

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Initiatives By



HARYANA COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROJECT



Women of Haryana



FOREST DEPARTMENT HARYANA



PROJECT AND ITS OBJECTIVES

Haryana Community Forestry Project (HCFP), a Project co-funded by the European Commission and Government of Haryana, is a community based intervention to contain and reverse the process of degradation and depletion of natural resources through forestry development with the active involvement of people, especially women.



Awareness Rally

The Project is being implemented on common lands, panchayat lands and privately owned farmlands in 338 villages in the districts of Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra, Sirsa, Fatehabad, Hisar, Bhiwani, Mahendragarh, Rewari and Jhajjar. The Project period is nine years, from 1999 to June 2008. Communities are involved in all stages of Project intervention i.e. appraisal, planning, formulation, implementation, maintenance and monitoring. The Project lays great emphasis on building capacities of communities by establishing institutions like Village Resource Management Committees (VRMCs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) with the objective of ensuring sustainable protection and management of Common Property Resources, rejuvenation of natural resources and empowerment of disadvantaged sections of society, especially women.

SELF HELP GROUPS

Women Self Help Groups have been constituted by the Project for the social and economic empowerment of women. Each SHG has 10 to 20 women members. Members of the SHG contribute a monthly subscription of Rs. 20 to Rs. 100. After an initial period of six months, if the performance of the SHG is satisfactory, it is provided a matching grant of Rs. 2500 to boost its morale, the only direct monetary benefit given to the SHG by the Project.



Micro-enterprise Development

EXTENT OF SHG FORMATION

Till the year 2006-07, 180 SHGs have been constituted in 100 villages of the Project. The cumulative savings of the SHGs through subscription is Rs.57,96,719. Funds utilised for inter-loaning are Rs. 1,29,80,695 and interest earned through inter-loaning is Rs. 11,89,540. Income earned till 31st March 2007 is Rs. 2,39,64,128.

CAPACITY BUILDING

The core thrust of the Project is to develop the capacities of communities through exhaustive training packages. The training module for SHGs consists of trainings for SHG concept and management, money management, leadership, skill upgradation, village development, planning and implementation, functional literacy and micro-enterprise development. Exposure visits to successful SHG implementation areas are also conducted by the Project to instill confidence in the members.



Experience Sharing during Exposure Visit

Through these interventions the Project has been able to develop the skills of the members to take up Income Generating Activities (IGAs) successfully.

INCOME GENERATING ACTIVITIES

Depending upon the aspirations and skills of the members as well as feasibility and sustainability various IGAs have been introduced by the Project. These include vermicomposting, dairy farming, general stores/shops, tailoring/embroidery, organic farming, wooden beads, durry weaving, STD booths, tie and dye, cattle feed, pickles and spices, flour grinding, poultry, sweet box making, candle making, clothes business, paper bags/envelopes, pottery, organic pesticides, interlock stitching and piko, knitting, surf making, paper plates making etc.



Vermicomposting

Most successful IGAs are vermicomposting, dairy farming, general stores/shops, embroidery, stitching, organic farming and sweet box making.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INITIATIVES

