

Empowerment of rural women through land ownership, securing entitlements and leadership in *sajiv kheti*

An Impact study of WGWLO network's interventions in Gujarat

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Vijay Parmar and Astad Pastakia

For

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Acknowledgements

Kindly provide full names and designations where applicable

The authors are indeed grateful to WGWLO members and its secretariat for giving us an opportunity to study the long term impacts of this unique network institution on the lives and livelihoods of rural women in Gujarat who were discriminated against in a predominantly patriarchal society. These impacts were created through well planned specialized and coordinated interventions for women's empowerment over a period of a decade and half.

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We trust that the three reports prepared by us will serve to be useful in reflecting on the impacts created so far and help the network in drawing up the agenda for the coming years.

Executive Summary

Background

Working Group for Women and Land Ownership (WGWLO) is a formal but unregistered network of 18 NGOs, 19 CBOs and four individuals across 17 districts in the state of Gujarat. Established in 2005, the network works on the issue of women's ownership of agriculture land and access to productive resources from the perspective of women's rights and empowerment, as well as livelihoods security. The network functions as a multi-level, collective platform for sustained action and policy advocacy on the issue of alienation of women from their land rights in patriarchal societies.

Objectives and methodology

The present study is designed to capture the process of empowerment that women land owners have gone through and assess the socio-economic impacts on their lives. This includes the fleet of women who have been working as para-legal workers and extension workers for sustainable agriculture. It may be noted that parallel to this study, the authors facilitated two separate learning workshops on two recent initiatives of the network - one on the functioning of Legal Clinics and the other on the Forest rights Act (FRA) initiative. Since separate reports have been submitted to the network, these aspects have been kept out of the purview of this report, which focuses mainly on the impacts created by the network over time on the socio-economic status of the women that have gone through a process of empowerment.

"The overall objective is to study impact on the lives of women who have owned land and have shifted to sustainable agriculture practices in the last 1-5 years; and on para legal workers (PLWs) and Mahila Kisan Sakhis (MKSSs) who have enabled this."

Since the network is spread all over the state, it was decided to select 4 Swa Bhumi kendras (SBKs) from four different geographical zones. This was carried out in consultation with the network Secretariat. A sample survey of 80 women farmers was carried out with 20 women drawn from each of the four zones, with the help of five CBOs (women sangathans) working in those areas.

The survey focused on the experience of these women at three levels:

- a) empowerment in the process of securing land ownership
- b) empowerment through securing land related entitlements from government
- c) gaining identity as a farmer/progressive farmer (from the original status of a non-descript housewife)

We have included two case studies of such outstanding workers in the network. These caselets are an attempt to understand the quality of leadership and the role played by senior women activists in promoting leadership in the network at the grassroots level

Scale and scope of the interventions

The network has enabled/ supported an estimated 8000 women to secure their land rights so far. As per WGWLO secretariat's MIS data for the past three years shows that a total of 1203 women secured a total of 720 acres of land which averages out to 0.60 acres per beneficiary. Two-thirds of the beneficiaries (66.8%) during the recent past have been tribals who are among the most marginalized in the state.

The amount of monetary benefits accrued to women land owners through two government schemes was about Rs. 6.1 million. The fact that women land owners can now access these entitlements directly from government as they are now considered farmers, provides a sense of empowerment to these women, many of whom are widows.

Apart from this, WGWLO has supported 667 women farmers directly from its own funds amounting to Rs 4.15 m. These funds were deployed for demonstration kits, trial of new varieties, organic fertilizers, pesticides and inputs for water conservation among other activities designed to promote *sajiv kheti* in the project areas. It has also enabled the member agencies to set up tool libraries that make available on rent tools that reduce drudgery of women in agriculture.

Key findings from the survey

Profile of sample:

- 85% of the sample comprises of widows and 10% of women who are wives. Very few cases of daughters using their land rights from paternal home were encountered. The sample was dominated by OBCs and STs which together accounted for 95% of the sample

Land ownership:

- The average size of land secured was 6.61 vighas (3.96 acres). However, the variation is quite large with minimum of 1 vigha and maximum of 32 vighas.
- Close to 60% of the sample reported having their names jointly with other members of the family.
- The average cost of securing land was little more than a thousand rupees. WGWLO has made a major impact on the cost by reducing it by a factor of 10 to 15 times. This of course does not include the cost of mental agony that is also removed.
- 40 percent of the respondents had been able to access land within 3 months, 56.25% within 6 months and 78.5% within 12 months of applying. Only the more complicated cases took longer than a year and were most likely referred to the Legal Clinics.
- The data shows that 25% of the sample (mostly from the tribal belt) are still without access to water. Hence for such women additional help would be needed to attain food and livelihood security by augmenting their income sources through off-farm or non-farm activities. Some of them were found to be eking out an existence by working as farm labourers for few months of the year, even at an advanced age.
- 54% of the sample actually owns the irrigation resources while 17% has access but do not own the resource. These may be women who are allowed to draw water from the well of a neighbor or relative, or those who can borrow a water machine to lift water from the pond or some other source.

- 92.5% of the sample have said that they found the PLW either extremely helpful or very helpful

Entitlements:

- 69.4% reported benefiting from schemes related to promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry. The remaining 30.6% responses were related to welfare schemes of which widows' pension was by far the largest component.

Sajiv Kheti:

- From our sample of 80, 11 women had taken up demonstrations in their fields. Several of them claimed that the demonstrations were successful and many people from the village as well as neighbouring villages had come to take a look at their fields. This had changed the identity of these women as they were now being consulted for *sajiv kheti*.
- The adoption of two main agri-inputs viz. organic fertilizers and bio-pesticides over the past five years show an identical pattern. The level of adoption has been increasing gradually and has been the maximum during the past two years. This is because the promotion of *sajiv kheti* by the network started about three years ago.
- The large majority of women farmers had adopted organic farming in less than 2 vighas of land. This was mainly to produce foodgrain for home consumption.
- 58.75% of the respondents stated that they were practicing the use of a combination of organic and chemical inputs in land devoted to production for the market as they did not want the yield to drop.
- Only 42.5% respondents seemed to perceive definite improvement in soil health. This was to be expected as many of the respondents have adopted *sajiv kheti* only in the current season or since 1-2 years which is not sufficient to see much change in soil health.

Economic impact:

- A large majority (88.75%) of the sample stated that they could grow enough food to meet food security of the family for 12 months
- Close to 50% of the respondents have said that they have acquired new knowledge and skills to augment their livelihoods. However, most of these responses refer to *sajiv kheti* and /or ability to take up farming on their own. Perhaps only 5 percentage would have tried to diversify their income beyond farming.

Social impact:

- *Recognition as a farmer:* 80% respondents felt that they have acquired a new identity of "woman farmer" which feels very different from being an ordinary housewife.
- *Independent decision making:* 75% of the sample women stated that they were now able to take their own decisions within the family, without having to consult anyone else. Most of these women were widows who have been empowered.

- *Helping other women:* Only 31.25% have come forward to help others while a large majority has remained contented with their own lives. The picture is particularly disappointing in the sample from Saurashtra region.
- *Practicing gender equality within family:* 50% of the sample appears to be practicing gender equality within their own family. This is manifested in the kind of decisions they take for their own children when it comes to educating girls or getting their names on the inheritance list as compared to boys.
- *Practicing gender equality outside the family (village, community):* The results show that the majority (65.0 %) have started asserting themselves outside the family. However, 65.4 % of these women are rather cautious and take a stand on selected issues only as they may fear retaliation or because they are still not confident enough.
- *Social recognition at the local levels:* 22.5% respondents have received some kind of recognition at local level of which 4 women have been recognized for their leadership at the block/district levels
- *Mental security and reduced vulnerability:* It is often assumed that land ownership would lead to reduced vulnerability and therefore greater mental security. While the women from central/northern Gujarat seem to have reported this in significant numbers (65%), the same is not true for the other three regions. Perhaps one reason could be that most of the women have succeeded in getting their names on the land document but independent possession (partitioning) remains elusive. This means that the sense of vulnerability still remains. This may be because in the case of joint ownership, names of people have often been removed from the records through sabotage without the knowledge of land owners. Although cases of such cheating have been reduced dramatically after computerization in 2010, and placement of records in public domain, people may still have that fear based on past experiences.

Leadership building through the network

Two case studies of senior women leaders within the network brought out why these women were successful/ Both Sumitraben and Ushaben had endured a lot in their early struggle either within their family and /or community or with unscrupulous outsiders and cheats. Their struggle enabled them to become what they are today and be sensitive to other women facing similar challenges in life

At present the network has women workers who are at various stages of growth and empowerment. Some who have joined more recently and are relatively young benefit a great deal from the inputs of more senior women leaders like Sumitra ben and Ushaben. The network provides learning platforms and regular meetings which makes this happen. Also with the use of hand-held devices information sharing among the group members has become very quick and efficient, which has also led to the building of a collective pool of knowledge. This pool of knowledge makes the group as a whole more proficient day by day, enabling them to think of higher goals in the coming years.

For women who had been struggling to get their land title against all odds, the sense of empowerment was enormous. It gave them a lot of self-confidence as well as an independent identity. It prompted them to take up farming on their own and/or explore new livelihood options. In this endeavor too, the

network came forward to hold their hands through the SKM workers who brought with them access to new technology and knowledge as well as linkages for accessing agri-inputs and tools for reducing drudgery. A fairly impressive proportion of these women who had latent talents flourished and soon became leaders in their own right. They became brand ambassadors for the network and were instrumental in identifying other such needy women and helping them to secure their rights. The fact that they became knowledgeable in *sajiv kheti*, meant that large number of neighbours and farmers from other villages as well came to see their demonstration and to gather information from them. Their efforts to spread this knowledge has also been recognized by government and other agencies, further boosting their efforts and resolve. Government departments and extension agencies like KVK have welcomed the emergence of empowered groups of women with whom they find it convenient to work with within the existing legal framework.

Suggestions for the way forward

- The strategies adopted by the network to empower women (particularly single women) starting with land ownership, seem to be effective for the most part, except where women do not feel the need and get the land rather easily without having to make any effort.
- So far the network has concentrated mostly on OBCs and STs. There is considerable scope of reaching out to women facing issues of land ownership in the same geographical areas from other communities as well.
- The local Sangathans have been playing a very important role in providing handholding support and guidance to women land owners, leading to overall socio-economic empowerment. They should continue to do so as it enables the women to live a life of dignity and security. Many of these institutions have been facing the challenge of financial sustainability which is a common issue that could be addressed by the network.
- The PLWs and MKSs have been doing a commendable job as can be seen from the ratings received in the survey. A few gaps in handholding were observed. The network may like to reflect on these gaps – when they happen and how to ensure that these gaps can be taken care of through regular contact with the women.
- The secretariat has been doing a challenging job of trying to keep track of the progress across the state. The network needs to develop norms such that vital information on the progress on different fronts may be collected as a matter of routine on a monthly basis. To this end, some more efforts may be needed to streamline the management information system.

1.0 Introduction

Working Group for Women and Land Ownership (WGWLO) is a formal but unregistered network of 18 NGOs, 19 CBOs and four individuals across 17 districts in the state of Gujarat. Established in 2005, the network works on the issue of women's ownership of agriculture land and access to productive resources from the perspective of women's rights and empowerment, as well as livelihoods security. The network functions as a multi-level, collective platform for sustained action and policy advocacy on the issue of alienation of women from their land rights in patriarchal societies.

Various institutional mechanisms and strategies have been promoted through different local institutional structures in the efforts to advance women's land rights and women farmers' identities. These include 18 *Swa Bhoomi Kendras* (SBKs) that facilitate the process of land ownership for women with the help of state administration at the block level. These kendras are run by a fleet of women para-legal workers specially trained by the network and its member institutions. In case of complicated legal cases, the SBKs provide access to legal advice through the mechanism of Legal Clinics.

As a next step the network decided to enable women land owners to learn how to practice sustainable agriculture and become leaders in organic farming. Hence another fleet of extension workers (*Mahila Kisan Sakhis*) was created which guides them in the latest practices of sustainable agriculture and helps to link them up to government schemes.

More recently, the network has also initiated a campaign in tribal areas to enable women and men to secure their forest land rights through Forest Rights Act. A large number of applications under the Act have been in a state of limbo due to inertia of the state level bureaucracy. Only a small percentage of applicants have been granted titles to land that they have been cultivating over a long period. Where applications have been rejected, they have not been given the reasons for rejection. A majority of applicants are not informed of the status of their application for four-five years.

The present study is designed to capture the process of empowerment that women land owners have gone through and assess the socio-economic impacts on their lives. This includes the fleet of women who have been working as para-legal workers and extension workers for sustainable agriculture. It may be noted that parallel to this study, the authors facilitated two separate learning workshops on behalf of WGWLO one on the functioning of Legal Clinics and the other on the FRA initiative. Since separate reports emerging from the learning workshops have been submitted to the network, these aspects have been kept out of the purview of this report, which focuses mainly on the impacts created by the network over time.

2.0 Purpose and methodology

As stated in the ToR,

“The overall objective is to study impact on the lives of women who have owned land and have shifted to sustainable agriculture practices in the last 1-5 years; and on PLW and Mahila Kisan Sakhis who have enabled this.”

It further clarified that since “the assignment is not an evaluation exercise, the documentation of impacts should use methods which are not evaluative in nature.” Rather these should synthesize the strategies deployed through various interventions and trace them to outcomes achieved and impacts created.

Since the network is spread all over the state, it was decided to select 4 SBKs from four different geographical zones. This was carried out in consultation with the network Secretariat. Annexure 1 provides the list of 18 SBKs in different zones with the selected SBKs in highlights. A sample survey of 80 women farmers was carried out with 20 women drawn from each of the four zones.

The survey instrument sought to gather information on the experience of these women at three levels (see Annexure 2):

- d) empowerment in the process of securing land ownership
- e) accessing other land related entitlements from government schemes
- f) gaining identity as a farmer/progressive farmer (from the original status of a non-descript housewife)

We were informed by the secretariat that it was possible that not all women in the sample would have gone through all the three experiences. This is because some women farmers may have secured land on their own initiative much before WGWLO. Also some women may have secured land but may have not adopted practices of sustainable agriculture promoted by the network during the past two years. Under the circumstances we allowed the individual member institutions to suggest a list of women preferably who have gone through all three stages and who have been with the network for at least three years. These criteria however could not be met rigorously in all the locations, which may be considered a limitation of the study.

Although the TOR does not specify any separate methodology to assess the impact on the field workers drawn from the community, we have included two case studies of such outstanding workers in the network. These caselets are an attempt to capture the personal struggle that these women went through which motivated them to join the network so that they could help other such women to secure their land and other related rights.

3.0 WGWLO network: evolution, activities and achievements

Evolution

During the decade of 2000, several NGOs in Gujarat were working on different aspects of women’s empowerment, particularly through land ownership. A need was felt to create a common platform where they could discuss and build a more comprehensive common strategy. In 2005 such a platform was created with participation of 14 NGOs/CBOs, coordinated by Ms Shilpa Vasavda. It was called the Working Group of Women and Land Ownership (WGWLO). The evolution of the network and its objectives went through two distinct phases as discussed below.

Phase 1 (2005 to 2012)

During this phase, the focus was mainly on building perspectives of member institutions and their functionaries as well as CBOs. Annual general body meetings were used to share what strategies different members used on the issue of land ownership by women. Efforts were made to cull out collective strategies that network members could adopt.

Thereafter meetings were held once in every three months which were essentially used for lateral sharing of experiences and for action-reflection process. In these meetings note was taken of what initiatives worked well and which failed to live up to expectations. For instance the need to develop a system of paralegal workers to carry out the work on a self-sustaining basis came up. The experience of CSJ came in useful to institutionalize such a system through the network. Still later, the need of consultation with lawyers emerged when complicated land ownership cases came up. The network drew upon the experience of another partner, Utthan, which had set up legal cells.

In 2011, some network agencies got engaged in the struggle related to land which was being appropriated by corporate giants in the state for industrial development. After much reflection, the network took a conscious decision not to take up such cases as it was not directly focused on the issue of women and land ownership.

Phase 2 (2013 onwards)

In 2013 the network started mobilizing funds for the first time and providing monetary inputs to member agencies. This had become essential firstly to raise a cadre of paralegal workers and to train them so that land related issues of women could be taken up in a systematic manner. With the help of funding from UNDP, the idea of *Swa Bhumi Kendras* (SBKs) was established across the network.

