End Line Evaluation of Soochna Seva
prepared for

DEF
DIGITAL EMPOWERMENT *foundation*

ubmitted by:

Ipsos

Ipsos Public Affairs
The Social Research and Corporate Reputation Specialists

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I. About Soochna Seva

The Soochna Seva project was initiated with an aim to improve and strengthen access to public schemes information and benefits amongst the vulnerable groups and communities. It was designed and deployed to address larger issues of poverty, rural development, social exclusion and inequity of marginalized groups through information empowerment. The action-plan of this project aimed to help India meet its Millennium Development Goals (now Sustainable Development Goals), such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality rates, and improving maternal health. The project had been deployed with an integrated information services delivery and citizen entitlement framework in 5 backward districts in India in 6 key areas of - education, health, livelihood, employment, financial inclusion and social security.

II. Objectives of the End Line Evaluation

Since the intervention, has reached its end, it became imperative to evaluate the intervention to understand, the impact it has made on the community and the support it has received from the stakeholders at various levels including Panchayat and Block Levels. The objectives of the final evaluation included understanding and analysing in what best possible ways and circumstances the objectives and key results could be achieved in a pre and post project scenario to address the larger issue of improving access and demand to public schemes information and entitlement benefits for the disadvantaged groups and communities in intervened backward panchayats, blocks and dstricts.

III. Geographical Coverage

The end evaluation was done in Panchayats of five states, namely, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

IV.   **Methodology**

The study adopted a mix – methodology approach, with 30 qualitative interactions planned and conducted with Panchayat and the Block Level and 250 quantitative end – beneficiary interviews, conducted at the Panchayat level. The respondents for both the set of interactions were facilitated by the Soochna Seva staff.

V.   **Analysis and Reporting**

The qualitative data was subjected to detailed content analysis and the quantitative data was analysed for frequency of responses, according to a set analysis plan. A detailed report has been written, reflecting the findings of the evaluation.

VI.   **Summary of Findings**

The ensuing text describes the summary of findings, of the end-line evaluation.

A) **Findings from the Qualitative Interactions**

A1. **Information Flow and Community Mobilization**

- Lack of clarity of information to be shared with the community and the media to be used for communication, made the information flow in the community, neither easy nor difficult.
- Verbal communication is the most sorted way of communication with the community members. None of the stakeholders reported to use any mass media for information communication.
- Community members are mobilized, using an active approach, where they inform about the schemes relevant to them, and help them in getting more information about it, and also assist them in filling forms, related to the scheme.
- Grievances are managed, by routing the complaints to respective departments at the block level, under the guidance of the local stakeholders.

A2. Operations of Soochna Seva

- Soochna Seva, through soochna van and soochna mitra, delivered information related to government schemes, to the end – beneficiaries. Forms were available at the Soochna Seva Kendra (SSKs), where the forms can be accessed and assistance can be sought to fill the scheme related forms.
- Soochna Seva staff, has been working as a bridge between the local government providers and the end – beneficiaries for their rightful entitlments, and they receive support from the local government.
- Soochna Seva has been instrumental in bringing a change in the community, as people are now more confident and aware of their rights for their entitlements.

A3. Changes Suggested for Soochna Seva Operations

- A public private partnership is suggested with NGOs/CBOs, and local government to continue the provision of services, even if the intervention is withdrawn.
- Soochna Staff needs to be trained for interpersonal communication, so that they can strike a rapport with community members and local stakeholders.
- Digital literacy trainings have not reached all end – beneficiaries for self-information and e-governance access, so such sessions should be organized at frequent intervals.

B) Findings from the End – Beneficiaries Survey

B1. Profile of the Respondent

- A typical respondent for the end – beneficiary survey was a male, aged 40 years, who was married.
- More than three-fifths of the individuals reported to earn upto INR 5000 per month. Less than two-fifths of them reported to work as a farmer on their own fields.
- Close to 55% of the end – beneficiaries reported that they live in nuclear family and majority of them live in their own household

B2. Information & Digital Literacy

- About 33% end – beneficiaries reported to own a mobile without an internet connection, followed by 27%% who reported to own a television with a dish connection. There is a significant difference in ownership of mobiles with an internet connection among males (28%) than females (16%).

- About 90% beneficiaries reported to be aware of Soochna Seva and of these 30% of them reported to learn internet connected to a computer as a part of their digital literacy classes.