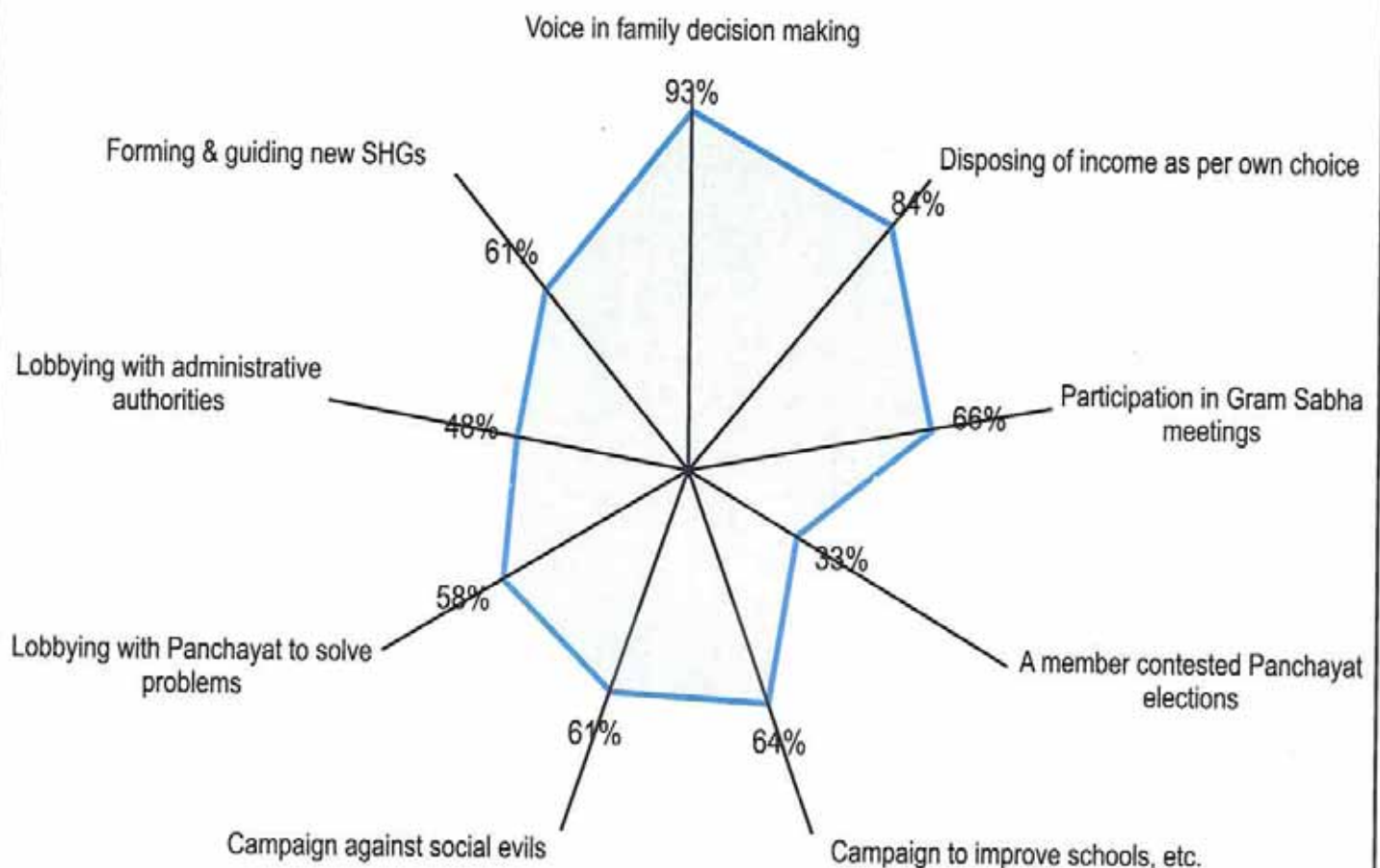
Apart from implementing IGAs, SHG members have gained confidence so as to play a prominent role in educating their communities in eradication of social aberrations like female foeticide, giving and taking of dowry, alcoholism etc.

On the other hand members are promoting healthy and desirable norms like celebrating birth of girl child and educating girls, assisting in marriage of poor women, helping poor widows, health and sanitation awareness, environment conservation, literacy campaign, johad rehabilitation, organic farming, protection of trees, village conflict resolution etc.



Discussing Social Issues in Cluster Meeting

WOMEN SELF HELP GROUP EMPOWERMENT (% OF SHGs)



SHG members also play a prominent role in approaching various Government functionaries and concerned authorities so as to ensure better supply of electricity, gas and drinking water, improvement of roads, authenticity of BPL cards, punctuality of teachers in schools, monitoring of lunch in schools, timely grants for organic farming from Agriculture Department, assistance to mentally challenged and recipients of old age pension, elections of panchayats as well as proper utilization of panchayat funds.



