

## **Assessing the Impact of Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana under the aegis of Rajeevika (Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad) on Income Generation Programmes: A Case Study**

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### **Abstract: -**

This case study delves into the consequential transformation brought about by Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana under the aegis of Rajeevika (Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad) in the life of women farmer's residing in the Ratniyakhedi village of Pratapgarh, Rajasthan, India. Specifically designed for semi-literate women aged 20 to 40, the program trains Pashu Sakhis in livestock farming, empowering them through technical skills and hand-holding support. The community-based approach ensures active participation and community ownership. Pashu Sakhis, functioning as both practitioners and advocates of best practices, perform key roles, including knowledge dissemination, doorstep healthcare, and demonstrating optimal farming practices. This initiative not only addresses the financial challenges faced by women but also transforms them into input suppliers, entrepreneurs, and service providers, ensuring sustainability and efficacy over time. The success stories from Ratniyakhedi village, where monthly incomes surged from ₹6000 to ₹12000, exemplify the positive impact of Pashu Sakhi in creating economic opportunities, fostering community development, and empowering women in rural India.

### **Introduction:**

The present study was carried out in Ratniyakhedi village of Pratapgarh, Rajasthan, characterized by its predominantly tribal

population, constituting approximately 90% of the community. The objective of the study was to assess the impact of an income employment

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program implemented by Rajeevika (Rajasthan Grameen Aajeevika Vikas Parishad) in the aforementioned village. This program is specifically designed to provide income-generating training to women through a distinctive initiative known as **Pashu Sakhi**, thereby positioning them as significant contributors to the local livestock farming economy. The initiative adopts a community-based approach, wherein semi-literate women are empowered through technical training and hand-holding support, enabling them to play a pivotal role in creating demand for inputs and delivering services to livestock farmers.

Rajeevika's initiative in Ratniyakhedi involves the targeted training of semi-literate women aged between 20 to 40 years, who have studied up to at least class 8.

#### **Programme Overview:**

Rural women form the backbone of the economy in many developing nations, playing a pivotal role in agriculture activities that contribute significantly to their livelihoods. In India, more than 80% of rural women are engaged in agriculture, with approximately 20% of farm livelihoods being led by women due to factors such as widowhood, desertion, or male emigration. However, the existing agriculture support system in India often reinforces the exclusion of women from their entitlements, limiting their access to extension services, support institutions, and crucial

production assets like seeds, water, credit, and subsidies. Additionally, women working in agriculture face the challenge of receiving lower wages compared to their male counterparts.

Recognizing the need to address these disparities and empower women in agriculture, the “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP) was established as a sub-component of the Deendayal Antodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). MKSP aims to improve the status of women in agriculture and enhance opportunities for their empowerment.

**Focus and Strategy:** MKSP uniquely recognizes women as farmers (“Mahila Kisan”) and endeavours to enhance their capacity in the realm of agro-ecologically sustainable practices. With a clear vision to reach the poorest households, MKSP seeks to expand the portfolio of activities handled by the Mahila Kisan. The focus is on capacitating smallholders to adopt sustainable, climate-resilient agro-ecology, creating a pool of skilled community professionals.

The primary objective of MKSP is to strengthen smallholder agriculture by promoting sustainable practices such as Community Managed Sustainable Agriculture (CMSA), Non-Pesticide Management (NPM), Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF), and the Pashu-Sakhi model for doorstep animal care

services. Additionally, MKSP aims to support sustainable regeneration and harvesting of Non-Timber Forest Produce, further diversifying the avenues available for women in agriculture.

In essence, MKSP stands as a transformative initiative committed to breaking barriers and empowering women in agriculture, ensuring their active participation and equal access to resources within the agricultural landscape of India. Through its strategic focus on sustainable practices and capacity-building, MKSP strives to create lasting impact and opportunities for women in rural communities.

#### **Addressing Livelihood Insecurity:**

The initiative emerged as a boon for women facing financial challenges in the village. The employment program filled the gap created by limited job opportunities in the city and the seasonal nature of farm work. The Pashu Sakhi Initiative, resembling an amalgamation of an Anganwadi worker and ANM in human health management, turned these women into input suppliers, self-business promoters, and service providers, making the system sustainable and effective over time.