- Six out of ten end – beneficiaries, reported to access information on a scheme, which concerned their family welfare and to know more about government schemes.

- Little more than a quarter of the respondents reported to be aware of MeraApp (project deployed mobile based scheme app) and of them 69% have been served with the App by the Soochna Mitras.

B3. Accessibility to Soochna Seva Kendra

- Nine out of ten respondents reported to be aware about Soochna Seva Kendra and seven out of ten of them have ever accessed it.

- About 85% respondents reported to access the SSK for availing the scheme form, followed by 70% of them who reported to access it for assistance in filling the scheme forms.

- More than 60% end – beneficiaries accessed SSK services, for more than three schemes.

- Close to three-fifths of the end – beneficiaries have registered their grievance through SSKs and 51% of them reported that their grievance was addressed by Soochna Seva Kendra.

B4. Importance of Soochna Seva Services

- End – beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction with Soochna Seva, on all quality parameters of information – timeliness (92%), completeness (93%), accuracy (89%), ease of accessing information (92%) and overall quality (85%).

- About 16 people reported to pay to avail the services of Soochna Seva, and the average amount paid was INR 287.

- There was mixed opinion on willingness to pay to avail Soochna Seva services.

- Almost all end – beneficiaries reported that Soochna Seva services are authentic for the community.

VII. Recommendations

The recommendations, for further strategy development are as follows:

- **Gender Inclusion:** Soochna Seva, needs to reach out to equal proportion of females in comparison to men, to understand their needs and guide them to their empowerment. This can be done, by deploying trained female staff, who can build rapport with women and work with them.

- **Training and Capacity Building:** Refresher courses and in-service trainings of the Soochna Mitras and Soochnapreneurs would be advantageous for the project. They can be trained, for interpersonal communication, community mobilization and stakeholder relationship management. The idea of engaging relevant and active local beneficiaries of the project as end Soochnapreneurs to further reach out to the community is a positive and relevant step.

- **Sustainability of the Operations:** In order to sustain the operations, Soochna Seva can now start charging for services in providing information, facilitation, digital services and for digital literacy classes; the charges can be decided by the community time to time with DEF support.

- **Replication and Scaling up of Soochna Seva Framework:** It is recommended that the Soochna Seva Framework be replicated and scaled up in new locations and geographies in a public private partnership mode with incorporating key learning and experiences from the Soochna Seva project interventions. It is suggested that

if some of the active and dynamic end beneficiaries wants to be part of the Soochna Seva services network, they could be identified, trained and taken on board to start the SSK work in their localities under DEF supervision and guidance.

Chapter -1

Introduction to Soochna Seva

1.1 Introduction to Soochna Seva

Good governance is vital to a viable and sustained socio-economic development. Keeping in mind the widespread and diverse social and economic challenges, Indian policymakers have designed several policies and programs to make its governance more accountable, inclusive and responsive to the needs of its citizens. Various public welfare schemes have been designed and being delivered to groups and communities across the country, especially with focus on rural and backward regions. As such, free flow and accessibility of information is one of the main factors that foster transparency of the governing structures. Right to Information Act was based on the premise that citizens have a sovereign authority on the government. Section 4 of the same act calls upon all governance bodies (state and central) to provide information to the public at regular intervals through various means of communication. In addition to planning and budgeting social welfare schemes, different sections of the government are also responsible for actively promoting these schemes. Unfortunately, the current state of affairs indicates that far more concrete and result oriented steps and actions are required to improve schemes access and delivery.

Indian government, at both Central and State levels, acts as the largest service delivery provider in India with multitude of schemes, benefits, plans and services. However, India's massive population size and chronic socio-demographic disparity make service delivery process like maintaining a free flow of information regarding available public schemes, extremely perplexing. Implementation of these schemes, especially from user citizen's perspective (distributing entitlements) presents an even bigger challenge. Shortage and mismanagement of funds have stunted the benefit from even some of the best laid development plans. For instance, more than two Crore families (out of 10.6 Crore applicants) have been denied work in the last 8 months under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme because of shrinking funds.

DEF launched 'Soochna Seva project with grant support from the European Union in January 2014 with an aim to spread awareness, using ICT/non-ICT tools, about existing public schemes amongst the deprived sections and enable them to derive benefits from the same. The

Soochna Seva action, during 2014-2018, was a response to the poor access to information and entitlement scenario in India and to the restricted call by the Contracting Authority (European Union) in 2012 for Civil Society Organisations in Development in India on – *'Improving Access to Information of Public Schemes in Backward Districts in India.'*

In addition to empowering the masses with information, Soochna Seva had set its focus on capacity building of the local communities, groups and citizens and advance cooperation between the stakeholders and local administration to develop an operative framework for public scheme information access, dissemination and entitlement gains.