Discussing Village Micro-plan

SHG CAPABILITY RATING

The Project conducted a study to assess the capability of all the Project SHGs taken together. From this an average SHG capacity index was formulated.

The score so worked out is the average of the score obtained by all the SHGs taken together on nine capacity indicators, the maximum score for each being 10. These nine indicators are organisational capacity, savings & credit, financial management, awareness & attitudes, empowerment & influence, skill development, micro-enterprises, network & linkages and plans & visions.



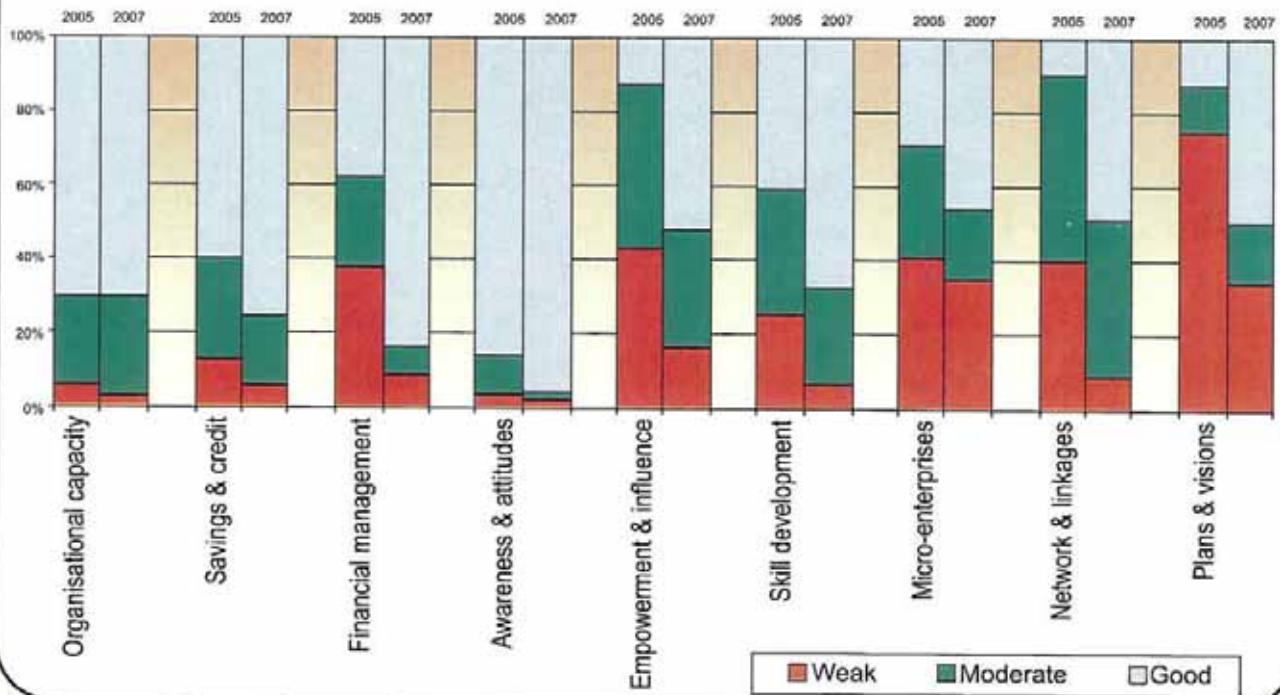
Plantation Drive

It was found that the capability index of the "average HCFP SHG" is 7.5, out of 10. This indicates that in general the HCFP SHGs possess good overall capacity.