This also marked the beginning of “Land Plus” stage where the focus was also to create an identity of the woman land owner as a “woman farmer”. The issue of sustainability of SBKs which were being set up in 14 blocks, also came up. Since it was established as part of the government set-up, SBKs could not charge fees from the clients. Wherever women’s federations (*Sangathans*) had taken up the responsibility to run the SBK, they could put certain percentage of their funds for social work and thereby support it. But for the other member institutions sustainability became an issue, hence external funding was necessary.

Soon it was realized that it was difficult to mobilise funds for land ownership. However, funds were more readily available for promoting agriculture, particularly organic agriculture (*sajiv kheti*). The network decided to also take up the issue of promoting *sajiv kheti* as women could identify well with it. Most of the inputs could be developed locally with organic and natural materials which women were familiar with. This also implied low or zero external inputs which brought down the need for going to the market and spending cash for agri-inputs. Besides, women could see the entire chain of links from farm to fork as they were primarily engaged in providing food and nutrition to the family. This also implied diversification from mono-crops and single varieties to multiple crops and varieties. The network got engaged in identifying valuable traditional varieties which were getting lost in the wake of the green revolution. An effort was made to reintroduce these varieties after procuring seed material from agencies working on this issue.

Realising that the network would not be able to play this role over an extended period of time a conscious effort was made to link KVKs and ATMA in different blocks to the Sangathans. A consequence of moving down this pathway was that the budget of the network increased substantially. While at the end of phase 1 the budget was restricted to a few lakhs of rupees, now the budget had crossed over a crore of rupees. The number of agencies in the network had now grow and included 18 NGOs and 19 CBOs which worked independently.

For a time-line of critical events and initiatives in the life of the network, see [Table 1](#).

Table1: Time-line of critical events and initiatives

Year	Key Events /Initiatives
2005	Establishment of the informal network
	Evolving common strategies through quarterly action-reflection meetings
2011-12	Decision to link women land owners with entitlements through various government schemes
2013	Establishment of SBKsand cadre of PLWs with the help of funding from UNDP
2017	Promotion of <i>Sajiv Kheti</i> among women farmers
	Decision to establish linkages with KVKs and ATMAs to help women farmers with technical advice and support with latest farm inputs, especially for <i>sajiv kheti</i>
Dec 2018	Decision to take up application of ownership of forest land being tilled by tribal women under Forest Rights Act, also community forest land under provision of the same Act.
Jan 2019	Establishment of Legal Clinics to support SBKs for legal advice in complicated cases
October 2019	Initiation of third party impact study

Activities and achievements

Land ownership

The network has enabled/ supported an estimated 8000 women to secure their land rights so far. As per WGWLO secretariat's MIS data for the past three years shows that a total of 1203 women secured a total of 720 acres of land which averages out to 0.60 acres per beneficiary (Table 2). In terms of geographical regions, the South Gujarat belt has benefitted the most during this period with 502 women becoming land owners. This was followed by Eastern tribal belt with 302 women land owners. Since both these areas are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities, it shows that 66.8% or two-thirds of the beneficiaries during the recent past have been tribals who are among the most marginalized in the state. Some agencies have outperformed others with more than 100 women beneficiaries. However, this does not imply that agencies showing low score during this period have been inactive. Many of these would have dealt with the ownership issues much earlier and moved on to empower the women through other means like securing entitlements, developing identity as farmers and enhancing livelihoods etc.

Table 2: Women securing land ownership through WGWLO (2017-2019)

No	Name of Agency	Total no of Beneficiaries	Total land secured (acres)	Average Land per beneficiary (acres)
	Central/northern Gujarat			
1	Sanand Mahila Vikas Sangathan	33	32	0.98
2	Bavla Mahila Vikas Sangathan	40	37	0.93
3	Mahila Vikas Sangathan Patadi	57	34	0.69
4	Mahila Vikas Sangathan Dhangadra	89	25	0.42
5	Marag	53	23	0.43
	<i>Sub-total</i>	272	151	0.70
	South Gujarat tribal belt			
6	Kanuni Sahay Kendra-CSJ	54	48	1.66
7	Cohesion Foundation Trust	32	51	2.13
8	Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikaas Manch	128	69	0.54
9	Jagruti mahila manch	163	73	0.45
10	DGVS	158	66	0.42
	<i>Sub-total</i>	535	307	0.61
	Eastern Tribal Belt			
11	Sarathi	135	59	0.44
12	Vanita Mahila vikas Sangathan	82	57	0.74
13	HDRC	90	53	0.59
	<i>Sub-total</i>	307	169	0.56
	Saurashtra			
14	Samarthan Mahila Vikas Sangathan	66	49	0.74

15	Maliya Mahila Vikas Sangathan	117	44	0.38
	<i>Sub-total</i>	183	93	0.51
	Grand Total	1297	720	0.60

Saurashtra region had the lowest average land secured at 0.51 acres per woman. The average land size available varies from region to region depending on the available cultivable land and extent of land fragmentation among other factors. Half an acre (about 2 *vighas*) is considered sufficient to attain food security for all twelve months of the year, for a nuclear family.

Entitlements

WGWLO has also helped women farmers register under *i-khedut* portal to assert their identity as farmers and gain access to their entitlements under a range of government schemes aimed at improving land productivity and sustainability of agriculture. The amount of monetary benefits accrued to women land owners through two government schemes as shown in [Table 3](#) is about Rs. 6.1 million. The fact that women land owners can now access these entitlements directly from government as they are now considered farmers, provides a sense of empowerment to these women, many of whom are widows.

Table 3: Benefits accrued through two government schemes

No	Name of Agency	Scheme 1 <i>Khedut Samman nidhi yojna</i>	Scheme 2 I-Khedut
	Central/northern Gujarat		
1	Sanand Mahila Vikas Sangathan	3,00,000	14,000
2	Bavla Mahila Vikas Sangathan	5,00,000	17,000
3	Mahila Vikas Sangathan patdi	4,30,000	10,500
4	Mahila Vikas Sangathan	3,13,300	11,000
5	Marag	2,00,500	16,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	1,743,800	68,500
	South Gujarat tribal belt		
6	Kanuni Sahay Kendra-CSJ	2,15,000	2,000
7	Cohesion Foundation Trust	4,00,000	23,000
8	Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikaas Manch	5,12,300	27,000
9	Jagruti mahila manch	4,11,000	12,000
10	DGVS	5,12,000	15,500
	<i>Sub-total</i>	2,050,300	79,500
	Eastern Tribal Belt		
11	Sarathi	4,12,000	21,000
12	Vanita Mahila vikas Sangathan	4,00,000	28,000
13	HDRC	3,18,000	24,500
	<i>Sub-total</i>	1,130,000	73,500
	Saurashtra		
14	Samarthan Mahila Vikas Sangathan	5,16,000	28,000

15	Maliya Mahila Vikas Sangathan	4,00,000	12,500
	<i>Sub-total</i>	916,000	40,500
	Grand Total	5,840,100	262,000

Sajiv Kheti

Since the past three years the network has been promoting *sajiv kheti*, which has helped about 500 women farmers across 12 districts, to take the leadership in practicing sustainable agriculture. Several of them have got linked with government training programmes of agriculture and gained access to tool banks which help to reduce their drudgery in agriculture activities. A few women farmers have gained access to new markets which has enabled them to raise their income through better price realisation.

WGWLO has supported 667 women farmers with demonstration kits, for trial of new varieties, organic fertilizers, pesticides and inputs for water conservation the total value of which works out to Rs 4.15 m (Table 4). It has also enabled the member agencies to set up tool libraries that make available on rent tools that reduce drudgery of women in agricultural.

Table 4: WGWLO support for demonstration of *sajiv kheti*

No	Name of Agency	No of Participant	Total Value (Rs)
	Central/northern Gujarat		
1	Sanand Mahila Vikas Sangathan	33	2,74,000
2	Bavla Mahila Vikas Sangathan	43	2,42,000
3	Mahila Vikas Sangathan patdi	40s	2,78,554
4	Mahila Vikas Sangathan	34	2,90,000
5	Marag	46	2,55,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	196	1,339,554
	South Gujarat tribal belt		
6	Kanuni Sahay Kendra-CSJ	32	2,66,618
7	Cohesion Foundation Trust	50	2,85,000
8	Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikaas Manch	53	3,11,000
9	Jagruti mahila manch	54	2,80,000
10	DGVS	53	2,87,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	242	1,429,618
	Eastern Tribal Belt		
11	Sarathi	40	2,93,000
12	Vanita Mahila vikas Sangathan	53	2,60,000
13	HDRC	48	3,00,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	141	8,53,000
	Saurashtra		
14	Samarthan Mahila Vikas Sangathan	42	2,47,500
15	Maliya Mahila Vikas Sangathan	46	2,80,000
	<i>Sub-total</i>	88	527,500
	Grand Total	667	4,149,672

Apart from the direct support women farmers were also supported through linkages with government promoted agencies like Kissan Vikas Kendras (KVKs) and ATMAs. Through these agencies women could access agricultural extension as well as agri-inputs for *sajiv kheti* on 100% subsidy. Some women could also access units of five female and one male goat to practice animal husbandry and diversify their livelihood. The extent of support received through this means could not be documented and quantified.

4.0 Profile of sample institutions

As external consultants it was necessary to understand the institutional context of the member institutions that were implementing the GWLO initiative at the grassroots level. Given below are brief sketches of the four institutions that formed part of the study. It is clear from these profiles that the CBO's and their promoting agencies are well tuned to the issues of women's empowerment and there is a strong match with GWLO's agenda. The main contributing factor is the fact, that these CBOs are being run and managed by women activists and leaders who have themselves faced gender discrimination and can therefore empathise with other women who are going through the same or similar challenges which they were able to overcome through sheer courage and persistence. Some of the institutions also shared their struggle to achieve financial sustainability so that they could continue to work for their mission on a larger scale.

Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikas Manch, Sagbara

This Sangathan was initiated by AKRSP in the year 2000 and registered as a Trust in 2003. Later it was also registered as a Section 8 company in 2005. At present Jagdish bhai Gamit is the Point Person. Usha ben is the PLW and Bhanuben is the MKS. The present chairperson is Urmilaben Surabsinh Vasava. She has a term of three years as the sangh has a system of rotational leadership. At present it has 3100 women members covering 55 villages. These constitute members of about 160 active SHGs out of 250 that had been initiated. This is the Sangh's sixth year of association with GWLO.

To become a member the SHG has to pay a membership fee of Rs 351/-. However since SHG cannot become a member, it is the individual members of the SHG who get membership of the sangh has a policy of keeping an SHG under observation for six months before accepting it.

According to Urmilaben, prior to the sangh's activities the tribal woman had "only her home, child and stove" to look after. "Navjeevan has given us a new life!.... But it did not come so easy! Because of our struggle, our daughters are getting a better life."

Activities prior to GWLO

Earlier the sangh was involved in targeting "*kurivaj*" (perverse customs), which affected the tribal woman and her self-respect and dignity. One such shameful tradition involved making a women who has just lost her husband to sit at home without a blouse for 12 days. These traditions were implemented by elderly women themselves. To tackle this social evil, the sangh members spoke to NGOs and asked for their support. A movement was created in 15 of their villages with support of the sarpanchs and elderly ladies, which resulted in success. The practice was stopped there onwards. However women are still not allowed to go to the *smashan ghat* (place of disposal of the dead). Another such *kurivaj* is the "*dakan paddhati*" in which a woman is declared a witch and later deprived of her land

and property. To tackle this issue they have to educate the population and often combine it with the threat of police action.

As part of the savings activities the sangh had established bank linkages for their SHGs so that they could get credit. As part of this activity, the sangh had to undertake grading of the SHGs and was also responsible for the recovery.

Apart from savings, the federation also worked on health issues for women. Three health camps per year were organized with the support of Seva Rural, Jhagadia. The federation women helped the women to articulate their health related problems in front of the doctor. About 100 to 150/- cases were taken up in each camp. The activities included anything from a regular check-up to an operation. Each woman had to pay Rs 20/- for her case which was enough to cover the travel expense of the doctor. Those poor women who could not even afford this fee could still participate by taking a loan from their SHGs. The services of the doctor were provided *pro bono*.

Among the other activities taken up by them were construction of toilets and soak pits, campaign against alcoholism amongst men. For all such activities the starting point was to create awareness with the help of plays and songs performed locally. Women who did well were invited on the forum and given a flower! This helped to raise their self-esteem.

Land Ownership and Livelihoods

Around 2005, WGWLO came to the federation and they were introduced to the issue of land ownership by women, particularly widows. This issue was relatively new to them but they took it up as always by creating awareness among the women at the village level in a campaign mode. Soon they got capacity building from the network and picked up the work with enthusiasm. As of now about 600 women have secured ownership of their land and about half of these have taken up sajiv kheti. Sajiv kheti is taken up mostly in rabi crops such as pigeon pea and gram.

Legal Clinics have been found useful for difficult / unusual cases. Only two legal clinics have been done so far. Help of Manjibhai, a local lawyer is taken for follow up work. An example was cited by Usha ben, the PLW. In 2008-9 a living person's name was removed from the land records. This was probably done through deceit as the woman would have signed without knowing what she was signing on. Her name was also not entered in the *pedinama* (inheritance list). This made the case more difficult. One alternative was to take the case to the *Panch*. Earlier Panch members used to give their signature for a price. The sangh stopped this tradition and started getting women into the panch!

A general problem in the area is that of outsiders (especially Patels from Saurashtra who have a skewed sex ratio in their community) marrying tribal women. Land owned by such women ultimately goes to non-tribals.

There is a need to create awareness among tribal women. The literacy rate has gone up as most women have studied upto 10th grade. AKRSP reaches out to about 1500 people through the mobile phone in the region. A social media group called "Gram Swaraj group" includes farmers as well as local government and panchayat officers. But mis-information through social media has to be guarded against. The most appropriate method is proving to be "patrikas" in the local language.

Financial Sustainability of Sangh

At one point, they had five para legal workers. However, these workers needed to be paid and without projects they could not afford to have so many PLWs. In order to cover the salaries of these workers the sangh needed to have a regular stream of income. At present the annual income is around 2.5 lakhs most of which comes from the rent of four tractors that have been given to four individuals to operate. Some income comes from the annual fee of Rs 100/- charged per SHG. With about 150 SHGs this income came to about Rs 15,000/-

The Sangh has over time build up its reserves through savings amounting to about Rs 7.0 lakhs which are in the form of Fixed Deposits. In addition it has invested in two plots of land at a cost of Rs 13.88 lakhs at Selemba, with the idea of creating their own center in the long run. In the short run they operate seven shops in a shopping complex at Sagbara. One shop has been given to Varsha ben who runs a sewing class. Another has been given to a group of women to run a restaurant as a source of livelihood. A third one is given to run an Amul outlet. The rest are used by the Sangh for various other purposes including storage, meetings, office space etc. How the Sangh acquired these shops is a story in itself. The land belongs to the Sagbara Panchayat. Earlier this land had a huge pit because of which it remained unutilized. The Sangh negotiated a deal with the TDO whereby they got the right to use the land if they filled up the pit and paid a nominal rent to the Panchayat. Subsequently as the officers changed and the value of the property went up, several attempts were made by them to evict the Sangh from this property. However, the women stood their ground on the basis of legal documents in their possession.

In the past there were several opportunities to improve their financial position through government projects. For instance a TDO wanted them to take up a project on toilet construction on contract basis. However he wanted a cut from the project money. The same was true for other projects including Mission mangalam etc. The Sangh took a conscious decision not to get into such projects.

Earlier the Sangh had sold 300 tons of vermicompost resulting in a profit of Rs 48,000/- It used to supply seeds from the Agro Center to the farmers on a seasonal basis where the annual turnover was about 4-5 lakh rupees. It even has a license for supply of agri-inputs. However, legally such commercial activities cannot be undertaken by a Trust or a Section 8 company. Now that a farmer producer company has come up in the area in which many of the women and their men are members, they find it convenient to carry out commercial activities through the FPO.

Bavla Mahila Vikas Sangathan (BMVS)¹

Established as early as 2002, with the help of NGO Jan Vikas, the BMVS has about 1400 women members from 26 villages of Bawla block. The CBO works on issues of savings as well as land ownership issues as well as promotion of sustainable methods in agriculture. Majority of its members are either Dalits or Koli Patels. The former have less land but more education. The reverse is true for the latter. The total savings has been around Rs 50 lakhs. The efforts of the CBO were recently recognized by Development Support Center, Ahmedabad, in the form of an award under Social Development Category, for the year 2018, received on 16th June 2018.