Soochna Seva was founded with an intention of strengthening the community entitlement related information ecosystem and to address larger issues of poverty, rural development, social exclusion and inequity of marginalized groups through information empowerment. The action-plan of this program also aimed to help India meet its Millennium Development Goals (now Sustainable Development Goals) such as eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality rates, and improving maternal health. The project had been deployed along with an integrated information services delivery and citizen entitlement framework in 5 backward districts in India in 6 key areas of - education, health, livelihood, employment, financial inclusion and social security. This initiative was further expected to strengthen the governance structure at district administration level and below.

1.2 Objectives of Soochna Seva

The key objectives of Soochna Seva included:

i. Addressing the larger issues of poverty, social exclusion and inequity of marginalised groups through information on public schemes and entitlement;

ii. Promoting and strengthening good governance practice by local administration;

iii. Providing enhanced channels and points for information services delivery to target groups at their doorsteps towards informed choices, decisions and entitlement benefits;

iv. Facilitating an integrated district-level public scheme information management framework;

v. Developing a citizen engagement and entitlement mechanism in public scheme administering process to bridge administration-citizen network deficits.

1.3 Achievements of Soochna Seva

Since 2014, Soochna Seva had made efforts to build and create a decentralized and democratized architecture of information dissemination, processing, beneficiaries undergoing the necessary process and system formalities to apply for entitlement benefits, and corresponding with necessary grassroots authorities to ensure gains of entitlements and recording the process.

This information-entitlement service model has overall led to set up more than 50 rural information-entitlements access and delivery points by end of 2018 (Soochna Seva Kendras /Yojana Banks) across 5 States in India including Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttarakhand. These centres are run by selected and trained rural information entrepreneurs (Soochna Mitras / SoochnaPreneurs / Information Entrepreneurs/ Soochna Sevaks), identified from the local community to serve existing and emerging information and entitlement needs and services. The sustainability of these points were sought to be ensured through this method. These points were equipped digitally with basic Information Communication Technology (ICT) tools, apparatus, and platforms locally including locally accessed MIS platform, a dedicated government schemes App (MeraApp) being provided in the hands of the Centre Operators cum entrepreneurs, call centre facility and mobile vans equipped digitally as mobile units to reach out to more people with information and entitlement services. This platform had made efforts to bridge the gap between the citizen and administration through methods in information-entitlement camps, Soochna Seva Samiti (Committee), Grievance Redress and Submission outlets on entitlements, advocacy and media engagement. As an extension of the programme, more than 30 Panchayats have been engaged to set up Soochna Seva Kendras / Yojana Bank outlets manned by 1-2 Soochna Mitras / Soochnapreneurs and serve the local community with necessary and relevant information and entitlement services.

Further, the programme had generated a system of schemes monitoring, review, update, validation and roll out at Panchayat level. It had created a methodology in status of schemes delivered and benefitted to ensure relevance and utility of schemes and delivery mechanisms. This is being done through both online MIS platform and offline review and audit of beneficiaries. In the process, the programme has generated more than 1, 00,000 validated data of beneficiaries, their portfolios that had become handy for the administration to

streamline delivery and access of further entitlements. Beneficiaries were further trained and selected as Soochna Seva / Yojana Volunteers at village level to serve as Soochna Sevak / Sevikas as community facilitators to strengthen rural information and entitlement networks. The overall focus was how to contribute in strengthening the governance structure, processes and systems at the local level in India in order to ensure timely, transparent, affordable, reliable, and trustworthy information and entitlements to citizens.

The project partnership with Qualcomm[1] in 2016 to roll out the Soochnapreneur (information entrepreneurship programme to deliver information and services) in 4 districts in 4 States helped to add much strength and value to the Soochna Seva project including developing and roll out of the MeraApp scheme app in 2016. This collaborative partnership on co-funding mode with DEF and the European Union project helped to reach out to more areas and beneficiaries by December 2018 and beyond.

1.4 Need for End-Line Evaluation

Since, the intervention had garnered attention, and has also reached its end, the implementing agency, Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), wanted to undertake an end-line evaluation to understand the impact of Soochna Seva. Thus, DEF engaged

IPSOS as a third party agency, to conduct an end line evaluation in five states – Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakahnd and Rajasthan.