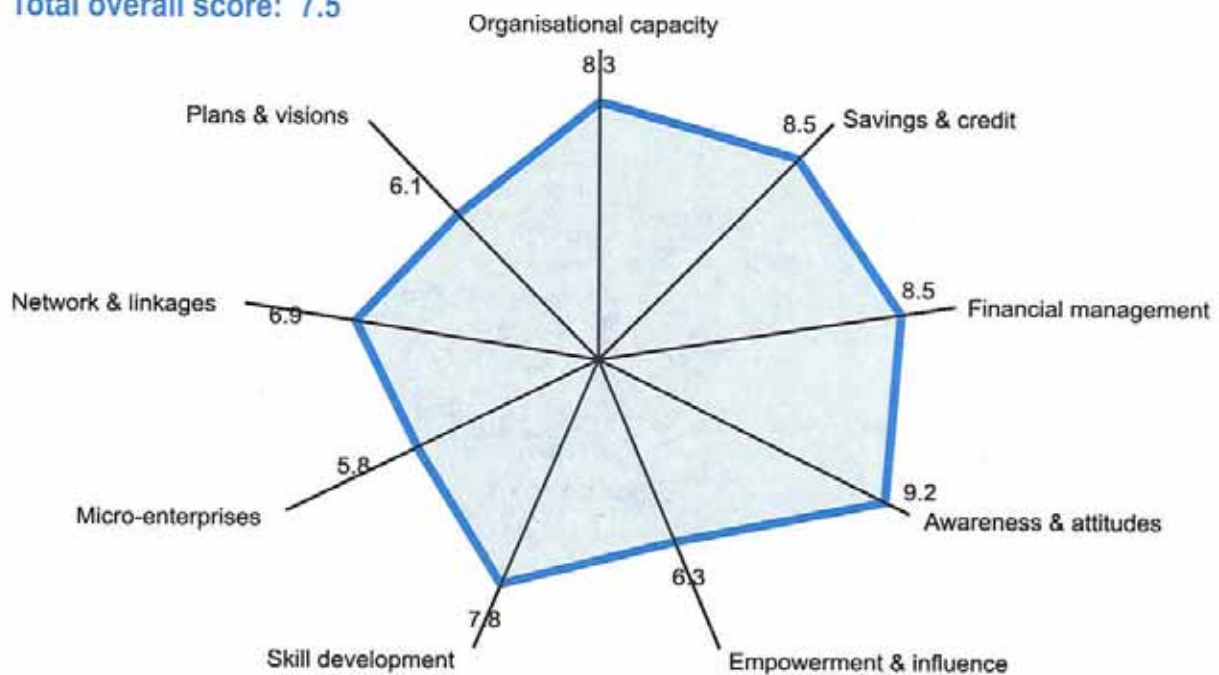
Literacy Campaign

SELF HELP GROUP CAPABILITY RATING



AVERAGE SHG CAPABILITY PROFILE 2007, ENTIRE PROJECT

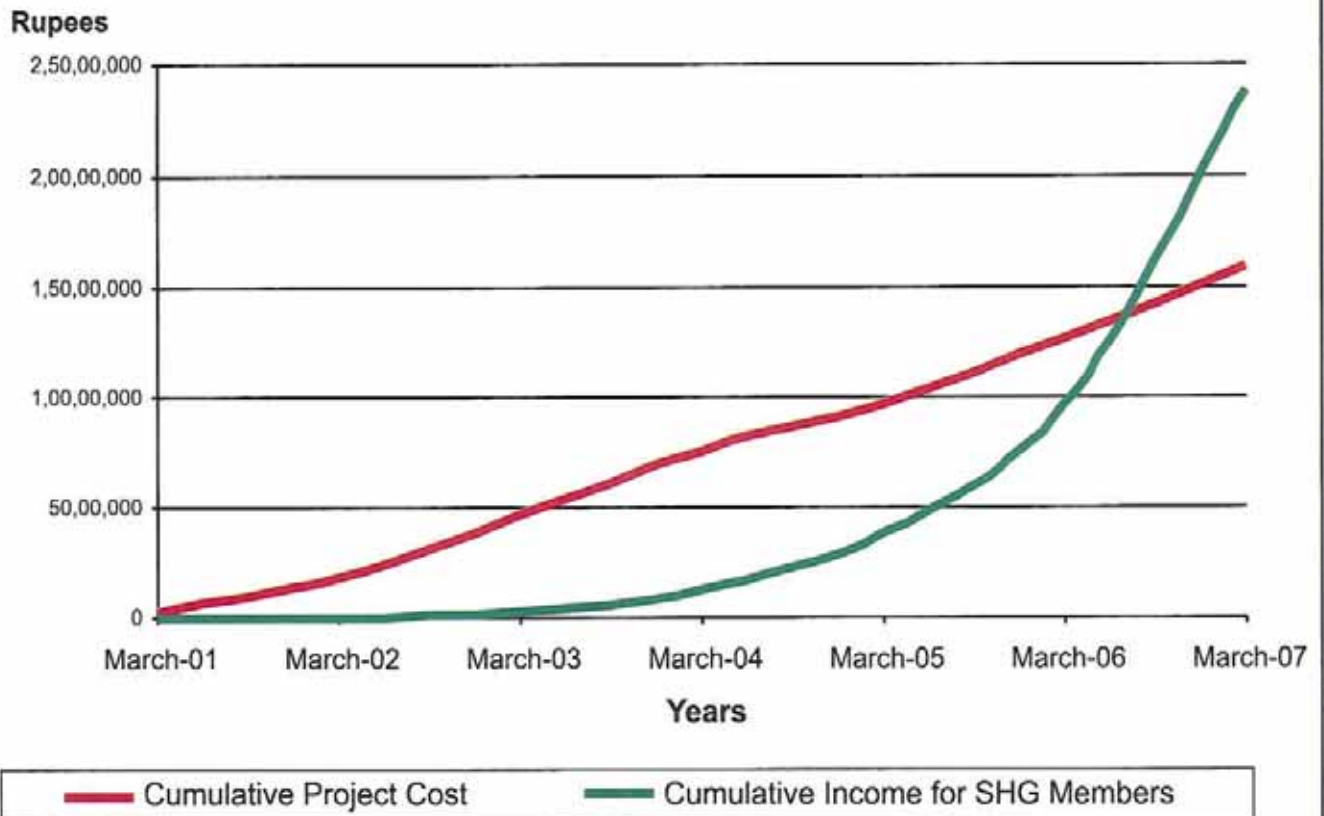
Total overall score: 7.5



BREAK-EVEN ANALYSIS

Analysis of investments under this Project component shows that the break-even point had been reached in 2006-07. Considering that to form SHGs, train them in essential group functions, mobilize NGO assistance and support SHGs to start up income generation units is a time consuming process, it is an encouraging achievement that the break-even stage has been reached within a period of little more than six years. Much further investment may not be necessary and the SHGs sponsored by HCFP are now poised towards consolidation and growth stages.

BREAK-EVEN ANALYSIS FOR SELF HELP GROUP ASSISTANCE



CLUSTER AND FEDERATION FORMATION

With the growing strength and initiatives of SHGs and favourable disposition of development functionaries, the Project has launched a new initiative to consolidate the gains of this successful social mobilization venture.