Organisation

¹ From the central/northern zone we took sample of 10 women each from two CBOs. One from Bavla and the other from Sanand. Since the history and manner of functioning of both are rather similar, a profile of the sangathan in Sanand (*Sanand Mahila Vikas Sngathan*) has not been included.

The institution is being managed largely through the efforts of a team of women led by Jasiben, who is the Point Person (President), Sumitra ben Gamtee Patel, the PLW, Mukta ben Nikul bhai, the MKS, Hansaben the Vice president and Sunita ben the accountant. It has established an office in Bavla town.

Jyoti Sangh Project

The CBO initiated its work with women of the area by taking up cases of violence against women. One of its early partners was NGO *Jyoti Sangh* which worked on similar issues. It was soon realized that the main reason for the vulnerability of women was their lack of economic independence. To address this issue a number of measures were initiated:

- a) *Micro-finance* - women in groups started saving anything from Rs 10 to 2000/-month.
- b) *Social/legal consulting service* – this service was initiated by the CBO, where about 125 legal cases were taken up
- c) *Social security/ welfare schemes* – Government pension scheme was stopped in 2003. To overcome this, an alternative scheme was started (under Karma Seva Sangh)
- d) *Land ownership* - Campaigns to get property in the names of women, particularly in case of single women were initiated

Land ownership

About 600 women have got land on their names. They have also secured plots for house construction and built homes on these plots. 70% of these women are cases of widows. The ownership is largely in joint names with other members of the family. This is largely because most lands have loans outstanding on them. Until the loans are cleared, the portioning cannot be done. Also, many plots are so small that under Land Fragmentation Act, these cannot be broken down further.

In order to understand the performance on land ownership for women, the context of Bawla should be understood first. During the past two decades the city of Ahmedabad has been expanding rapidly. Due to proximity to this growing metropolis Bavla has experienced growing urbanization. Industrial units especially in pharmaceutical and textile sectors have shot up in this block. Due to these developments, the value of land has shot up beyond expectations. An associated problem is the increase in cases of cheating and manipulation in effecting land deals.

The expenses related to land transfer deeds have also been rising over time. Stamp duty has increased from July this year to Rs 300/- The advocacy to reduce this is still on. The cost of affidavit has increased from Rs 20/- to Rs 50/-. The cost of typing and notary comes to around Rs 1500/- (Since notary licence is obtained often through political influence or payment of unauthorized money, this cost is unlikely to go down).

The CBO finds it more effective to organize campaigns and camps rather than online applications.

Entitlements from Government

About 300 women have received “widow’s pension” from the government which entitles them to a pension of Rs 1250/-month. Also, under Net Family Support Scheme, they get a one-time support of Rs 10,000/-. Only those women who fall under BPL category are eligible for this support.

Sustainable Agriculture

More recently (since when?) BMVS has started extension work to bring about the transition from chemical to more sustainable methods of farming. In this area the main cropping pattern is paddy in Kharif, wheat in Rabi. Some farmers also cultivate paddy during summer. Earlier this area was totally dependent on rainfall for agriculture. The main crop was dryland wheat. However, since about five decades it has started getting partial irrigation. Paddy was taken up as a major crop and *Gujarat* variety became the main variety that was cultivated for several years. Of late this variety has gone down due to disease problems and has now been replaced by variety *Gujri*. For home consumption people cultivate varieties like *Massuri* and *Krishna Kamod*.

This year BMVS has organized demonstration plots in 7 different villages with the idea of promoting traditional varieties combined with organic and low external input farming which would make farming more attractive economically and improve soil health in the bargain. In case of paddy it has introduced nine traditional varieties through demonstration plots of one vigha per demonstration. These varieties are to be cultivated using System of Rice Intensification (SRI) method combined with organic methods of farming. The yields are expected to match those of *Gujri* variety which is around 50-60 maunds/vigha. In terms of cost, it is likely to result in dramatic reduction in cost of seed material, water input, cost of chemical inputs and fertilizers. The seed material of these varieties have been secured from Dangs and Sagbara regions of Gujarat. In Zekra village, demos of millets like nagli and banti have been initiated along with those of vegetables. Linkages have been established with NGO Sristi and with FICCI’s wing being run by women of industrialists. Linkages have also been established with a wholesaler in Thaltej, Ahmedabad, who sells in bulk to hotels and mainly to Jain community which prefers organic food.

For paddy, 15 kgs of seed was obtained. The CBO produced saplings and provided these to the women who agreed to set up the demonstrations in their fields. The women are expected to repay by returning double the amount of seed material. The CBO has also given assurance to buy back the rest of the produce, which it would pool together to create a *seed bank* for the region.

Sahiyar Sangathan

Sahiyar Sangathan promoted by SAARTHI, Godhar was evolved out of Swashakti project in year 2007. At the time of this project, Saarthi was working in 60 villages and promoting self-help groups (SHGs) and through them, focusing on savings & credit, health and income generating activities. After the completion of Swashakti project, the sangathan was linked with Mission Mangalam. The sangathan keeps itself active by linking itself with some government projects with support of Saarthi.

Sahiyar Sangathan has a general body of 60 members who represent their respective villages. These members have paid membership fee of Rs.5 each. The general body elects/ appoints governing body (karobari) of 11 members. The president of sangathan is Lilaben who also happens to be PLW. Radhaben is Secretary, Dariyaben- MKS and Rashmikaben – PLW (FRA) are members of karobari along with 7 other members.

Sahiyar Sangathan currently works on the issue of women's land ownership (both revenue and forest land) and facilitating access to agriculture related schemes and other government schemes by women.

Saarthi has been associated with WGWLO network since 2007. As a result of efforts by Saarthi and Sahiyar Sangathan, 655 cases of varsai have been done successfully. The work on forest land started recently and sangathan has been following up cases of individual as well as community forest rights.

This area has rainfed farming and large number of young population migrates to cities and Saurashtra region in search of work for higher wages.

Samarthan Mahila Sangathan (SMS), Bhavanagar

Utthan has been working in Bhavanagar district for the past many years. One of the focus areas of Utthan has been women's empowerment and as a result of its work, the sangathan was initiated in 2003 focusing on women's issues in Bhavanagar district. There were small women's groups / self-help groups in 45 villages and these groups were federated into an area level sangathan called *Samarthan Mahila Sangathan* (SMS). It is also registered as Society and Trust. Currently the sangathan has 2500 members from 45 villages, who have paid life-time membership fee of Rs. 50/- each. The sangathan has 35 leaders drawn from these villages, who meet regularly to discuss common issues and draw up plans of action. These leaders nominate 11 members to the *karobari* (governing council) which in turn elects / selects its office bearers viz. president, vice president and secretary.

The karobari has set up thematic sub-committees to address specific issues. The members of sub-committees have many years of experience and demonstrated leadership on these issues. Most of the sub-committee members provide their services *pro bono* or for a token honorarium. Some of the key activities undertaken by the sangathan are described below:

Savings and credit activity

About 750 members are active in this activity. The sangathan has evolved its norms / rules for savings and credit activity which are followed by its members. Monthly collection of savings is Rs. 65,000/-. The sangathan provides an annual interest of 4% annual interest. It also gives loans to those members who are active in savings at an annual interest rate of 12%. Out of savings and credit activity, the sangathan makes about Rs. 1.5 lacs profit every year. In future savings and credit activity will be transferred to a cooperative. The process of registration for the proposed credit cooperative has already been initiated.

Domestic violence

The sangathan has been taking up issues of domestic violence since its inception. Every month about 5-6 cases are addressed / taken up by sangathan. In many of the other cases, the issue is addressed at the village level itself. The sangathan provides socio-legal counselling, legal support in filling cases (if required) and also facilitating just (*Nyayi*) *samadhan* (mutual agreement with justice).

Promoting constitutional values

The Sangathan with support from Utthan, works towards promoting constitutional values of democracy, equality, fraternity, secularism within local communities as well as in schools, panchayats and other civic spaces, in a structured manner. This is a recent initiative having started only last year.

Women and land ownership

With support from WGWLO the sangathan has been working on the issue of women's land ownership since the last six years. It also runs a *Swa Bhumi Kendra* (SBK) in the premises of Ghogha taluka panchayat. The sangathan has addressed many issues of *varsai*, cheating, *khata fod* etc. It has addressed complex issues of land ownership through legal clinics. As many as 29 cases were brought to the legal clinic out of which 7 have been addressed successfully so far.

Entitlements

The sangathan has also supported women farmers to access various entitlements from KVK, Atma, and through i-kisan portal. As many as 108 women could access various entitlements through i-kisan portal. It has developed good working relationships with members of the taluka panchayat and also the mamlatdar's office. Many talatis know the sangathan very well and provide their support as and when needed.

Sajiv Kheti

Since last two years, the sangathan has been supporting women farmers in adopting organic farming. Currently 145 women have adopted organic farming.

5.0 Assessment of impacts based on sample survey

As outlined in the methodology, the sample was drawn from four zones and from each zone one or two member agencies were selected. From each zone twenty women were selected for the survey. Thus the total sample was of 80 women who had participated in WGWLO activities. Given the limitations of time and resources it was not possible to draw a more representative sample. Hence the findings of this survey should be taken as indicative.

5.1 Profile of sample

i) Status in family:

Women play different roles in life. After marriage they move from their home to their in-law's home. They are entitled to their share of inherited land in both their paternal home as well as husbands' home. This right is generally denied to them in their paternal home on grounds that when they are married off the parents have to give considerable amount of gifts to the husbands' side. Therefore the land should be given only to the sons. When they move to their husbands' home, here too there is resistance from the male members of the family who feel that as long as her husband's name is on the land the wife should have no issues. The problem becomes most acute in cases of widows as even at this stage many women face stiff opposition from the in-laws when it comes to securing their land rights. In a few cases widows have been known to be harassed and tortured so that they may leave the family and go somewhere else. It is for this reason that the network started their campaign with widows. Not

surprisingly 85% of the sample comprises of widows and 10% of women who are wives (Table 5). Very few cases of daughters using their land rights from paternal home were encountered.

Table 5: Type of cases encountered

Zone	Widow	%	Daughter	%	Wife	%	Total
Central/northern Gujarat	13	65	0	0	7	35	20
South Gujarat Tribal belt	15	75	4	20	1	5	20
Eastern tribal belt	20	100	0	0	0	0	20
Saurashtra	20	100	0	0	0	0	20
Total	68	85	4	5	8	10	80

ii) Social status:

As seen in Table 6, the sample was dominated by OBCs and STs which together accounted for 95% of the sample. This raises the question why the participation of Scheduled Caste communities has been so low and whether this has happened in spite of efforts made by the agencies?

Table 6: Social profile of sample

Zone	SC	%	ST	%	OBC	%	Other	%	Total
Central/northern Gujarat	2	10	1	5	16	80	1	5	20
South Gujarat Tribal belt	0	0	20	100	0	0	0	0	20
Eastern tribal belt	1	5	13	65	6	30	0	0	20
Saurashtra	0	0	0	0	20	100	0	0	20
Total	3	3.75	34	42.50	42	52.5	1	1.25	80

5.2 Land ownership

i) Land ownership profile:

Table 7 provides details on three parameters. The average size of land secured was 6.61 vighas (3.96 acres). However, the variation is quite large with minimum of 1 vigha and maximum of 32 vighas. A woman owning 1 vigha may be barely able to secure food security for 12 months, provided she does not have a large family of dependents.

Table 7: Profile of land ownership

No.	Area/Type	Land ownership size		Land ownership type		Ownership how	
		Average size (vighas)	Range (vighas)	Individual/partitioned (nos.)	Joint (nos.)	Independently (nos.)	Through WGWLO (nos.)
1	Central/northern Gujarat	10.6	5-32	4	16	4	16
2	S. Gujarat Tribal belt	6.15	2-16	9	11	0	20
3	Eastern tribal belt	3.8	2-8	1	19	11	9
4	Saurashtra	5.9	1-20	19	1	7	13
	Total	6.61	1-32	33 (41.25%)	47 (58.75%)	22 (27.5%)	58 (72.5%)

Close to 60% of the sample reported having their names jointly with other members of the family. In the case of wives and daughters, this is not an issue. But for widows this can be a major issue and represents an unfinished task in the journey of empowerment through land security. In fact one of the women interviewed in Bavla stated that she has taken a *vrat* (vow) not to go personally to the field until she gets partitioning of the land done. Although this may not be considered a very practical approach to the problem, it never the less brings out the fact that widows facing opposition do not feel secure until the last step of partitioning is done. This is because in the past there have been cases of tampering of the records and people having their names removed without their knowledge (although with the computerization of land records and access to records on-line, this is now becoming rare).

The sample also shows that 58% of the women had secured their land titles by going through WGWLO. The sample also included women who had secured land through their own initiative by employing lawyers, much before the coming of the network's services. Such women were included in the sample as they have adopted *sajiv* farming and are active in the activities of the sangathan.

ii) Cost of securing land:

This refers to the monetary cost involved in securing land and includes among other things the cost of making trips to the SBK or other government offices, the cost of stamp duty and/or lawyers's fees, the cost of getting documents made etc. Table 8 shows that the average cost was little more than 1100/- rupees. However, the range is large with some women having been lucky enough to pay only Rs 100/ (mostly because of land ownership camps held in the village) and other having to pay more than 15,000/- rupees. The latter would be cases where the women had gone through the route of engaging private lawyers to get it done. They lawyers typically charged anything from Rs 10,000/- to 15,000/- even in straight forward cases. Hence the figures speak for themselves – WGWLO has made a major impact on the cost of securing land by reducing it by a factor of 10 to 15 times. This of course does not include the cost of mental agony that is also removed.

Table 8: Average cost of securing land (Rupees)

Zone	Travel to block (no of trips x cost per trip)	Stamp fee, Notary etc.	Typing / Photocopies / getting copies of revenue records	Average	Range

Central/northern Gujarat	468	75	306	1875	160-15400
South Gujarat Tribal belt	239	63	250	562	100-3000
Eastern tribal belt	490	166	257	914	460-2300
Saurashtra	605	295	264	1164	210-1200
Overall average				1130	100-15400

iii) Time duration for securing land:

The data summarized in [Table 9](#) indicates that close to 40 percent had been able to access land within 3 months, 56.25% within 6 months and 78.5% within 12 months of applying. Only the more complicated cases took longer than a year and were most likely referred to the Legal Clinics.

Table 9: Time duration for securing ownership

Months	Central/northern Gujarat	South Gujarat Tribal belt	Eastern tribal belt	Saurashtra	Total	%	Cumm. %
0-3 Months	9	5	1	16	31	38.75	38.75
4-6 Months	4	7	1	2	14	17.50	56.25
7-12 Months	3	7	6	2	18	22.50	78.50
> 12 Months	4	1	12	0	17	21.25	100.00
	20	20	20	20	80	100.00	

iv) Access to and ownership of irrigation:

It is well known that land without access to irrigation is not as useful as rainfed crops are both uncertain and low in productivity. They are possible only during the rainy season and hence cannot provide food security for the whole year, unless the person owns a large tract of land. In this context water may be seen as a necessary resource allied to land and having access to it is of paramount importance for both food security as well as livelihood security. [Table 10](#) and [Figure 1](#) show the picture of access to water in the four zones by different sources. The data shows that 25% of the sample (mostly from the tribal belt) are still without access to water. Hence for such women additional help would be needed to attain food and livelihood security by augmenting their income sources through off-farm or non-farm activities. It is in this context that the “goat kits” (5 plus 1) which the women have been able to access through

KVK/ATMA are very useful as they provide an alternative source of income and an insurance against the rainy day – since goats can be sold at a good price in case of emergency.