The following chapter describes the methodology of the end line evaluation.

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[1] *Qualcomm* Incorporated is a world leader in 3G and next-generation mobile technologies.

Chapter -2

Research Methodology of End – Line Assessment

Digital Empowerment foundation, wanted to assess the impact of Soochna Seva it has made in the lives of targeted 1, 00,000 beneficiaries over a period of 5 years, in terms of facilitating information of public schemes related to education, health, livelihoods and employment & financial inclusion. Therefore, it engaged IPSOS Research Private Limited, to conduct an end-line assessment among 200 end – beneficiaries and 24 stakeholders at the Block level and the Panchayat level.

This chapter describes the specific objectives of the end – line evaluation, the methodology followed for data collection, the geographical coverage, and analysis & reporting of data.

2.1 Specific Objectives of the assessment

The objectives of the final evaluation included

i. To understand and analyse in what best possible ways and circumstances the objectives and key results could be achieved in a pre and post project scenario to address the larger issue of improving access and demand to public schemes information and entitlement benefits for the disadvantaged groups and communities in intervened backward Panchayats, Blocks and Districts;

ii. To understand from the community members, whether and how they received key scheme related information and end benefits and facilitating support from the Soochna Seva project support;

iii. To apprehend from the community level service agencies, Block, Panchayat stakeholders and authorities, the role played by Soochna Seva in facilitating and strengthening access to public schemes information and benefits for the benefit of the community while seeking to work closely with these agencies and authorities;

iv. To comprehend and understand the work and efforts of the project team to reach out to the community, the project success, challenges, perceptions, level of support and coordination extended to Soochna Seva team for implementation of this project;

v. To understand, analyse and evaluate key elements of a project in this context in terms of – project model or a framework that could evolve for learning and reference in improving

and strengthening access, innovations if any, replication and scale up, sustainability, project delivery gaps and issues and key learning that could strengthen a project like this.

2.2 Research Design

To achieve the stated objectives, a mix method approach for data collection was adopted. The end - beneficiaries were interviewed using the survey technique while qualitative interactions which included semi structured interviews were done with stakeholders at the block and the Panchayat level.

2.3 Target Respondents

There were two set of target respondents of this study.

a) **End – Beneficiaries**

The end – beneficiaries for the purpose of this study has been defined as those who ever availed the services of Soochna Seva, and have benefitted from it.

b) **Stakeholders at the Panchayat and the Block Level**

The stakeholders at the Panchayat and the Block level, have been defined as those, who have been instrumental in coordinating with the Soochna Seva staff, to deliver the benefits to the community members.

2.4 Geographical Coverage

The final evaluation was carried out in West Chamapran (Bihar), Guna (Madhya Pradesh), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Barmer (Rajasthan) and Tehri (Uttarakhand). The below table details the block and the panchayat covered in each district and state.

Table 1: Geographical Coverage of the Evaluation			
State	District	Block	Panchayat
Bihar	West Chamapran	Sitka	Balthar
Jharkhand	Ranchi	Itki	Kundi
Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Chamba	Suyl
Rajasthan	Barmer	Guna	Dhidra
Uttarakhand	Tehri	Kalyanpur	Ghadoi Charnan

2.5 Sample Size

For the end – beneficiaries' survey, the total sample size was 250, across 5 Panchayats, i.e. 50 beneficiaries per Panchayat.

The below grid details the sample size achieved for end – beneficiaries:

Table 2: Sample Size				
State	District	Panchayat	Sample Planned	Sample Achieved
Bihar	**West Chamapran**	**Balthar**	50	58
Jharkhand	**Ranchi**	**Kundi**	50	52
Madhya Pradesh	**Guna**	**Suyl**	50	55
Rajasthan	**Barmer**	**Dhidra**	50	56
Uttarakhand	**Tehri**	**Ghadoi Charnan**	50	54
			250	275

A total of 30 stakeholders, across 4 states were interviewed for the study. The distribution of qualitative interviews, per state is as follows:

Table 3: Distribution of Qualitative Interactions						
Stakeholders	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Ranchi**	**Rajasthan**	**Uttarakhand**	**Total per stakeholder**
Number of blocks in each state	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	
PRI members and PRI staff	1	2	1	1	1	**6**
Project Staff and Project Fellow	1	0	1	1	2	**5**
Community Health Workers and others (AWW, ASHA worker, Ration card suppliers)	1	1	2	2	1	**7**
Block officials	2	1	1	1	1	**6**
Staff available at the NGO/CBO/ SHGs	1	2	1	1	1	**6**
Total per state	**6**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**6**	**30**

2.6 Development of Research Tools

Two diverse research tools, quantitative structured tool for end – beneficiaries and a semi-structured interactive guide was prepared for the stakeholders at the Block & the Panchayat level.