Meeting of Federation Members

For long-term sustainability and linkages with various institutions and better market accessibilities

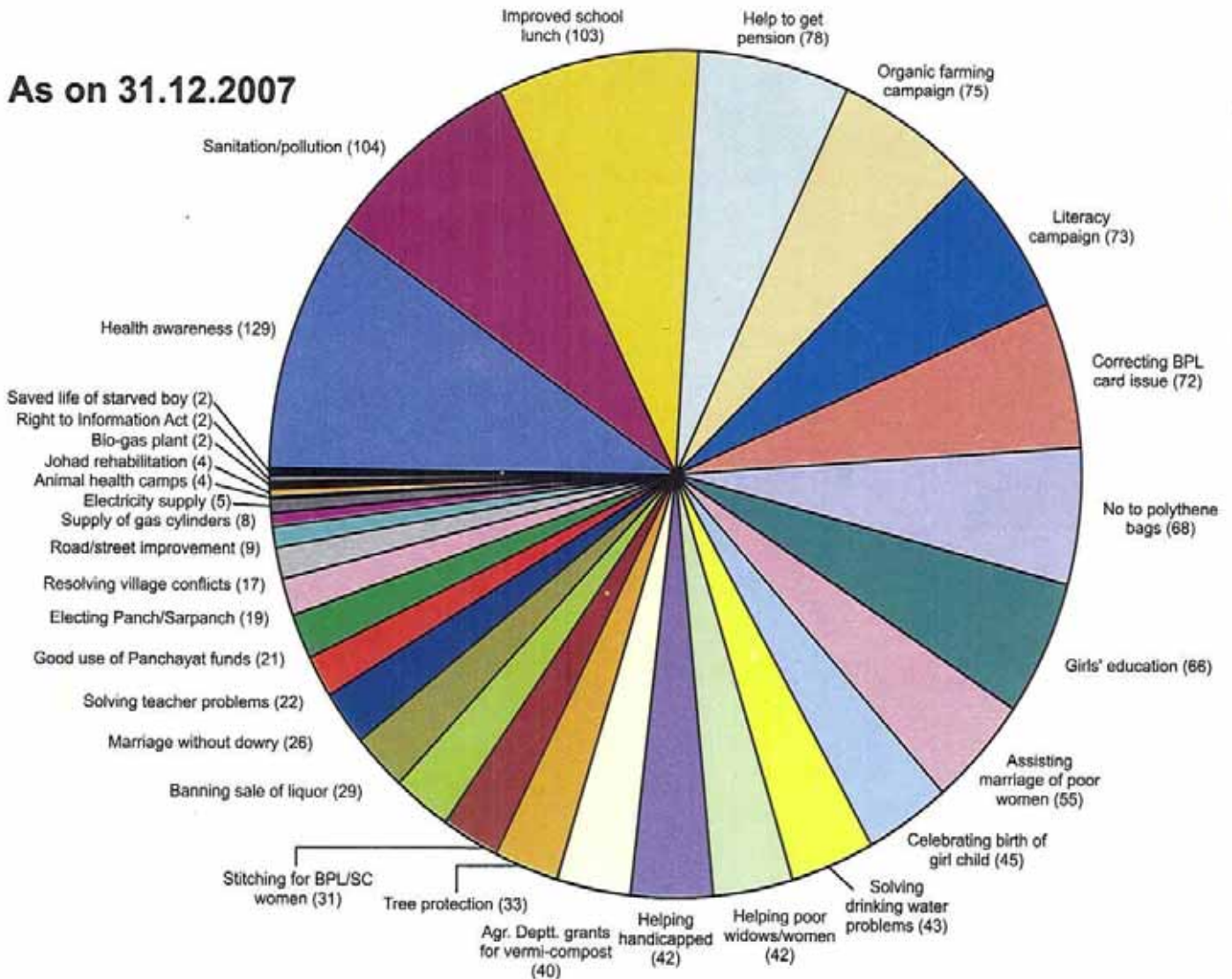
SHGs have grouped themselves into clusters. These clusters conduct meetings once a month to discuss issues relating to them, their villages and micro-enterprises. The Project has imparted trainings to these clusters as well as conducted exposure visits to various successful areas to enhance their marketing skills. All the clusters have been registered under the Societies Act 1860.

For further strengthening and consolidation of the SHGs, a state level Apex SHG Federation has been recently constituted.

SOCIAL ACTIONS TAKEN BY SHGs

(with number of SHGs involved)

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