Table 10: Status and source of irrigation

Zone	Borewell	Well	Lift by river	lift by pond	lift by check dam	canal	No irrigation	Total
Central/northern Gujarat	5	3	4	3	0	2	3	20
South Gujarat Tribal belt	3	5	1	0	1	0	10	20
Eastern tribal belt	9	5	0	0	0	0	6	20
Saurashtra	0	19	0	0	0	0	1	20
Total	17	32	5	3	1	2	20	80

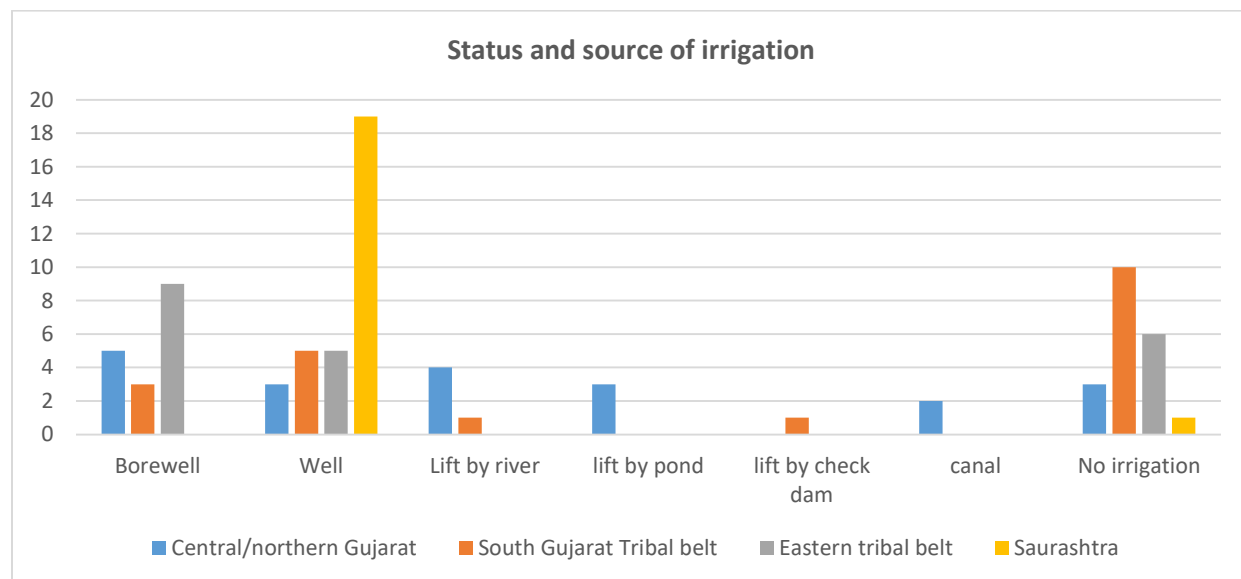


Figure 1: Access to Irrigation from different sources

As seen from the data, Saurashtra region relies predominantly on wells for irrigation. The eastern tribal belt relies on both bore wells and wells. Central/northern region and South Gujarat tribal belt rely on multiple sources which include both ground and surface water sources.

Given the importance of wells and bore-wells, ownership of these resources play an important part in food security. In the case of surface water, ownership or access to water pumps or lift irrigation becomes important. Table 11 shows that 54% of the sample actually owns the irrigation resources while 17% has access but do not own the resource. These may be women who are allowed to draw water from the well of a neighbor or relative, or those who can borrow a water machine to lift water from the pond or some other source.

Table 11: Ownership of Irrigation source/equipment

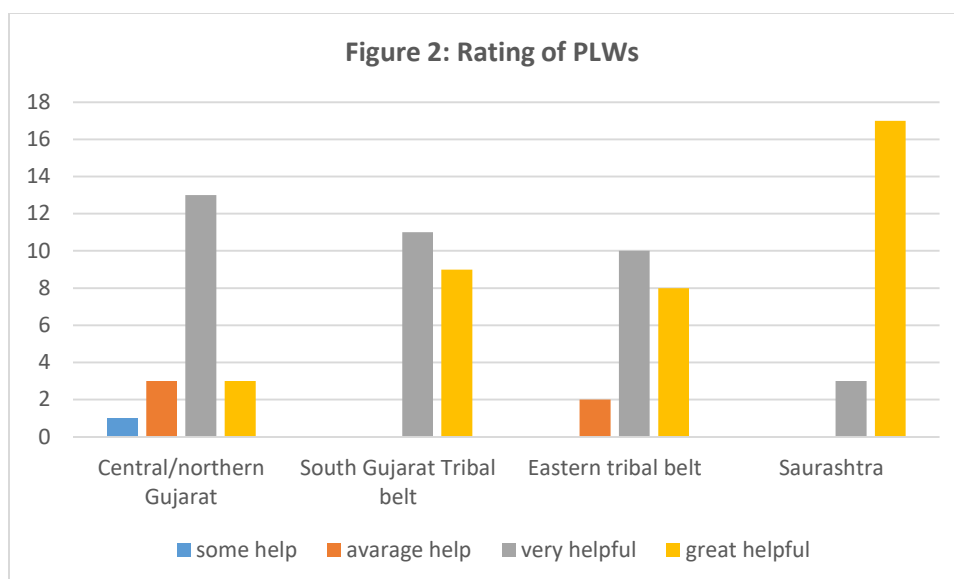
	Ownership of irrigation source/equipment						
Zone	Yes	%	No	%	NA	%	Total
Central/northern Gujarat	6	30	11	55	3	15	20
South Gujarat Tribal belt	8	40	2	10	10	50	20
Eastern tribal belt	11	55	3	15	6	30	20
Saurashtra	18	90	1	5	1	5	20
Total	43	54	17	21	20	25	80

viii) Rating of PLW services:

As seen in [Table 12](#) and [Figure 2](#), 92.5% of the sample have said that they found the PLW either extremely helpful or very helpful. It may be noted that this resulted may be somewhat biased as the question for most times had to be asked in the presence of the PLW. However, the authors feel from other responses of the women as well as their body language and interaction with PLWs that the ratings provided are genuine and the bias if any would be minor.

Table 12: Rating of PLWs

Zone	some help	average help	very helpful	great helpful	Total
Central/northern Gujarat	1	3	13	3	20
South Gujarat Tribal belt	0	0	11	9	20
Eastern tribal belt	0	2	10	8	20
Saurashtra	0	0	3	17	20
Total	1	5	37	37	80



5.3 Entitlements

Table 13 provides a summary of the different kind of schemes accessed by the women in the sample. 68 out of 98 women (69.4%) reported benefiting from schemes related to promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry. The remaining 30.6% were welfare schemes of which widows' pension was by far the largest component.

Table 13: Summary of Entitlements secured through government schemes

Type of Scheme	Types of inputs received	Department	Central/northern Gujarat	South Gujarat Tribal belt	Eastern tribal belt	Saurashtra	Total beneficiaries
Agriculture and Animal husbandry schemes							
Agri-inputs	Seeds, fertilizer etc.	i-Khedut of Agri Dept / KVK	1	11	1	5	18
PMKMDY (Prime Minister Kisan Sanman Nidhi Yojana)		Agriculture / Revenue	10	8	2	13	33
Agri-equipment	Water pump,	KVK/ATMA/ Agriculture	4	3	5	3	15

	spray pump, reaper, tarpaulin, pipeline etc						
Animal husbandry	Goat rearing, Cattle shed	TSP / DRDA	0	1	1	0	2
Sub-total			15	23	9	21	68
<i>Social welfare schemes</i>							
Widow pension	Monthly cash	Social welfare	4	8	13	1	26
Social welfare for orphans, housing etc.		Social welfare	2	0	1	0	3
ICDS Food contract		ICDS	0	0	1	0	1
Sub-total			6	8	15	1	30
Total			21	31	24	22	98

5.4 Sajiv Kheti

Promotion of Sajiv Kheti

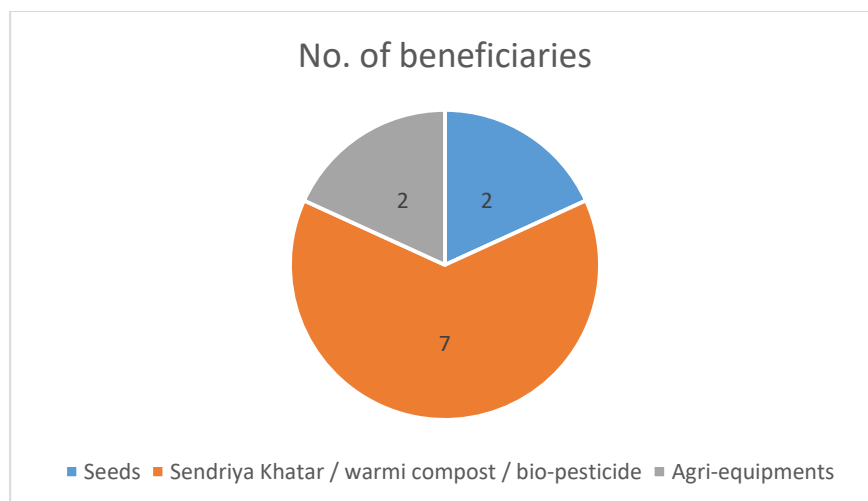
In addition to the support provided for agriculture through government schemes, WGWLO also has its own schemes designed to demonstrate organic farming and diversification of varieties and crops in order to make agriculture more sustainable and climate resilient.

Women taking interest in sajiv kheti and having the necessary facilities to carry out trials were given kits for trial of new varieties, organic fertilizers and pesticides and farming techniques such as SRI that reduce the use of agricultural inputs and thereby make it economical viable while improving soil health and quality of produce.

From our sample of 80, 11 women had participated in such demonstrations as shown in [Figure 3](#). Several of these women claimed that the demonstrations were successful and many people from the village as well as neighbouring villages had come to take a look at their fields. This had changed the identity of these women as they were now being consulted for adopting sajiv kheti.

In this context it is worth noting that the linkages with KVK have also be rather beneficial in promoting sajiv kheti. Although KVKs promote both organic as well as chemical farming, when they know that particular groups of women are interested in organic inputs they tend to give them priority in trying out some of the new products that are coming out of the formal agricultural research system, or new products being tested by the private companies. This is something we came to know during our interaction with Dr Minaxi Tiwari of the KVK visited on 22nd October 2019.

Figure 3: Support by WGWLO



Adoption of Sajiv Kheti

Sajiv kheti is instrumental in substituting chemical fertilizers and pesticides (which are harmful for soil health and contribute to pollution of air, water and food sources) with organic fertilizers (farm yard manure, vermi-compost among others) and organic pesticides (cow-urine based pesticides and immunity stimulating products made locally from leaf extracts of different plants).

The pattern of adoption of these two main agri-inputs over the past five years can be seen in [Figures 4 and 5](#). Both the figures show the same pattern where the level of adoption has been increasing gradually and has been the maximum during the past two years.

Figure 4: Adoption of *Sajiv Kheti* (Organic Fertilizers)

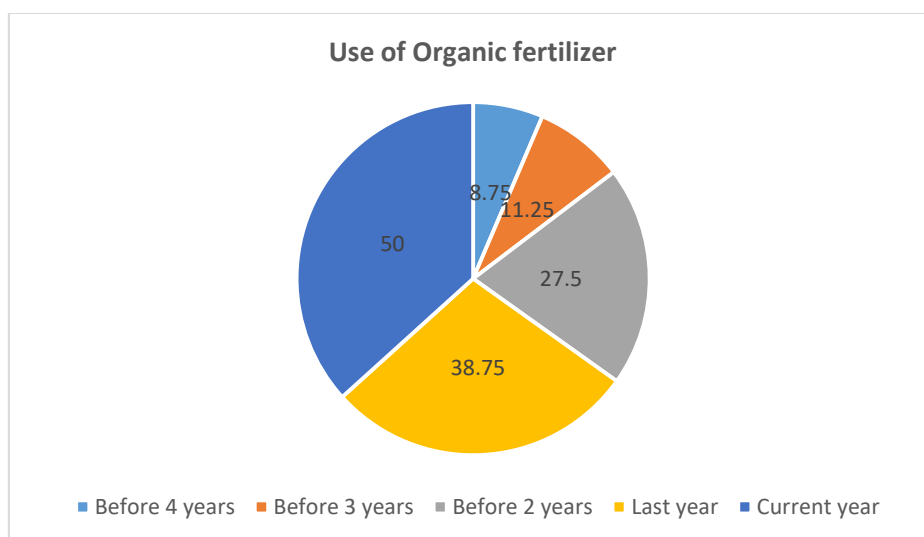
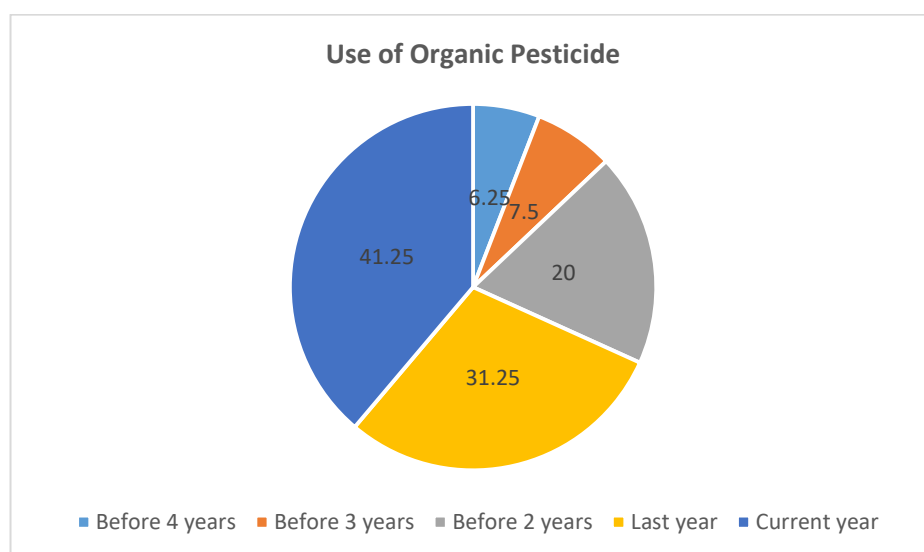


Figure 5: Adoption of Sajiv Kheti (Organic pesticides)



Partial adoption

It was also observed that majority of the women have gone for partial adoption. The large majority of women farmers had adopted organic farming in less than 2 vighas of land ([Table 14](#)). This was mainly to produce foodgrain for home consumption. Farmers realize that organic food is safer and healthier to consume. However, productivity drops for 2-3 years and therefore they would suffer losses if they were to adopt it for all of their land. In a few cases women reported marginal or no loss in productivity. These were cases where they were earlier using small dose of chemicals fertilizers or using them in conjunction with good amount of FYM.

Table 14: Partial adoption of Sajiv Kheti

	Land in Vighas	Central/northern Gujarat	South Gujarat Tribal belt	Eastern tribal belt	Saurashtra	Total adopters
Organic (vigha)	.50	1	1	0	0	2
	.75	1	0	0	0	1
	1.00	10	10	18	14	52
	1.25	1	0	0	0	1
	2.00	5	8	0	3	16
	3.00	0	0	0	3	3
	7.00	2	0	0	0	2
Total		20	19	18	20	77

47 respondents (58.75%) stated that they were practicing the use of a combination of organic and chemical inputs in land that was used for producing for the market (Table 15). Many had reduced the dosage of chemical fertilizers and were using it in conjunction of organic fertilizer (mostly FYM). Chemical pesticides were now being seen as a measure of last resort.

Table 15: Conjunctive use of organic and chemical fertilizers

	Land in Vighas	Central/northern Gujarat	South Gujarat Tribal belt	Eastern tribal belt	Saurashtra	Total
Mix(vigha)	1.00	2	3	20	1	26
	4.50	1	0	0	0	1
	5.00	1	0	0	0	1
	6.00	1	0	0	0	1
	9.00	1	0	0	0	1
	10.00	0	2	0	0	2
	11.00	1	0	0	0	1
	15.00	0	2	0	0	2
	20.00	0	4	0	0	4
	35.00	0	1	0	0	1
	45.00	0	1	0	0	1
	50.00	1	1	0	0	2
	60.00	0	1	0	0	1
	65.00	0	1	0	0	1
	105.00	0	1	0	0	1
	150.00	0	1	0	0	1
Total		8	18	20	1	47

Perception of soil health

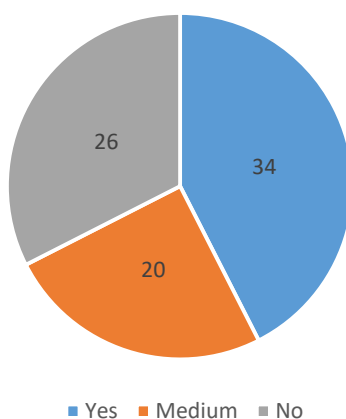
Scientists have developed a large number of parameters that contribute to an overall index of soil health. These can broadly be classified into three categories viz. chemical (macro nutrients and micro-nutrients, acidity/alkalinity and salinity levels), physical (soil texture, soil depth, organic content, water holding capacity, drainage among others) and biological parameters (microbial activity, organic carbon, beneficial organisms like earthworm etc). Government issues soil health card after carrying out soil tests of a handful of parameters (usually organic carbon, PH, electrical conductivity, Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potash). However, all except organic carbon are measures of chemical parameters and that too only macro-nutrients.