2.6.1   End – Beneficiary Research Questionnaire

The quantitative structured tool, was developed in such a way that it captured the importance of Soochna Seva services for the end – beneficiaries, the benefits they received from the intervention and their willingness to pay, for the sustainability of the intervention.

The sections of the questionnaire are as follows:

a)   Profile of the end – beneficiary
b)   Information and Digital Literacy
c)   Information and benefits received on Public Schemes
d)   Awareness and Accessibility to Soochna Seva Kendras (SSKs)
e)   Sustainability of Soochna Seva

The research questionnaire was signed off by DEF which was further translated in Hindi and scripted in I – field (internal software of IPSOS) for data collection.

2.6.2   End – Beneficiary Research Questionnaire

The qualitative semi-structured tool was developed to understand the role played by Soochna Seva to benefit the community members. Further, it took into account the support and coordination extended to Soochna Seva team for implementation of the intervention, by the block and the Panchayat officials.

The sections of the semi-structured tool are as follows:

a)   Background Information of the Respondent
b)   Information flow and Community Mobilization
c)   Operations of Soochna Seva
d)   Soochna Seva: Project Staff and Fellows (exclusively asked to the staff working with Soohcna Seva)
e)   Importance of Soochna Seva

Since this was a qualitative discussion tool, pen and paper approach was used for data collection.

2.7 Training of the Field Teams for Data Collection

For the quantitative survey, field teams' at all five locations, were trained for data collection. The objective of the training was to familiarize the investigators with the research tool, so

that they do not face any difficulties, in the field during data collection. The teams were trained for the end – beneficiary tool, section by section. They were explained the logic checks and the skip patterns (though they are taken care of by CAPI).

For the qualitative discussions, a separate set of experienced moderators were trained. They were also taken through the entire interactive and the logic behind each and every question was explained. This was done to familiarise with the tool and to solve their doubts, if any. During the training, they were told about the distribution of interactions, in each state.

2.8 Data Collection

The entire data collection was done over a period of ten-days, which included two days of end – beneficiary survey in each state, and two days of qualitative data collection.

- **Quantitative Data Collection**

  The quantitative data collection was done with end – beneficiaries who were mobilized by Soochna Seva team. A mix of males and females end – beneficiaries was gathered in one Panchayat, from different Panchayats.

- **Qualitative Data Collection**

  The participants for qualitative data collection were recruited beforehand, and they were informed of the exercise. The moderators coordinated with the field staff of Soochna Seva, who in – turn helped them in reaching the right stakeholder, at the scheduled time.

2.9 Analysis and Report Writing

The quantitative data was subjected to quantitative data analysis, in SPSS. The analysis was done in accordance to an analysis plan, shared with the data processing team. The analysis plan had the required breaks and the cross-tabs, for detailed data analysis.

The qualitative data was subjected to detailed content analysis, which was analysed thematically, to be included in the report. Relevant verbatims have also been included, to support the findings.

2.10   Guidelines to read the report

i. The report has been divided into two parts; first part presents findings from the stakeholders, who have been involved in coordination with Soochna Seva staff, to deliver the benefits to the community members. The second part focuses on presenting the quantitative findings from the end – beneficiaries. The chapters are independent of each other and should be read in isolation.

ii. In the findings of the end – beneficiary survey, a summary box has been included, which at glance gives the summary of the findings of that chapter.

iii. Z-value test has been applied on the quantitative data to check the significant difference in proportion to the base. This significance testing was done at a 95% confidence level. In the tables, the significantly high is represented in **GREEN** and the significantly low is represented by **RED**.

FINDINGS FROM THE STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Chapter – 3:

Information Flow and Community Mobilization

Information flow and community mobilization is a crucial aspect in delivering the benefits of the public schemes to the community members. Timeliness, accuracy and completeness of information can go a long way to in delivering the rightful entitlements to the beneficiaries. But, it has to go through the right channels and also using the right channels, so that the intended information reaches the intended beneficiary.