#### **Training Methodology:**

Prior to training, community involvement is emphasized, with women selected by the community and their roles and responsibilities briefed in consultation with

family heads. This process enhances community ownership and family support for the effective functioning of Pashu Sakhis. A systematic orientation, followed by a 5-day residential training program, is organized. The participatory training process, adjusted to the learners' pace, incorporates multiple methodologies around key knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to function as Pashu Sakhi.

#### **Roles and Functions of Pashu Sakhis:**

Pashu Sakhi training goes beyond treatment, focusing on management practices and the sharing of best practices. Pashu Sakhis serve as small livestock farmers and adopters of best practices, enhancing their knowledge and credibility as best practice propagators and local leaders. They perform three complementary functions: extension of improved practices and knowledge sharing, providing doorstep first aid and counselling services for disease prevention and management, and demonstrating best practices and enterprise management in their own houses.

#### **Monitoring and Entrepreneurial Initiatives:**

Pashu Sakhis also work as monitoring and support service providers, regularly visiting each house to assess conditions and monitor disease spread. Through data analysis, they provide critical feedback on adoption and suggest appropriate practices, technologies, or

inputs based on relevance and feasibility. Furthermore, Pashu Sakhis are trained to take up entrepreneurial activities, sustaining themselves on input supply initiatives for animal farming rather than solely providing services.

**Impact on Employment and Sustainability:**

The impact of this employment program is multi-faceted. Pashu Sakhis, functioning like Anganwadi workers and ANMs in human health management, become input suppliers, self-business promoters, and service providers. The systematic inclusion of women in the age group of 20 to 40, who have studied till class 8, ensures a pool of motivated and educated individuals contributing to the local economy. This employment program not only creates sustainable livelihoods for the women of Ratniyakhedi but also enhances the overall effectiveness of the system over time.

**Success Stories from Ratniyakhedi Village:**

14 women from Ratniyakhedi village underwent Pashu Sakhi training, resulting in a remarkable increase in their monthly income from ₹6000 to ₹12000. Previously, villagers had to travel 20 km for animal-related issues, incurring both time and financial costs. With the Pashu Sakhis offering early treatment and assistance at the doorstep, the community experienced a significant improvement in livestock management. The success of the Pashu Sakhi Initiative resonated beyond

individual accomplishments. Empowered women, buoyed by their newfound skills and economic stability, collaborated to form a self-help group named Bhavna Shambhu. This collective effort resulted in the accumulation of funds, strategically utilized for various community-centric initiatives. Some members-initiated ventures such as raising different animals such as chicken, goat etc. and nutrition gardening, selling their produce in nearby markets.

The ripple effect of these endeavours extended to broader community development, serving as a beacon of inspiration for neighbouring women to join the program. The establishment of the self-help group, coupled with animal rearing and nutrition gardening, not only contributed to economic growth but also fostered a network of empowered individuals. The Pashu Sakhi Initiative, thus, emerges as a catalyst for both individual and communal progress, exemplifying the pursuit of sustainable rural development.

**Impact on Employment and Community Development:**

The Pashu Sakhi Initiative not only addresses the financial challenges faced by women but also brings about a positive transformation in the entire community. The establishment of a self-help group and the initiation of a poultry farm not only contribute to economic growth but also serve as

motivation for women in nearby villages to join the program, creating a network of empowered individuals.

**Conclusion:** Pashu Sakhi Initiative implemented by Rajeevika in Ratniyakhedi village, Pratapgarh, Rajasthan, stands as a transformative force for both individual and community development. By addressing the longstanding challenges associated with animal-related issues, the initiative significantly improved livestock management, sparing villagers the need to travel long distances and reducing both time and financial costs.

The empowerment of women through Pashu Sakhi training not only resulted in an impressive increase in monthly incomes but also fostered a spirit of collective action. The formation of a self-help group and the initiation of ventures like poultry farming and nursery gardening exemplify the newfound economic stability and entrepreneurial spirit among the empowered women. These endeavours, beyond individual financial gains, contributed to economic growth and served as a source of inspiration for neighbouring women to enrol in the program, creating a network of empowered individuals.

The success of the Pashu Sakhi Initiative underscores its role as a catalyst for sustainable rural development. By addressing immediate challenges, empowering women,

and fostering community initiatives, the program exemplifies the potential for well-designed, community-centric initiatives to create positive and lasting impacts on rural livelihoods. The journey of Ratniyakhedi village serves as a testament to the transformative power of empowering women and building resilient communities.