Farmers have their own perception of soil health which is based on assessment of physical parameters such as soil texture, water holding capacity, drainage, soil depth and impact on productivity. During the survey we tried to assess their perception of soil health and whether there was any significant change after adoption of saji khedi over 2-3 years. The results are summarized in [Table 16](#) and the overall perception of soil health is indicated in [Figure 6](#). As seen in the figure, only 34 respondents (42.5%) seemed to perceive definite improvement in soil health. This was to be expected as many of the respondents have adopted only in the current season or since 1-2 years which is not sufficient to see much change in soil health.

Table 16: Impacts on soil health and productivity

Zone	Soil texture			Depth of upper surface of soil			Improve water holding capacity			Overall improvement in soil health		
	Yes	Medium	No	Yes	Medium	No	Yes	Medium	No	Yes	Medium	No
Central/northern Gujarat	5	4	11	0	2	18	1	3	16	9	0	11
South Gujarat Tribal belt	8	4	8	9	5	6	11	5	4	13	4	3
Eastern tribal belt	0	10	10	0	10	10	0	18	2	0	16	4
Saurashtra	11	0	9	12	0	8	11	0	9	12	0	8
Total	24	18	38	21	17	42	23	26	31	34	20	26

Figure 6: Improvement in overall soil health

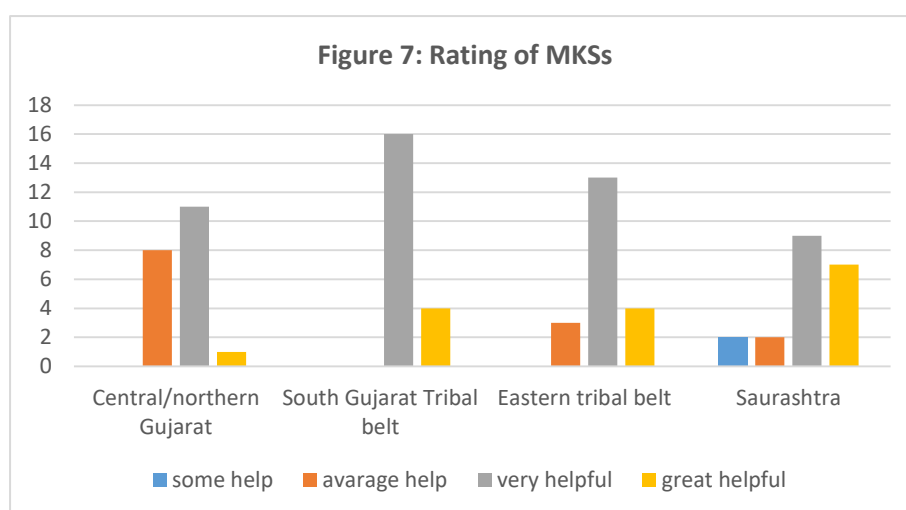


Ratings of Extension workers (MKs)

As in the case of PLWs the MKSs have also been given good ratings by the women farmers as a large majority (81.25%) have found them to be either very helpful or extremely helpful (Table 17 and accompanying barchart).

Table 17: Rating of support from MKS

Zone	some help	average help	very helpful	great helpful
Central/northern Gujarat	0	8	11	1
South Gujarat Tribal belt	0	0	16	4
Eastern tribal belt	0	3	13	4
Saurashtra	2	2	9	7
Total	2	13	49	16



5.5 Economic Impacts

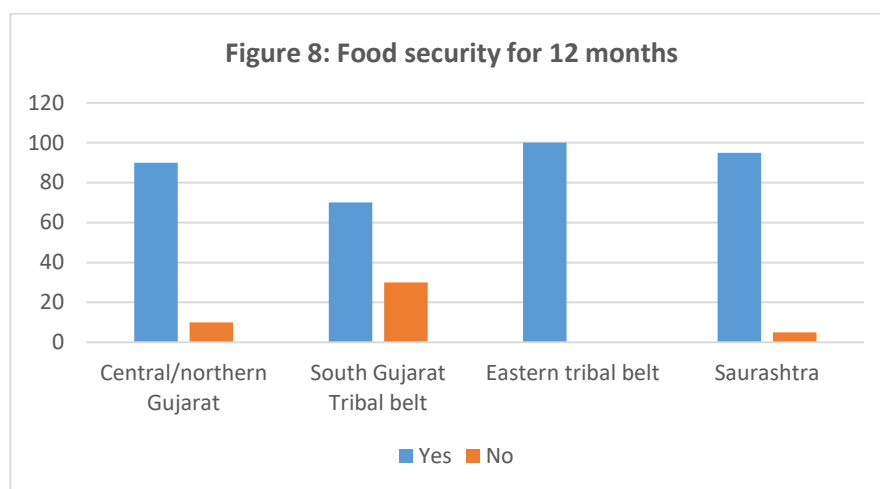
Food Security

A large majority (88.75%) of the sample stated that they could grow enough food to meet food security of the family for 12 months (Table 18). A small percentage were relatively better off either because they had a larger parcel of land with irrigation or because they had acquired new skills which helped them to diversify their source of income.

Around 11.25% had to be helped in other ways to augment their income e.g. through off-farm activities like goat rearing or poultry etc. Some relied on income from farm labour and income of their children who are educated and employed in government or private organisations or skilled enough to be employed in local factories.

Table 18: Food Security and economic prosperity (nos. and %)

Zone	Do you get 12 months grain?				Total
	Yes	%	No	%	
Central/northern Gujarat	18	90	2	10	20
South Gujarat Tribal belt	14	70	6	30	20
Eastern tribal belt	20	100	0	0	20
Saurashtra	19	95	1	5	20
Total	71	88.75	9	11.25	80



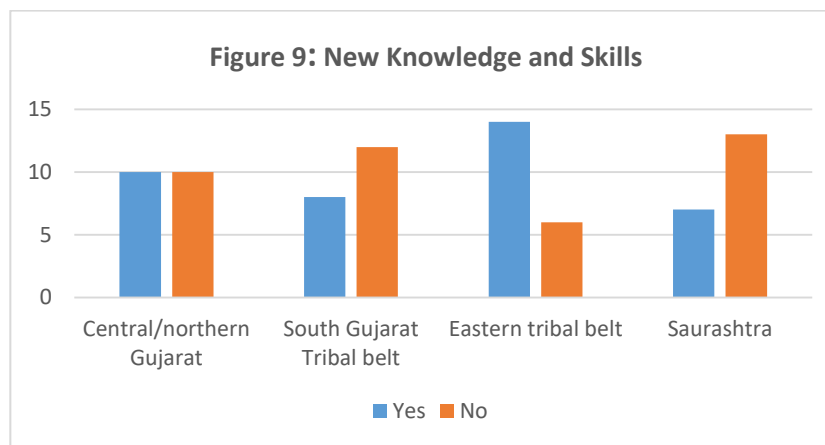
Livelihood security

Close to 50% of the respondents have said that they have acquired new knowledge and skills to augment their livelihoods (Table 19). However, most of these responses refer to *sajiv khedi* and /or ability to take up farming on their own. Perhaps only 5 percentage would have tried to diversify their income beyond farming. A few examples of such enterprising women are provided below:

- ✓ Teji ben Amarsinh Bhaiof Baldena village, Bavla, has started making torans and lamp shades out of glass-bead work which has generated an alternative source of livelihood for the family, with a net income of 48,000/- year
- ✓ Amrit ben Sana bhai of Dahegamda, Bavla has become an expert in trading in the marketplace. She has started procuring grain from other villagers, storing and selling it when the price is right.
- ✓ Shitalben Ramubhai Tadv of Bhavuri Savar, Dediapada has started a retail shop for organic vegetables, after adopting organic farming. The shop is run by her son who is physically disabled and fetches an additional income of about Rs 1.5 lakhs per annum.
- ✓ Ramilaben Lahu bhai of Sakore, Bavla gets a third of her income from share cropping on mortgaged land as she lends money to others.

Table 19: Acquiring new knowledge and skills to diversify income sources (Q 5)

No.	Area/Type	Yes	No	Total
1	Central/northern Gujarat	10	10	20
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	8	12	20
3	Eastern tribal belt	14	6	20
4	Saurashtra	7	13	20
	Total	39	41	80



5.6 Social Impacts

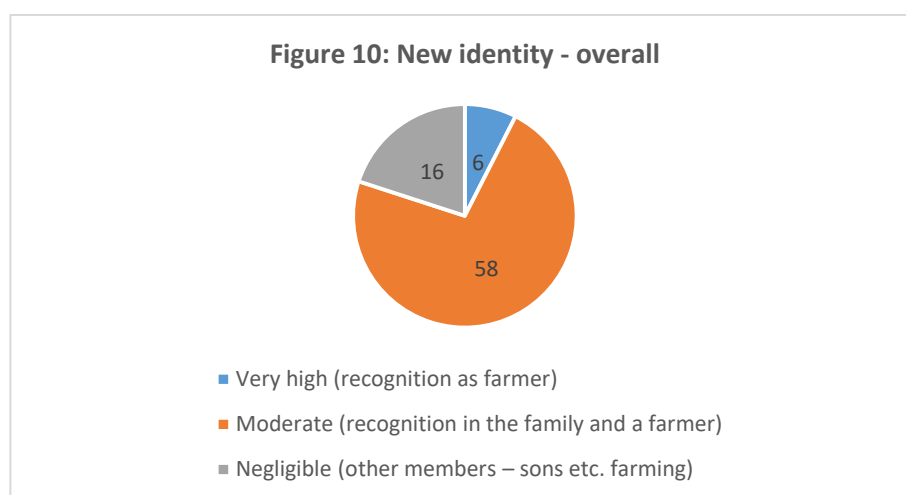
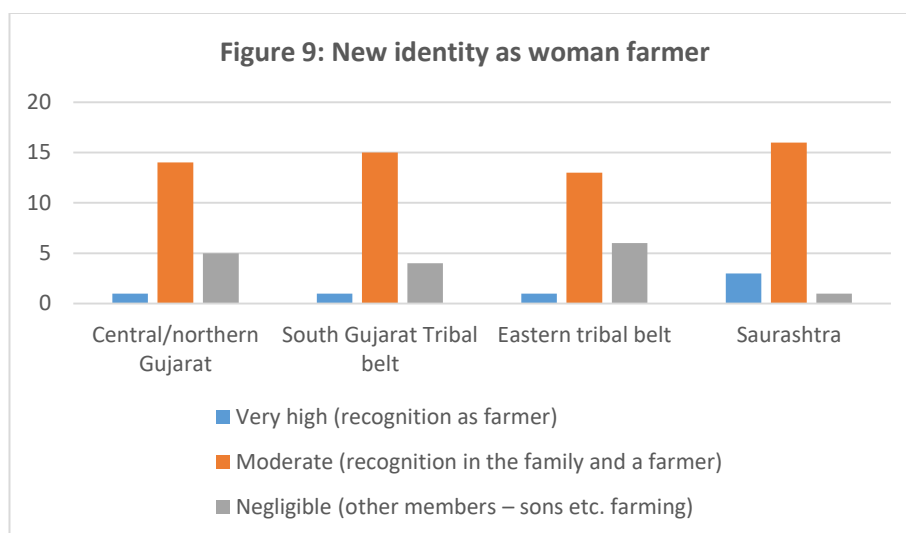
The figures in this section represents a quantification of qualitative data. The rating is based on responses to certain questions (last section of the questionnaire). These findings are only indicative as this is not a scientifically validated instrument to assess social impacts on women undergoing a process of empowerment.

i) Identity as a woman farmer

64 out of 80 women land owners (80%) felt that they have acquired a new identity of being a woman farmer which feels very different from being an ordinary housewife (Table 20).

Table 20: Identity as a woman farmer (Q 1)

No.	Area/Type	Very high (recognition as farmer)	Moderate (recognition in the family and a farmer)	Negligible (other members – sons etc. farming)	Total
1	Central/northern Gujarat	1	14	5	20
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	1	15	4	20
3	Eastern tribal belt	1	13	6	20
4	Saurashtra	3	16	1	20
	Total	6	58	16	80

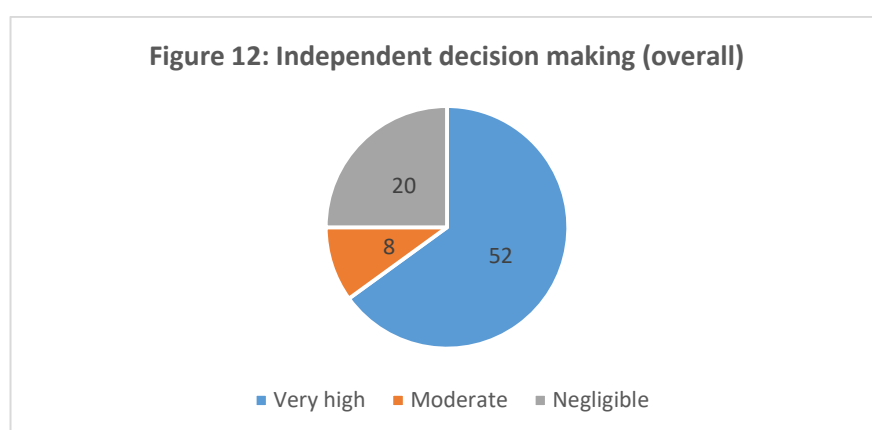
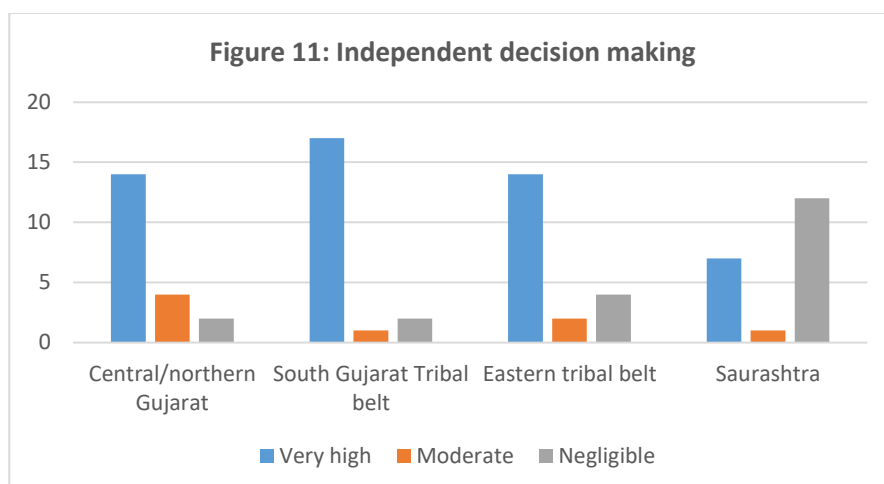


ii) *Ability to make independent decisions within the family*

About 60 out of 80 women (75%) stated that they were now able to take their own decisions within the family, without having to consult anyone else ([Table 21](#)). Most of these women were widows who have been empowered.

