

**Gender-sensitive self-assessment report**  
**Interim Report Annex**

**EU Programme on Access to Information of Public Schemes in Backward  
Districts  
2014-2018**

## Gender-sensitive self-assessment report

---

### PART I: SUMMARY STATEMENT

#### **Our analysis of the Soochna Seva program is Level C: Gender Moderate.**

At the planning process itself, the Soochna Seva program has been designed to target 40% of female beneficiaries, including both women and girl beneficiaries in health and livelihood access programmes, especially child and maternal health care. Keeping this target in mind, our efforts have been focussed on collating information that can be analysed with respect to gender.

As a program, Soochna Seva addresses women empowerment through engagement of women-centric community service providers such as ASHA and Anganwadi workers, and Self Help Groups (SHG) to mobilize communities by bringing women to voice out issues and concerns related to Government entitlements. While the team has not engaged male members of the village to address the issues of gender inequality, this exercise itself is bringing a change, however small, by giving a voice to the women.

Since the inception of the project in January 2014, we have spent a major part of the year in working towards building an effective relationship with multiple stakeholders such as Government officials, elected Panchayat members, and network groups for putting the strategies in place for a smooth implementation of the program. The effort of recording achievement of the Action was initiated only in the last quarter of the year. To that effect, there has been no influence on major stakeholders' policies, programmes, and practices so far.

We have implemented our plan to include more female Soochna Seva fellows to encourage more women and girls approaching them with their concerns and issues related to Government schemes and visit the Soochna Seva Kendras (SSKs). This has been widely supported by the men in the communities too. SSKs are situated in locations keeping gender sensitivity in mind. All our centres are easily accessible by females and are safe.

### PART II: ISSUE-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS:

**Organisational and project data:** A standardised form has been developed to collect the information of each beneficiary in a disaggregated manner. The form is converted into a comprehensive Management Information System for further study and analysis. This data is being analysed on a periodic basis by the central team and the analysis filtered down to the field team.

**Consultation:** We, at DEF, have consulted our partners ALOK Sansthan and Social Work Research Centre right from the stage of project launch to the implementation stage. We have also worked with our state partners who have extensive experience in working in their respective geographical locations. A consultative approach was adopted with all our partners where their views, ideas, and expertise were sought from the perspective of the program. The prime objective was to reach out to maximum BPL families and communities belonging to the SC/ST/OBC group. Through our partners, DEF has managed to involve women-oriented community service providers such as Self-help Groups (SHG), ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers have been mobilized to reach out to the communities. The key strategy was to give equal focus to women.

**Intersectionality:** Our overall strategy and analysis are around information dissemination under within six key Government Entitlement categories; Education, Health, Social Security, Livelihood, Employment and Financial Inclusion. The strategy includes coverage of at least 40% of women. While our analysis is on tangible benefits, the far-reaching outcomes of the program are larger and intangible. To quote an example, women who are not decision makers at home and are homebound are now finding a voice in matters like Government schemes that are purely individual. While this change is small, we anticipate this to have far reaching impact over a period of few years.

**Context specificity:** The analysis of the program is generic in nature. However, the generic analysis has been possible keeping contexts, persons, communities, situations, conditions, roles in mind since the planning process of the Soochna Seva program has kept the inclusion of vulnerable communities as the key target. The ultimate objective in the planning process is to bring a social change to bring a change to the target numbers.

## Gender-sensitive self-assessment report

---

**Empowering strategies:** DEF is committed to maintaining a safe, diverse and positive atmosphere at work where individuals can work together in an environment free of all forms of violence, harassment, and discrimination on the basis of gender, population groups, or organization with regard to categories protected by applicable laws in India, as well as other categories identified by DEF in alignment with its own Human Resources policies. This policy is maintained at the regional hub centres too where the location is suitably selected to be gender friendly and accessible.

All staff members who are responsible for hiring or promoting employees for the development and implementation of DEF programs or activities are mandated to support this policy and respond appropriately to any concerns that are brought to their attention.

**Policy impact:** The Soochna Seva project was launched in January 2014. The major part of the year has been primarily working together with multiple stakeholders such as Government officials, elected and nominated Panchayat members, and network groups for putting the strategies in place for effective implementation of the program. At every stage of our project, Soochna Seva team has engaged them to reach out to the communities and disseminate information about the Government Schemes. There was also a lot of work in developing IEC materials and setting up SSKs.

The real effort of recording results of the Action with the beneficiaries was initiated only in the last quarter of the year. To that effect, there has been no influence on major stakeholders' policies, programmes, and practices so far.

### **PART III: FOLLOW-UP**

The main gender-specific points that Soochna Seva program would like to follow-up during the following year are:

- Increase the number of female Soochna Seva fellows
- Mobilize groups to ensure at least one female member of a household to focus on availing Government benefits not just for herself but also for other members in the household
- Create more women groups