
- From 2018 onwards, HUL started inducting SEs into Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme whereby HUL incentive is deposited directly in their respective bank accounts to bring in more transparency and faster payment.
- Recently, social initiatives like Mera Poshan Mera Gaon have been introduced to spread awareness about the benefits of good nutrition among children and pregnant/lactating women.

Assessment objectives

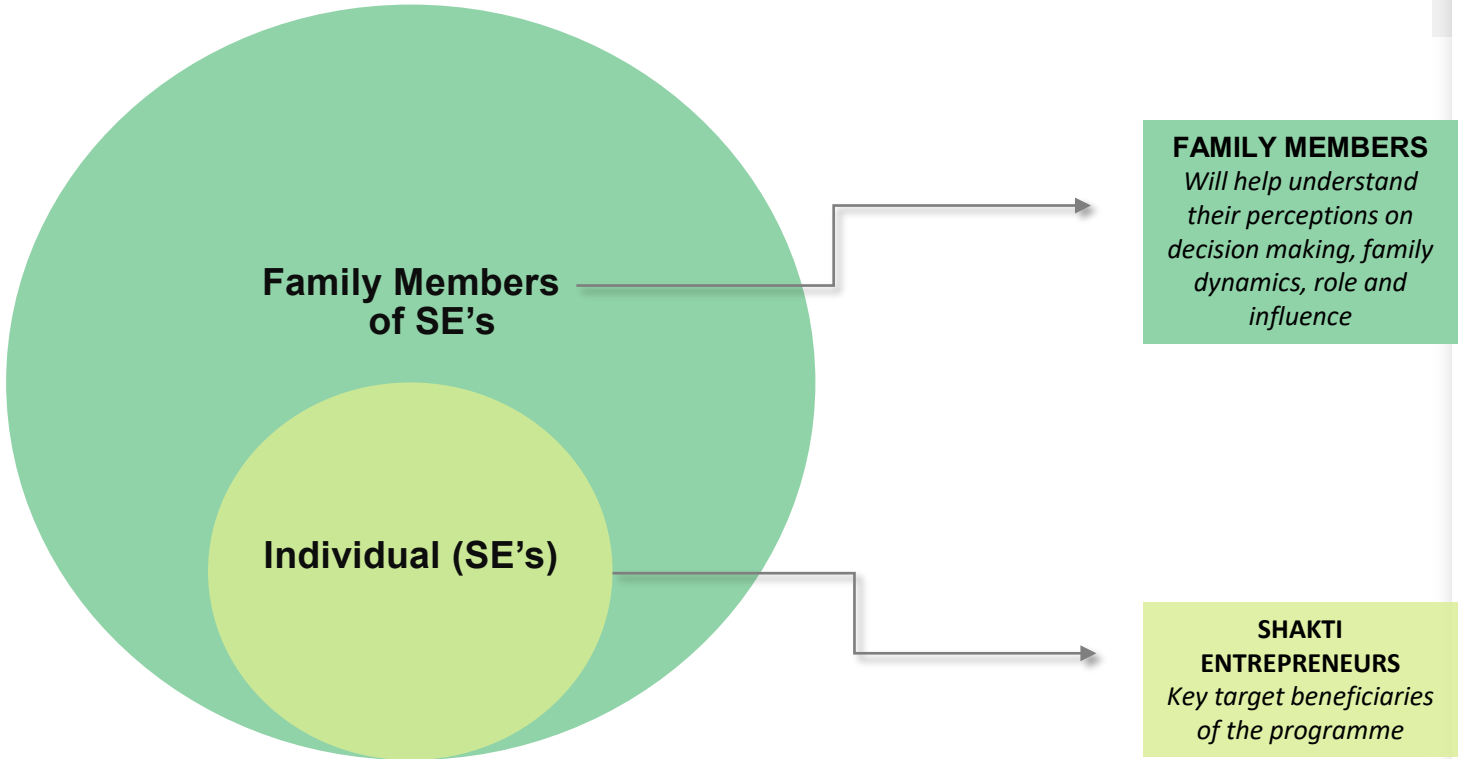
The broad objective of the study is to assess the perceived impact that Project Shakti has been able to make in terms of the Financial and Social Empowerment of the Shakti Entrepreneurs.

- **Programme engagement:** Understanding the level of involvement of SEs in the business
- **Economic impact:** Understanding if Project Shakti has created any economic impact for SE and her family
- **Social impact:** Impact of Project Shakti in making SEs socially empowered
- **Community and social participation:** Understanding the level of engagement of SEs with AWWs, ASHAs, and other Govt. institutions in the village. Understanding community participation and interpersonal relationships. Understanding SEs perspective in the Mera Poshan Mera Gaon cascade
- **Impact of DBT:** Impact of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) of incentive amount in SEs' bank accounts
- **Identifying needs and challenges:** Identifying challenges faced, support required by SEs, key areas where HUL can build knowledge/capacities of & provide support to SEs to drive their businesses better



Assessment participants

Aligned with the program's emphasis on enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of Shakti Enterprises (SEs) and elevating their social standing within both families and the broader community, the evaluation encompassed Shakti Enterprises and their respective family members.



Assessment design and methodology

Quantitative & qualitative data have been triangulated to enable a nuanced and deeper understanding of the envisaged impact & ensure contextualization and consistency of findings

1

Cross-sectional surveys with SEs

The impact reported through the study is arrived at through cross-sectional surveys with SEs and qualitative discussions with family members and Shakti's.

2

Qualitative discussions with family members and Shakti's

The impact parameters have been assessed against self-reported values as perceived by SEs, and their family members.