Table 21: Independent decision making within family - both economic & social (Q 8)

No.	Area/Type	Very high	Moderate	Negligible
1	Central/northern Gujarat	14	4	2
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	17	1	2
3	Eastern tribal belt	14	2	4
4	Saurashtra	7	1	12
	Total	52	8	20

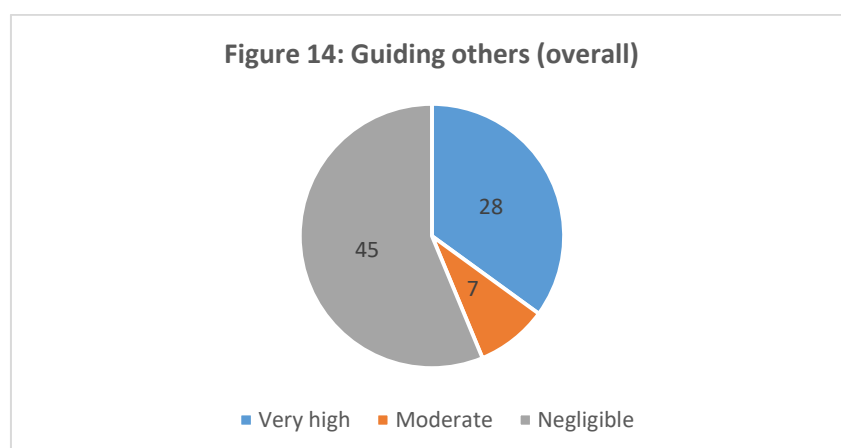
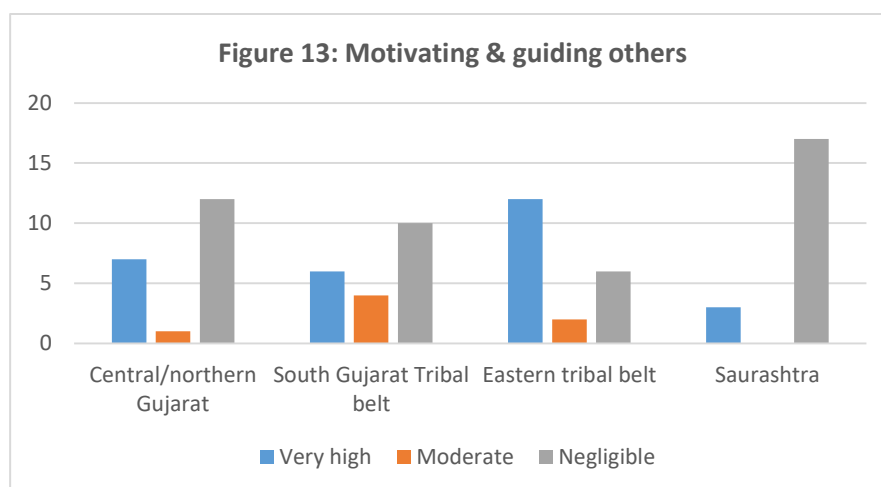


iii) *Motivating and guiding other women*

One expectation from the women beneficiaries is that once they feel empowered they would empathise with other women and try to motivate and guide them to assert their rights for land and other entitlements. Here it is seen that only 31.25% have come forward to help others while a large majority has remained contented with their own lives ([Table 22](#)). The picture is particularly disappointing in the sample from Saurashtra region.

Table 22: Motivating & guiding other women in need (Q3)

No.	Area/Type	Very high	Moderate	Negligible
1	Central/northern Gujarat	7	1	12
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	6	4	10
3	Eastern tribal belt	12	2	6
4	Saurashtra	3	0	17
	Total	28	7	45

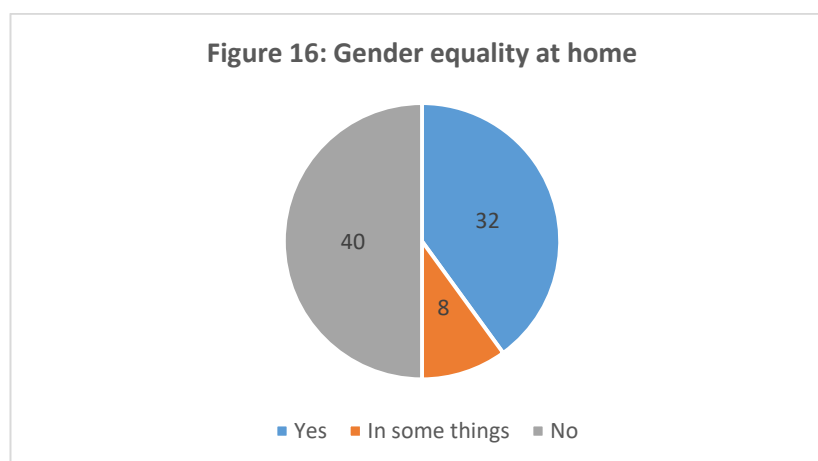
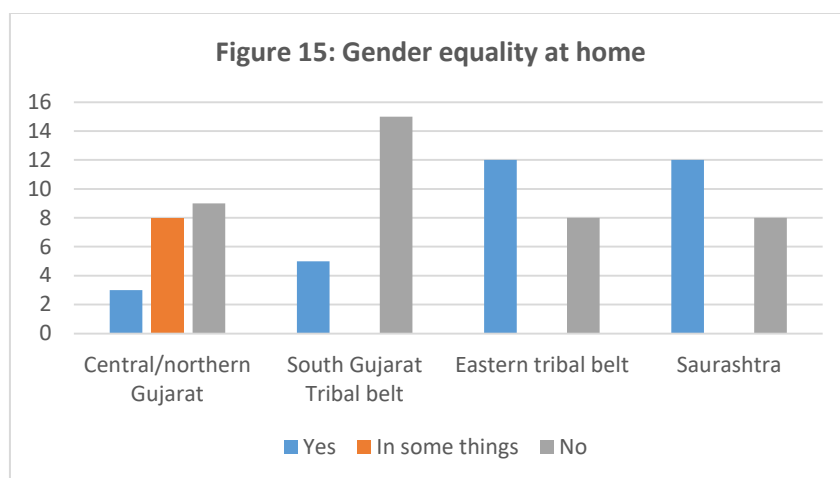


iv) *Practicing gender equality within family*

Overall result shows that only 50% of the sample appears to be practicing gender equality within their own family (Table 23). This is manifested in the kind of decisions they take for their own children when it comes to educating girls or getting their names on the inheritance list as compared to boys.

Table 23: Practicing gender equality within own family (Q 7)

No.	Area/Type	Yes	In some things	No
1	Central/northern Gujarat	3	8	9
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	5	0	15
3	Eastern tribal belt	12	0	8
4	Saurashtra	12	0	8
	Total	32	8	40

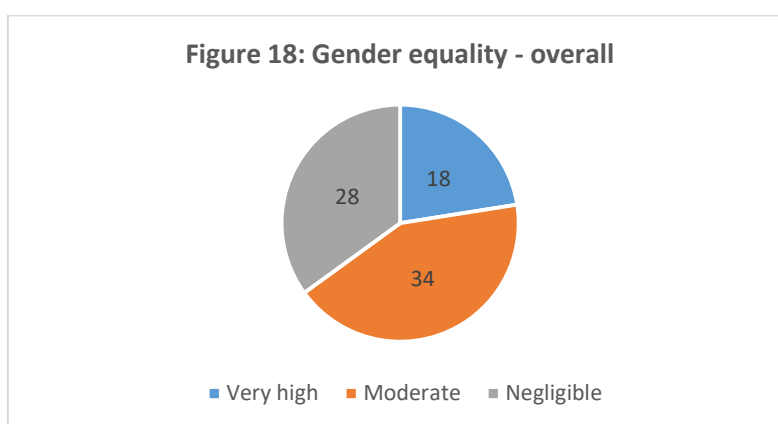
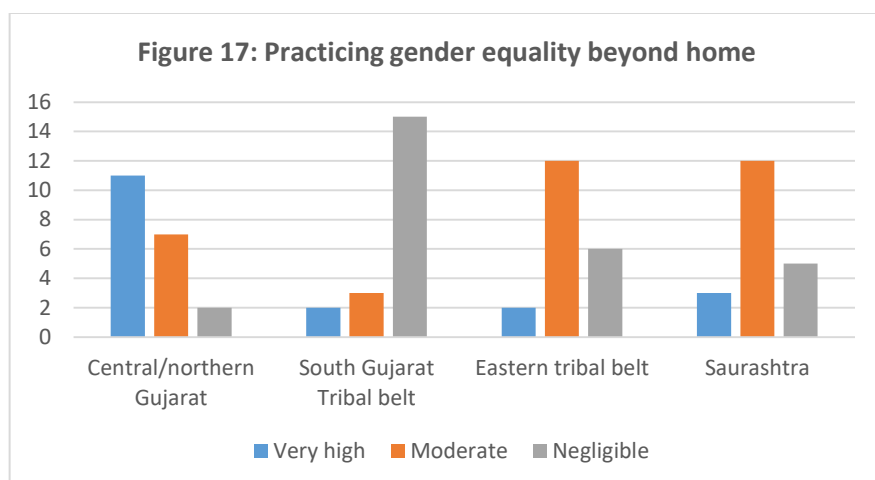


v) *Practicing gender equality outside the family (village, community)*

This refers to women being empowered enough to participate in the larger issues taking place in her surroundings, in the panchayat and in the community. This could also mean challenging men on certain issues where women are discriminated against simply because of tradition. The results show that the majority (65.0 %) have started asserting themselves outside the family. However, 65.4 % of these women are rather cautious and take a stand on selected issues only as they may fear retaliation or because they are still not confident enough (Table 24).

Table 24: Practicing gender equality in village and beyond (Q 4)

No.	Area/Type	Very high	Moderate	Negligible	Total
1	Central/northern Gujarat	11	7	2	20
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	2	3	15	20
3	Eastern tribal belt	2	12	6	20
4	Saurashtra	3	12	5	20
	Total	18	34	28	80

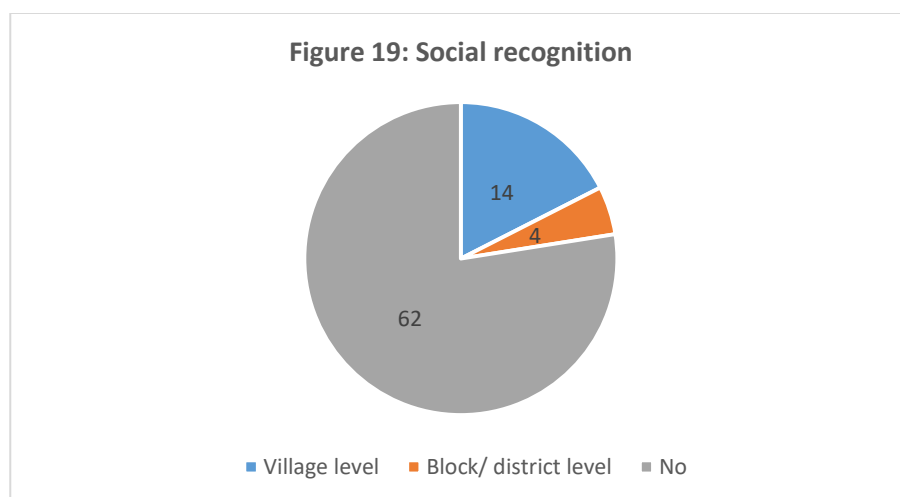


vi) *Social recognition at the local levels*

The data shows that 18 out of 80 women (22.5%) have received some kind of recognition at local level of which 4 have been recognized for their leadership at the block/district levels (see Table 25).

Table 25: Social recognition (Q 2)

No.	Area/Type	Village level (nos.)	Block/ district level (nos.)	No
1	Central/northern Gujarat	3	4	13
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	11	0	9
3	Eastern tribal belt	0	0	20
4	Saurashtra	0	0	20
	Total	14	4	62



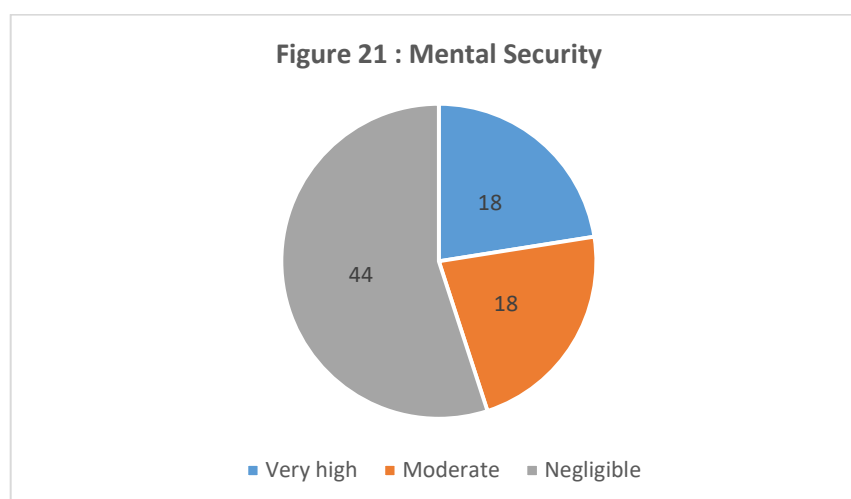
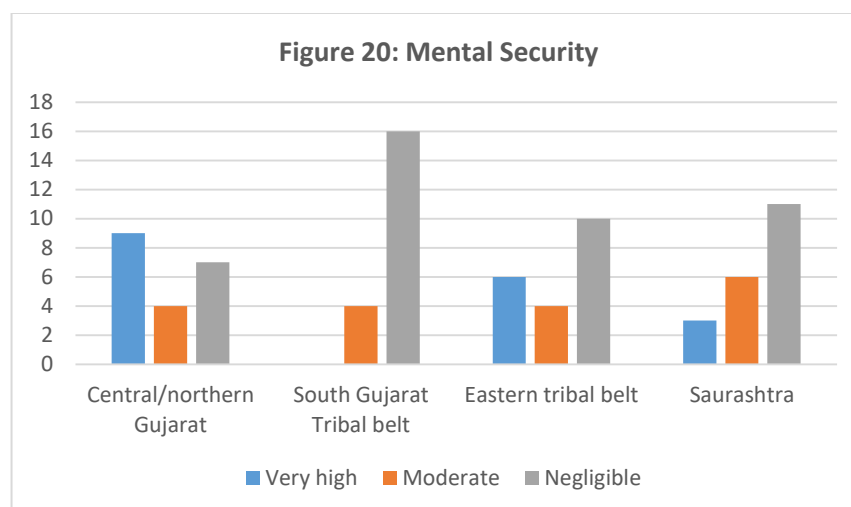
vii) Mental security and reduced vulnerability

It is often assumed that land ownership would lead to reduced vulnerability and therefore greater mental security. While the women from central/northern Gujarat seem to have reported this in significant numbers (65%), the same is not true for the other three regions ([Table 26](#)).

Perhaps one reason could be that most of the women have succeeded in getting their names on the land document but independent possession (partitioning) remains to be done in most cases. This means that the sense of vulnerability still remains as name of people have often been removed without their knowledge in the past.

Table 26: Mental security and reduced sense of vulnerability (Q 9)

No.	Area/Type	Very high	Moderate	Negligible	Total
1	Central/northern Gujarat	9	4	7	20
2	South Gujarat Tribal belt	0	4	16	20
3	Eastern tribal belt	6	4	10	20
4	Saurashtra	3	6	11	20
	Total	18	18	44	80



6.0 Case studies of two PLWs

To understand the long term impacts of WGWLO's work it was also felt necessary to make a qualitative assessment of the kind of leadership that was getting created at the grassroots level. However, no clear methodology had been identified in the ToR for this purpose. The authors decided to interact with two of the best leaders – one from tribal and another from non-tribal area and do a small case study on the life experiences of these leaders. These are presented below in synoptic form.

Case 1: Sumitra ben Patel

Sumitraben Patel from Dholka town of Ahmedabad district has been associated with *Bavla Mahila Vikas Sangathan* since 2002. Her association with the sangathan started on the issues of domestic violence. She had taken up five villages to reach out to women facing domestic violence. She received training on this issue from Center for Social Justice (CSJ) Ahmedabad, a NGO which is also a member institution of

the network and which was responsible for incubating the sangathan. She continued to grow through her own work with the sangathan and the capacity building inputs provided by WGWLO network.

During 2008 to 2011, Janvikas an NGO associated with CSJ awarded her a fellowship that enabled her to continue her work on the issue of domestic violence for 3 years. Her work on women and land ownership started in 2013. She continues to take leadership on both issues through the sangathan.

Sumitraben herself has gone through a very long struggle of fighting for land ownership for her mother. Her mother became a widow in 1985 and since then the struggle for land ownership started. Her mother's Jeth (brother-in-law) and all her in-laws were strongly against giving her any share in the ownership of land through *varsai*. Her mother was entitled to 7 vighas of land and one building (home). However, she was harassed constantly while trying to cultivate the land belonging to her husband.

At the age of 22, Sumitraben took it upon herself to tackle her mother's in-laws. She filed a case in the local court for reclaiming the ownership. In retaliation, all her mother's in-laws ex-communicated their family. When Sumitra's younger sister got married, not one member attended the marriage from among her father's relatives. They put lot of pressure on Sumitraben to withdraw case. She did not surrender to such pressures. Finally they filed a false case against her for which she had to remain for two days in police custody. Meanwhile her family continued to cultivate land that rightfully belonged to it.

Between 1992 till 2002 the battle was fought in the judicial arena. She fought cases in courts and against all appeals filed by her mother's Jeth and won them all! Finally in 2002 she got all clearances which allowed her to get the land and building transferred in the name of her mother and other members of the family. She has four brothers and sisters who are also co-owners now.

Needless to say this experience made her a strong leader. She had acquired in the process a lot of knowledge about legal procedures and provisions necessary to secure land. Her success motivated her to help other women undergoing the same or similar crisis and mental torture that she and her family had faced.

In her early career, she had taken up a job in a government hospital but was not very happy there as she could not help other women. Soon she left the job and started looking for a better opportunity through which she could help other women in need. It is during this time that the father of one of the employees of Bavla sangathan from village Rupal met Sumitraben and asked her to contact the sangathan. She did not waste any time in meeting up with the sangathan's office bearers. This is how she got the opportunity to work on the issue of domestic violence.

Through her efforts in Bavla sangathan she has been able to help an estimated 600 women in claiming land ownership through *varsai*. She has also helped nearly 200 women to own houses / housing plots and enabled hundreds of women in accessing government schemes for social security, housing, agriculture etc.

Many organisations including WGWLO network have recognised her capacities as para-legal worker. She is called as a resource person in many trainings. She given her services as a resource person in legal camps organised by district legal service authority to conduct trainings / camps in villages of Viramgam, Dhandhuka, Bavla, Dholka and Sanand taluka. Durdarshan and GTPL TV network have broadcasted her

interviews on women and land ownership. She has travel outside Gujarat to participate in exposure visits and also in training. She has direct contacts with Bavla mamlatdar and all talatis of this taluka. She is invited in talati meetings held every Thursday. She gets most of her work done through her network of contacts built over time. Often a word put in through a simple phone call is all it takes to get the work of a client done. She can independently draft applications, affidavits, and secure copies of government orders without any difficulty. Only in a few complicated matters, does she need to take the advice of a legal expert.

In future she wants to continue reaching out to more women needing such help. She would like to see rural women becoming independent at all levels so that they may live a life of dignity. She has two sons and her husband owns an auto-rickshaw and also sells packed milk pouches. One of her sons is engineer and employed with local company. As a result their economic status has improved considerably and they have been able to build a two-storied building as their home. Interestingly, her mother-in-law who is now 85 years old and lives with them!

Case 2: Usha ben Dinesh bhai Vasava

Usha ben, works as a PLW in *Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikas Manch*, a CBO incubated by AKRSP in Dediapara. She is among the key persons who provided leadership in this CBO. She has also been honoured by the KVK in Dediapada for her work in promoting *sajiv kheti* among women of the block.

Usha ben who belongs to Panchpipari village, was among the fortunate few tribal girls who got school education. When she failed to clear 10th std. her parents decided to get her married. The land in the family that she got married was on the name of her father-in-law. Even in her own home the women did not have their names entered on the 7/12 document.

At the turn of the century, when the SHG movement had picked up, she chanced to attend a training programme organized by AKRSP. In that training she realized that “as women we did not own anything that would give us a sense of security. The trainer however, assured us that if we started saving, that money would remain with us and we could decide how to use it and manage it..... In 2001 we started our SHG. At that time it was difficult even to save Rs 10/month. However, it was a good beginning as for the first time women started thinking about themselves.”

The SHG experience gave Usha more confidence. Hence when an opportunity to go out to Chausala training center run by Sadguru Foundation came up she eagerly grabbed it. The training was on raising grafted mango and all the people who came forward were men. There was stiff opposition from home but she persisted and was the only woman to go with the group.

In 2004-5 the federation of women’s SHGs was formed. Given her educational background and her leadership skills, she got a chance to work with the federation as volunteer (EV) deputed by AKRSP (I).

In 2013, the UNDP project being implemented by WGWLO came up. In the beginning the people were skeptical about the very idea of women working as para legal workers for getting land in the names of women. “Many told us that you will create problems between brothers and sisters!” recalled Usha of those early days. Never the less, she was convinced about the idea and became a PLW.

She first started building rapport with the talatis. In five panchayats, she got meetings organized during the evening time so that women could also attend. Through the “chandla fixing” game she was able to make the community members realize how skewed the land ownership pattern was against women. This stimulated a number of women to come forward to get their names registered on *varsagat* agricultural land. To reduce processing costs they started collective processing of cases.

Simultaneously, the sangathan also started taking up cases of domestic violence against women. Usha got actively engaged in taking up the cause of the affected women who came to the sangathan for help. The approach adopted by the sangathan in all such cases was to contact the local *Panch* to see what they would do in the matter. If the *Panch* failed to take a proactive decision and do justice, they would then take the matter to court.

In Phogat taluka, the panch did a case against the federation which went on for 5 years. The federation had gone against the panch’s decision supporting a man who pushed his wife and daughter out of the house because he wanted to marry a second wife. During this struggle, the federation supported the woman and the affected girl child got educated. Many years later the man lost both his wife and mother and he wanted to take his daughter back. She decided to go back to him and both are happy now.

In another case of divorce, the court ruled in favour of the husband although the wife had looked after the son for the first three years. The sangathan helped to rehabilitate the woman. She took up a job in an anganwadi. Later she married another person. In a case of attempted rape of a six year old girl, Usha took the help of the 181 helpline. The person accused of the crime was arrested and jailed. She was called to give evidence as a social worker.

Because of her social work people wanted her to contest for the Panchayat elections. She stood twice but lost the elections. She soon realized that the outcome was because she refused to join any political party. In the sangathan, “we keep away from politics and religion”.

Realising the need to safeguard her livelihood, she got her name entered on 5 acres of their land and also 3 acres of her father’s land. She gets the agricultural work done through hired labour. In her father’s land she practices *sajiv kheti*.

Over the years, she realizes that she has moved from being a housewife to a person known to be knowledgeable about new information and the rights of women. She along with the other leaders in the sangathan have tried to prepare other women leaders in every village where they have members. Her vision is to create such women who would fight for the rights of women in the entire block.

Since 2012 AKRSP which incubated the sangathan has not been providing as much support as before. Hence the sangathan has to rely on its own resources and fend for itself. It started relying more on service charge and new membership charge to cover its recurring costs. ADB had given them a tractor earlier which generated some income. But that was not enough and they needed to think of alternative streams of revenue. At that time they had a collector (Mr. Milind T) in the district who was very favourable. He facilitated the purchase of three tractors with subsidized loan from NABARD. These were handed over to them in a function to celebrate Adivasi day on 9th July 2105. The sangathan had to pay Rs 16,500/- where the total cost was Rs 49 lakhs. During the function, a high-handed lady officer made some adverse comments about. This offended the three representatives of the sangathan and they

thought of rejecting the government offer by not going up to the stage. However, good sense prevailed and they finally yielded to good council and took the keys to the three tractors that were offered to them in the function.

The sangathan has given the three tractors to individual entrepreneurs and one to the FPO promoted by AKRSPI to run on a rental basis. These individuals in turn offer services to small and marginal farmers of the region. This arrangement has helped to generate additional income of Rs 2 lakhs per year which is sufficient to tide over the financial crisis of the sangathan for the time being.

However, the sangathan continues to face challenges from various sources. The Sagbara Gram Panchayat wanted it to pay an exorbitant sum as tax, but was not willing to provide a receipt for the same. Other agencies like Mission Mangalam have their eyes on the premises which the sangathan had developed by investing in land development. However, by now the sangathan with leaders like Usha have learnt to stand up for their rights. Although the land belongs to the panchayat, it is bound by contract signed with the government, which is a legal document. In due course the sangathan will plan to purchase land and set up its own office on a permanent basis.

Leadership building through the network

Clearly these are women who have endured a lot in their early struggle either within their family and /or community or with unscrupulous outsiders and cheats. Their struggle enabled them to become what they are today and be sensitive to other women facing similar challenges in life. The authors experienced an enormous sense of empathy while listening to their trials and tribulations, as also a sense of satisfaction and pride at their achievements and their commitment to the mission of WGWLO and the larger issue of women's empowerment.

The network has women workers who are at various stages of growth and empowerment. Some who have joined more recently and are relatively young benefit a great deal from the inputs of more senior women leaders like Sumitra ben and Ushaben. The network provides learning platforms and regular meetings which makes this happen. Also with the use of hand-held devices information sharing among the group members has become very quick and efficient, which has also led to the building of a collective pool of knowledge. This pool of knowledge makes the group as a whole more proficient day by day, enabling them to think of higher goals in the coming years.

7.0 Views of different stakeholders

We had the opportunity to meet some revenue talatis and a circle officer. The revenue officials have very clearly stated that they would always help and have helped women to apply for and secure their *varsai* within current legal framework. They have even tried to find out solutions within legal framework in cases of death of great-grand-parents whose names were not registered.

Mr. Jaideep singh Solanki, a talati in Dediapada said that the number of cases of fraud have come down dramatically after 2010 when land records were placed on-line. As per law names have to be put in the Pedhnama irrespective of gender. Also without the signature of Panch and voluntary signature of a woman her name cannot be removed. Jaideep informed that at present about a third of the talatis are

women. He also observed that there has been a spurt in varsais done recently, simply because of the Prime Minister's benefit scheme for agriculture which is linked to land ownership.

He also informed that under tribal customary law, if more than one marriage has been done by a man, both the women can inherit land. (But in such cases if one wife has a son and another has a daughter, a conflict could ensue!)

We also met Mr. Ambelal Sukha patel, Extension Officer, Agricultural Department at Santrampur through in South Gujarat through the good offices of SAARTHI. He was of the opinion that the SBKs were performing well. They had fixed Mondays and Thursdays for the SBK desk mainly because their meetings with talatis and sarpanchs are held on these days. On other days most of the officers are in the field. Hence on these days, if there is a need for any of a particular talati or sarpanch, they can immediately be called to the desk and the task completed without delay.

For agricultural extension they had to rely primarily on the gram sevak, Gram mitra and the sarpanch. They organize two meetings per month with gram mitros to share new information that has to be passed on to farmers. They also involve SKMs for agricultural extension related to women and get them involved through Krishi mela and Mission mangalam. One issue flagged by him was that only about 2.5% of the women get access to their schemes simply because they don't own land. They provide demonstration kits for different crops through ATMA with 90% subsidy through Gujarat Agro and GSFC depots. Applications are also received during the months of March to April for supply of various agricultural equipments.

Dr. Meenakshi Tiwari, a lady scientist whom we contacted at the KVK in Dediapada was very forthcoming about the need to promote sajjiv khedi through women and their groups. This KVK came under Navsari University and was responsible for the whole of Narmada district. A KVK has six positions for scientists covering the areas of crop production, plant protection, horticulture, animal husbandry, extension and health, nutrition, drudgery. There are plans to include a position on climate change and agriculture.

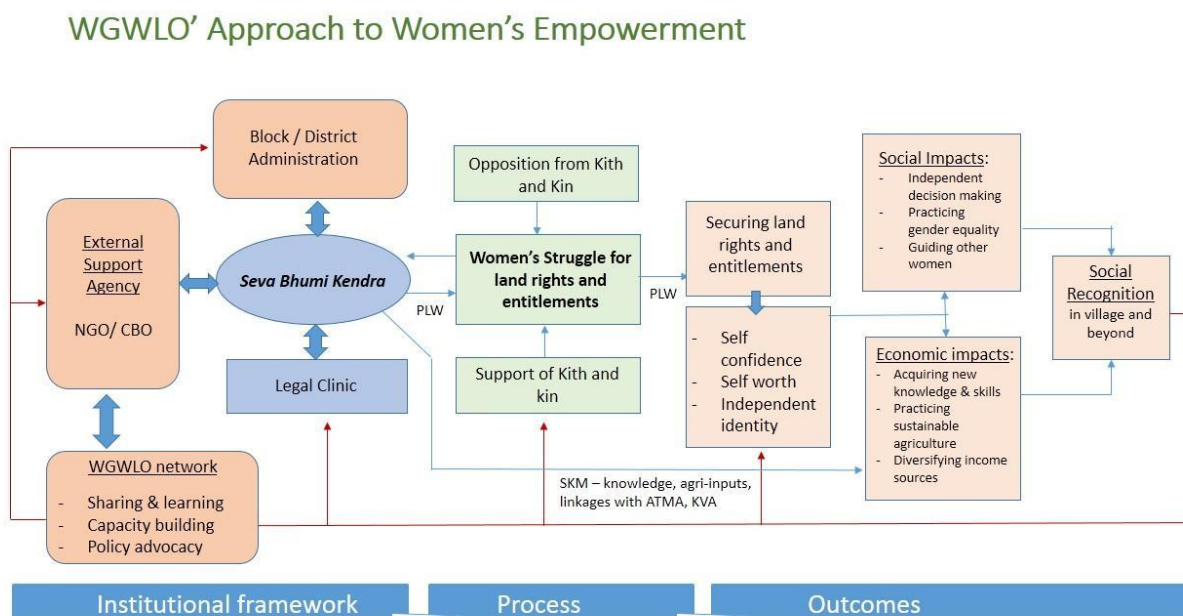
She was of the view that maximum amount of chemicals were being used in cultivating vegetables which affects the health of the public at large. The only way to come out of it is to promote sajjiv khedi particularly in vegetables and food crops. She showed us a new product patented by Navsari University that is being field tested through the KVK. It is a liquid organic fertilizer made out of the pseudostem of the banana plant. It was priced at Rs 120/liter and found extremely effective in promoting productivity of vegetable crops.

She was particularly happy to be associated with the PLWs and women farmers in Dediapada (through Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikas Manch) with whom the KVK was engaged on a regular basis. She found them to be "a group of empowered women who was eager to do new things.....We gave them tools for reducing drudgery in agriculture. But they also placed their demands about the kind off tool they want, so we understand their needs better."

8.0 Framework for women's empowerment through land ownership

Based on the findings of the study as well as interactions with WGWLO secretariat and a few representatives of the network we present below what we feel is the approach adopted for women's empowerment (Figure 22).

Figure 22: WGWLO's approach to women's Empowerment



As seen in the figure, the network which is created by like-minded NGO's and CBOs serves the purpose of providing a platform for sharing and learning and for capacity building of members and their grassroots level functionaries. It also serves as a mechanism for initiating collective action at the state level and for lobbying for policy change. Member institutions are thereby strengthened to promote women's empowerment through the pathway of securing land ownership and related entitlements. Thanks to the action-reflection process adopted by the network an institutional innovation called *Seva Bhumi Kendra* was established in collaboration with the block/district administration. As this center was managed by PLWs trained through the network itself it soon became a user-friendly access to the government for speedy and cost efficient disposal of applications for land ownership by women.

In the struggle for land rights many women, particularly widows, often encounter strong opposition from their in-laws. In some cases this opposition can become violent and even end up in sabotaging land records or filing of false cases. Cases of the father-in-laws or other land holders in the family having been swindled by unscrupulous traders and moneylenders by falsely taking their thumb impressions have also been found. In such cases the routine process of transferring land title was not possible and legal advice was necessary to identify the problem and take the right course of action. This is where another innovation of a member network viz. legal clinic, came in useful and has been scaled up across the network.

The process of empowerment included creating awareness about women's rights over land especially these were varsagat (inherited) and identifying needy women who have no other means of livelihood and giving them priority to access the services of the SBK. In many places the bureaucracy collaborated with the member agency to conduct village level camps where the processing of a large number of applications could be handled in a cost effective way, thereby making it easier for both the applicants as well as the government and panchayat officers. For the latter it was a matter of efficiency in meeting targets and for the women it saved them the cost of repeated visits to the block office – which included the opportunity cost of doing household or livelihood related work.

For women who had been struggling to get their land title against all odds, the sense of empowerment was enormous. It gave them a lot of self-confidence as well as an independent identity. It prompted them to take up farming on their own and/or explore new livelihood options. In this endeavor too, the network came forward to hold their hands through the SKM workers who brought with them access to new technology and knowledge as well as linkages for accessing agri-inputs and tools for reducing drudgery. A fairly impressive proportion of these women who had latent talents flourished and soon became leaders in their own right. They became brand ambassadors for the network and were instrumental in identifying other such needy women and helping them to secure their rights. The fact that they became knowledgeable in sajjiv kheti, meant that large number of neighbours and farmers from other villages as well came to see their demonstration and to gather information from them. Their efforts to spread this knowledge has also been recognized by government and other agencies, further boosting their efforts and resolve.