3

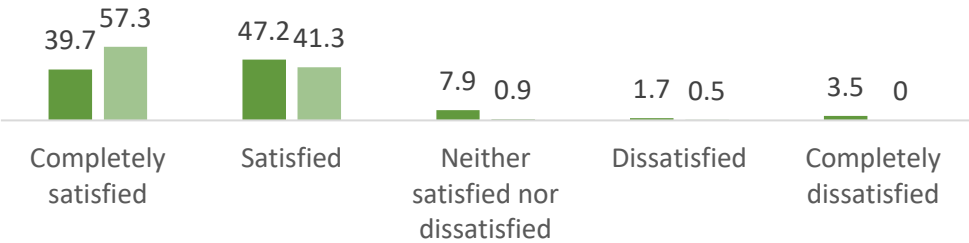
Quantitative surveys with SEs

Social & economic impact perceived by SEs, their families, and communities as a result of Shakti programme.



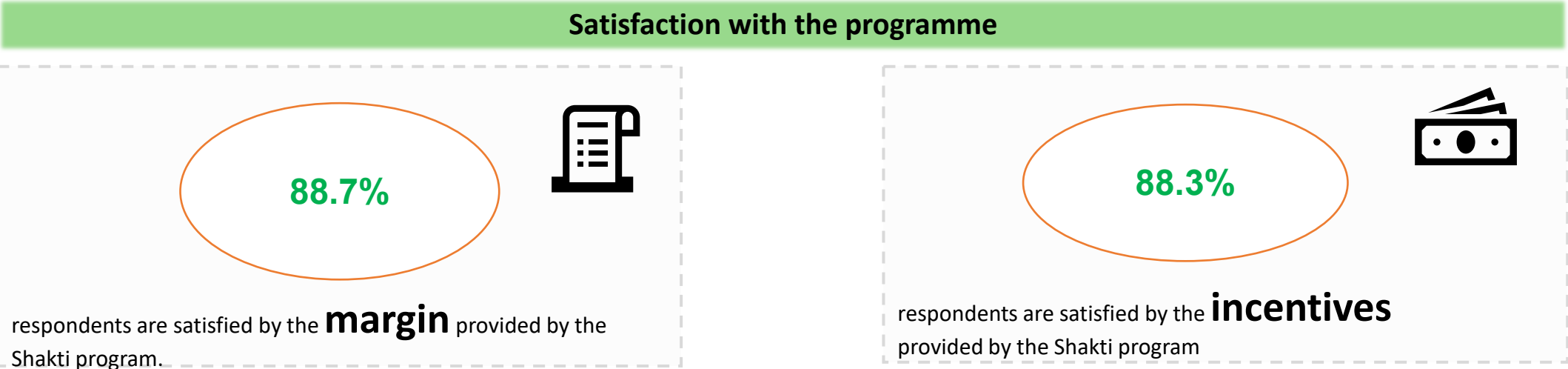
Nearly nine out of ten Shaktis were satisfied with their overall experience of being associated with Shakti Programme

Overall experience with the shakti programme



Base: All respondents(Shaktis); n=213 (2023) & 229 (2022)

“Before opening this shop, the idea was born out of a desire for business and shared benefits. Alone at home, we recognized the need for additional income. Although my husband was working, the responsibility for the family is a joint effort. It's not about doing it all on one's own; both partners need to contribute. I firmly believe that for progress, a woman must pursue her aspirations. Thankfully, my husband supported my decision, allowing me to embark on this journey of work and empowerment.”
Shakti, IDI, Bihar”



8 out of 10 Shaktis were satisfied with their experience of interacting with the RSPs

96.2% of respondents are satisfied with their overall experience of interacting with the Rural Sales Promoters (RSP)

Shakti's attitude towards RSPs

97.2%



Believe that the RSP helps them to run their business better

97.2%



Believe that RSPs are well equipped to solve their business problems

88.7%



Easy to reach out to the RSP

Economic Impact of Project Shakti

👍 Level of agreement (“Strongly agree” & “agree”)

97.2% ₹

After becoming a shakti,
I have been able to
contribute to household income
and save money for future

91.7% 📄

The extra money earned from shakti
has helped me to spend more
on child education

92.0% 📁

The extra money earned from
shakti has helped me
to spend more on myself

93.9% 💵

The extra money earned from shakti has
helped me to spend more
on household expenses



“

Even though I am a housewife, I don't want to sit idly at home. I want to do something in my life. That's why I decided to join the Shakti Program along with my husband. My husband also encouraged me to do something instead of just being a housewife.

”

- Shakti, IDI, West Bengal

Improvements in social empowerment indicators



Level of agreement (“Strongly agree” & “agree”)

95.3%



I can Take Independent
Financial decisions

93.9%



I am able to purchase items
which I could not afford earlier

96.2%



I feel confident in dealing with
people after I became a Shakti

96.1%



I contribute to the decisions
related to my children’s education



“Yes, I’ve **observed a significant transformation** in her. Previously, like many women in villages, **she was reserved and hesitant** to engage with unfamiliar individuals. However, due to the shop and market exposure, **she now confidently communicates** with every customer, regardless of gender or age. Her responses mirror the confidence she has gained, and she interacts with people in a manner that reflects her newfound assurance.”

Husband, IDI, Maharashtra

Community and Social Participation



Level of agreement (“Strongly agree” & “agree”)

97.7% 

I think people value me more as I am financially independent now

92.5% 

People now ask for my advice

86.4% 

I feel comfortable while speaking in community meetings

95.8% 

I encourage people to adopt better health and hygiene practices



“

People ask me how I started my business. I was just a housewife before. But now, as **I am running my own business**, people get curious and discuss about my business.

- Shakti, IDI, West Bengal

”

“

The way she roams about, the way she talks, **the way she introduces herself and mixes with other people has changed**. She used to speak less early but now she talks more with people regarding business.

- Son, IDI, West Bengal

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Thank You!