9.0 Conclusions and recommendations

The network has enabled/ supported an estimated 8000 women to secure their land rights so far. Based on MIS data available with the secretariat for the past three years, a total of 1203 women secured a total of 720 acres of land which averages out to 0.60 acres per beneficiary. This considered sufficient to meet the food security needs of an average family of 4-5 members for all 12 months of the year.

Significantly, 66.8% or two-thirds of the beneficiaries during this period, have been tribals who are among the most marginalized in the state.

The amount of monetary benefits accrued to women land owners through two government schemes as was about Rs. 6.1 million. The fact that women land owners can now access these entitlements directly from government as they are now considered farmers, provides a sense of empowerment to these women, many of whom are widows.

WGWLO has directly supported 667 women farmers with demonstration kits, for trial of new varieties, organic fertilizers, pesticides and inputs for water conservation the total value of which works out to Rs 4.15 m. It has also enabled the member agencies to set up tool libraries that make available on rent tools that reduce drudgery of women in agriculture.

Summary of Findings from the survey

Profile of sample:

- ☐ 85% of the sample comprises of widows and 10% of women who are wives. Very few cases of daughters using their land rights from paternal home were encountered.
- ☐ The sample was dominated by OBCs and STs which together accounted for 95% of the sample.

Land ownership:

- The average size of land secured was 6.61 vighas (3.96 acres). However, the variation is quite large with minimum of 1 vigha and maximum of 32 vighas.
- Close to 60% of the sample reported having their names jointly with other members of the family.
- The average cost was little more than a thousand rupees. WGWLO has made a major impact on the cost of securing land by reducing it by a factor of 10 to 15 times. This of course does not include the cost of mental agony that is also removed.
- 40 percent of the respondents had been able to access land within 3 months, 56.25% within 6 months and 78.5% within 12 months of applying. Only the more complicated cases took longer than a year and were most likely referred to the Legal Clinics.
- The data shows that 25% of the sample (mostly from the tribal belt) are still without access to water. Hence for such women additional help would be needed to attain food and livelihood security by augmenting their income sources through off-farm or non-farm activities. Some of them were found to be eking out an existence by working as farm labourers for part of the year, even at an advanced age.
- 54% of the sample actually owns the irrigation resources while 17% has access but do not own the resource. These may be women who are allowed to draw water from the well of a neighbor or relative, or those who can borrow a water machine to lift water from the pond or some other source.
- 92.5% of the sample have said that they found the PLW either extremely helpful or very helpful.

Entitlements:

- 69.4% reported benefiting from schemes related to promotion of agriculture and animal husbandry. The remaining 30.6% responses were related to welfare schemes of which widows' pension was by far the largest component.

Sajiv Kheti:

- ☐ From our sample of 80, 11 women had taken up demonstrations in their fields. Several of them claimed that the demonstrations were successful and many people from the village as well as neighbouring villages had come to take a look at their fields. This had changed the identity of these women as they were now being consulted for *sajiv kheti*.

- The adoption of two main agri-inputs viz. organic fertilizers and bio-pesticides over the past five years show an identical pattern. The level of adoption has been increasing gradually and has been the maximum during the past two years.
- The large majority of women farmers had adopted organic farming in less than 2 vighas of land. This was mainly to produce foodgrain for home consumption.
- 58.75% of the respondents stated that they were practicing the use of a combination of organic and chemical inputs in land devoted to production for the market.
- Only 42.5% respondents seemed to perceive definite improvement in soil health. This was to be expected as many of the respondents have adopted sajiv kheti only in the current season or since 1-2 years which is not sufficient to see much change in soil health.

Economic impact:

- A large majority (88.75%) of the sample stated that they could grow enough food to meet food security of the family for 12 months
- Close to 50% of the respondents have said that they have acquired new knowledge and skills to augment their livelihoods. However, most of these responses refer to sajiv kheti and /or ability to take up farming on their own. Perhaps only 5 percentage would have tried to diversify their income beyond farming.

Social impact:

- *Recognition as a farmer:* (80%) felt that they have acquired a new identity of being a woman farmer which feels very different from being an ordinary housewife
- *Independent decision making:* 75% of the sample women stated that they were now able to take their own decisions within the family, without having to consult anyone else. Most of these women were widows who have been empowered.
- *Helping other women:* Only 31.25% have come forward to help others while a large majority has remained contented with their own lives. The picture is particularly disappointing in the sample from Saurashtra region.
- *Practicing gender equality within family:* 50% of the sample appears to be practicing gender equality within their own family. This is manifested in the kind of decisions they take for their own children when it comes to educating girls or getting their names on the inheritance list as compared to boys.
- *Practicing gender equality outside the family (village, community):* The results show that the majority (65.0 %) have started asserting themselves outside the family. However, 65.4 % of these women classified as practicing gender equality moderately are rather cautious and take a stand on selected issues only as they may fear retaliation or because they are still not confident enough.
- *Social recognition at the local levels:* 22.5% respondents have received some kind of recognition at local level of which 4 women have been recognized for their leadership at the block/district levels
- *Mental security and reduced vulnerability:* It is often assumed that land ownership would lead to reduced vulnerability and therefore greater mental security. While the women from central/northern Gujarat seem to have reported this in significant numbers (65%), the same is not true for the other three regions. Perhaps one reason could be that most of the women

have succeeded in getting their names on the land document but independent possession (partitioning) remains elusive. This means that the sense of vulnerability still remains. This may be because in the case of joint ownership, names of people have often been removed from the records through sabotage without the knowledge of land owners. Although cases of such cheating have been reduced dramatically after computerization and placement of records in public domain, people may still have that fear based on past experiences.

Leadership building through the network

Two case studies of senior women leaders within the network brought out why these women were successful/ Both Sumitra ben and Usha ben had endured a lot in their early struggle either within their family and /or community or with unscrupulous outsiders and cheats. Their struggle enabled them to become what they are today and be sensitive to other women facing similar challenges in life

At present the network has women workers who are at various stages of growth and empowerment. Some who have joined more recently and are relatively young benefit a great deal from the inputs of more senior women leaders like Sumitra ben and Ushaben. The network provides learning platforms and regular meetings which makes this happen. Also with the use of hand-held devices information sharing among the group members has become very quick and efficient, which has also led to the building of a collective pool of knowledge. This pool of knowledge makes the group as a whole more proficient day by day, enabling them to think of higher goals in the coming years.

For women who had been struggling to get their land title against all odds, the sense of empowerment was enormous. It gave them a lot of self-confidence as well as an independent identity. It prompted them to take up farming on their own and/or explore new livelihood options. In this endeavor too, the network came forward to hold their hands through the SKM workers who brought with them access to new technology and knowledge as well as linkages for accessing agri-inputs and tools for reducing drudgery. A fairly impressive proportion of these women who had latent talents flourished and soon became leaders in their own right. They became brand ambassadors for the network and were instrumental in identifying other such needy women and helping them to secure their rights. The fact that they became knowledgeable in sajjiv kheti, meant that large number of neighbours and farmers from other villages as well came to see their demonstration and to gather information from them. Their efforts to spread this knowledge has also been recognized by government and other agencies, further boosting their efforts and resolve. Government departments and extension agencies like KVK have welcomed the emergence of empowered groups of women with whom they find it convenient to work with within the existing legal framework.

Suggestions for the way forward

- The strategies adopted by the network to empower women (particularly single women) starting with land ownership, seem to be effective for the most part, except where women do not feel the need and get the land rather easily without having to make any effort.

- So far the network has concentrated mostly on OBCs and STs. There is considerable scope of reaching out to women facing issues of land ownership in the same geographical areas from other communities as well.
- The local Sangathans have been playing a very important role in providing handholding support and guidance to women land owners, leading to overall socio-economic empowerment. They should continue to do so as it enables the women to live a life of dignity and security. Many of these institutions have been facing the challenge of financial sustainability which is a common issue that could be addressed by the network.
- The PLWs and MKSs have been doing a commendable job as can be seen from the ratings received in the survey. A few gaps in handholding were observed. The network may like to reflect on these gaps – when they happen and how to ensure that these gaps can be taken care of through regular contact with the women.
- The secretariat has been doing a challenging job of trying to keep track of the progress across the state. The network needs to develop norms such that vital information on the progress on different fronts may be collected as a matter of routine on a monthly basis. To this end, some more efforts may be needed to streamline the management information system.

Annexure 1

List of member institutions and individuals in WGWLO

Please provide

	NGO	
1	ANANDI	
2	Human Development and Research Center (HDRC)	
1	Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (I) (AKRSP)	
2	Center for Social Justice (CSJ)	
3	Cohesion Foundation Trust	
4	Dakshin Gujarat Vikas Sanstha (DGVs)	
5	Development Support Centre (DSC)	
6	Gramya Vikas Trust (GVK), Dwarka	
7	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS)	
8	MAHITI	
9	MARAG SANSTHA	
10	Prakruti Foundation	
11	SAARTHI	
12	Sahjeevan	

1 3	SAHR WARU	
1 4	Samarthan Trust	
1 5	Sewa Mahila Housing Trust	
1 6	SWATI - Society for Women's Action and Training Initiative	
1 7	UTTHAN	
1 8	Viksat	
	Federations	Promoting NGO
1	Bawla Mahila Vikas Sangathan (BMVS), Bawla	
2	Devghadh Mahila Sangathan - Bariya	Promoted by ANANDI
3	Ekal Naari Shakti Manch (ENSM) - Anjar	
4	Jagruti Mahila Manch, Dediyaipada	Promoted by AKRSP
5	Kanuni Sahay Kendra, Ahwa	Promoted by CSJ
6	Mahila Swaraj Manch, Shihor	Promoted by ANANDI
7	Mahila Vikas Sangh - Dhrangradha	Promoted by SWATI
8	Mahila Vikas Sangh - Patadi	Promoted by SWATI
9	Maldhari Mahila Sangathan	Promoted by MARAG
1 0	Maliya Mahila Shakti Sangathan - Maliya	Promoted by ANANDI
1 1	Megha Adivasi Federation, Tapi	Promoted by SEWA
1 2	Osad Sangathan, Dwarka	Promoted by GVT
1 3	Panam Sangatha	Promoted by ANANDI
1 4	Rajula-Mahua Sangh	Promoted by Utthan
1 5	Ratanmahal Sangathan	Promoted by ANANDI
1 6	Saiyere Jo Sangathan - Kutch	
1 7	Samarthan Mahila Sangathan - Bhavnagar	Promoted by Utthan
1 8	Sanand Mahila Sangathan (SMVS), Sanand	
1 9	Shri Navjeevan Adivasi Mahila Vikas Manch – Sagbara	Promoted by AKRSP
2 0	Ujaas Mahila Sangh, Navsari	Promoted by Cohesion

2	Vanita Shakti Mahila Sangathan, Dahod	Promoted by Utthan
1		
	Development Professionals	
1	Dr. Meera Velayudhan	
2	Ms. Kirtida Vora	
3	Ms. Preeti Oza	
4	Dr. Varsha Ganguly	
5	Meena Rajgor	
6	Krishna Keshvani	
7	Sushila Prajapati	
8	Anu Verma	
9	Shilpa Vasavada	

Annexure 2

Questionnaire

WGWLO Impact Study

Instructions

The questionnaire consists of three basic parts corresponding to three stage of empowerment of women land owners:

- a) Ownership
- b) Entitlements
- c) Sustainable agriculture

The respondents may belong to any one of the following three categories based on which stages they have experienced:

- i) Ownership + sustainable agriculture
- ii) Ownership + entitlements + sustainable agriculture
- iii) Only sustainable agriculture

The interviewer must first identify to which of the three categories the respondent belongs. Questions for only those stages that she has experienced, would need to be filled.

A fourth section deals with economic and social impacts on the respondent which must be filled for all respondents.

Profile of Respondent

Name of Respondent:

Name of Village, Block, District:

Cell Phone:

Social status in family: widow / daughter / wife

Dependents in family:

Amount of land owned (vighas):

Year in which land ownership obtained:

Social category: SC/ ST/ OBC/ other

Name of Interviewer

Signature of Interviewer

A OWNERSHIP

1) Ownership type (circle the right answer) - Individual / Joint

2) Status of irrigation: Irrigated / non-irrigated

3) Source of Irrigation:

Source	Access (Yes/No)	Ownership (Yes/No)	In how many acres?
Dug wells			
Bore wells			
Lift Irrigation from seasonal nallas/rivers			
Lift Irrigation from ponds/tanks			
Lift irrigation from check-dams			
Any other (please specify)			

4) Time spent in getting the land ownership (in months/years) _____?

5) Cost of securing ownership:

No	Particulars	Amount (Rs)
1	No of trips to SBK/ block office X cost per trip	
2	Government charges – fees, stamp paper etc.	
3	Documentation and typing, xeroxing charges	
4	Legal fees for advocate/ notary if any	
	Total	

6) How helpful did you find the PLW in providing various services (please rate on a five point scale below:

5 (Excellent)	4 (very helpful)	3 (fairly helpful)	2 (somewhat helpful)	1 (not much helpful)

B ENTITLEMENTS

- 1) Did you apply for and get entitlements like farm equipment, land development work, government support and welfare schemes? Please give details in the table below, use back side of the page if more space needed:

Entitlement particulars	Name of Department	Value (Rs) Paid by Government	Own contribution (Rs)	Time taken to get sanctioned
Total	-			-

C SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

- 1) Did you use chemical fertilizers? If yes how much:

Crop	Land (vighas)	Name of fertilizer
Total	-	-

2) Did you use organic fertilizers? If yes, how much:

Crop	Land (vighas)	Name of fertilizer (FYM/ vermicompost/ any other?)
Total	-	-

3) Did you use any chemical pesticides? If yes, how much:

Crop	Pest/disease	Name of pesticide

Total	-	-

4) Pattern of using agro inputs over past five years (put Yes / No in each cell as applicable):

	4 yrs ago	3 yrs ago	2 yrs ago	Last year	Current year
Chemical fertilizer					
Chemical pesticide					
Organic fertilizer					
Organic pesticide					

5) Impact on productivity of land:

For the same crop has the yield/vigha increased? From _____ to _____

For the same crop has the quality of produce improved? If yes please specify _____

Does it fetch a better price? By how much? _____

6) Impact on soil health:

- Soil texture improved ----- Yes/ somewhat/ No
- Depth of topsoil improved ----Yes/ somewhat/ No
- Water holding capacity ----- Yes/ somewhat/ No
- Soil fertility/productivity ----- Yes/ somewhat/ No
- Overall soil health ----- Yes/ somewhat/ No

7) Impact on food security:

Produce enough food for entire family for how many months _____?

If no, how do you manage for remaining months?

- Credit from money lender
- NREGA employment
- Off farm activities
- Migration of one or more family members

8) What are the current sources of cash income? Please estimate the same:

- From sale of surplus food grains produced _____ Rs.
- From sale of cash crops produced _____ Rs.
- From sale of off-farm/ forest produce _____ Rs.
- From NREGA or other farm labour _____ Rs.

- From migration labour _____ Rs.
- From farm labour during peak season _____ Rs.
- From factory labour _____ Rs.
- Any other source _____ Rs.

9) How helpful did you find the MKS in providing various services (please rate on a five point scale below:

5 (Excellent)	4 (very helpful)	3 (fairly helpful)	2 (somewhat helpful)	1 (not much helpful)

D**SOCIAL IMPACTS****Social Impacts**

- 1) Has your role as a farmer been recognized and accepted in your family and village community?
How can you say so?
- 2) Have you tried to help other women who are facing the same or similar problems that you had faced in the past?
- 3) Did you succeed in breaking patriarchal boundaries (give examples – like speaking up in Panchayat, going to the field at night, negotiating in the market yard etc.)
- 4) Have you picked up any new technical skill for farming or income generation which was earlier considered a male domain?
- 5) Have you diversified your economic activities beyond farming in order to increase family income?
- 6) How do you now use your disposable income? (what are your priorities for spending the money – girls's education? Food and nutrition? Investment in assets?)
- 7) Has the pattern of decision making in the family undergone any change?
 - a. She is now consulted where earlier she was not – specify the areas
 - b. She can now take decisions independently – specify the areas
- 8) Do you now experience mental security and reduced sense of vulnerability because of the ownership of land and other assets and sources of income?