Thus, this chapter understands the information flow from service agencies, authorities and departments from District, Block, Panchayat to the community members. It also takes into account the Information Communication Technology (ICT) mediums used for dissemination of information. Further, it understands the community mobilization methods and approaches used to assist the community members for availing the benefits of a scheme. While they may mobilize the community for assisting them, they may also face situations where they have to address the grievances of the community members. This section also understands how are the grievances handled; also about mapping, identifying and selecting deserving beneficiaries with various schemes based on various socio-economic indicators; data management of beneficiaries for further information and communication and coordination purpose and decision making for next level of benefits and entitlements selection and delivery.

3.1 Information Flow in the Community

The information flow in the community, determines, what information is flowing and to what extent. Further it understands, who are the messengers of information and what media do they use for information flow. It has been divided into two sub–sections, the first section is how all the stakeholders rate the information flow in the community, the reasons supporting the rating and the ICT mediums used to disseminate information.

a) Rating of Information Flow in the Community

All the stakeholders were asked to rate the information flow in their community on a scale of "1" to "5", where "1" stood for "extremely difficult" and "5" for "extremely easy".

Except the block department officials, who gave a rating of "4", which stood for "easy", all other stakeholders gave a rating of "3", which means, that the flow of information was neither easy nor difficult.

Figure 1: Rating of Flow of Information in the Block/Panchayat

Numbers reported in absolutes due to small base
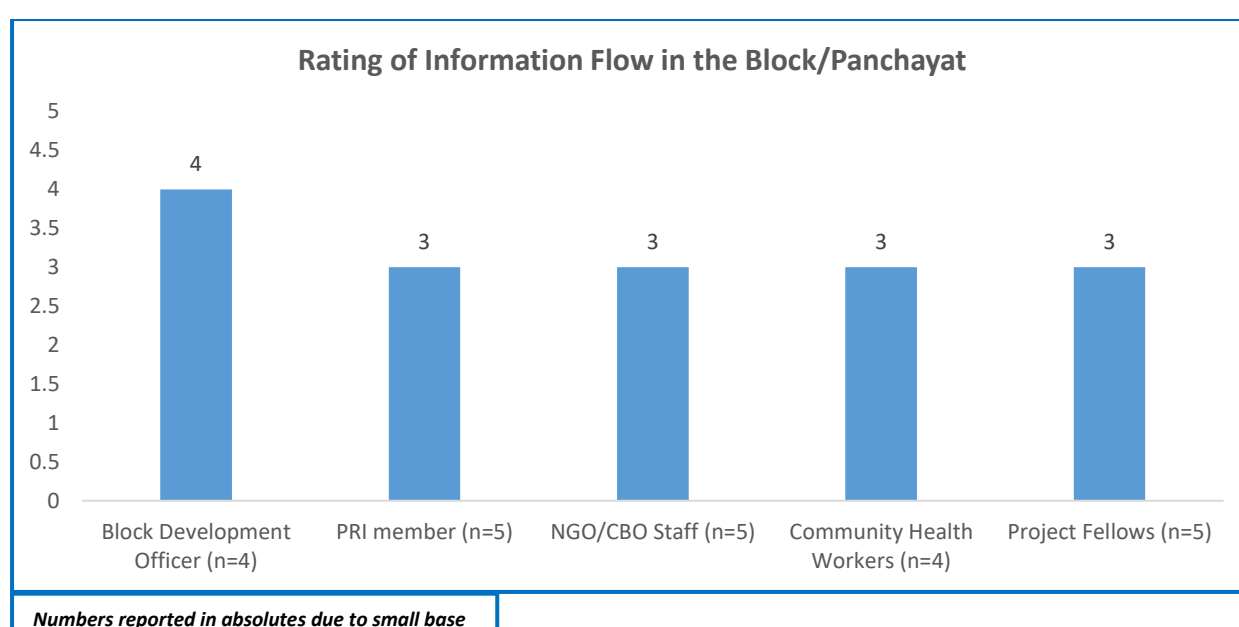
The common reasons for such a rating included, lack of clarity of information to be disseminated, among the stakeholders and if they had clarity then they were not aware which is the right media to use, for information flow.

While this may be true for all stakeholders, in all the states, in Guna (Madhya Pradesh), the project staff, use their "Soochna Vaahan" and "Internet Saathi" for mass communication

Some of the relevant verbatims, are presented in the text below:

- *"Lack of information that needs to be given to the community member" – PRI member, Bethia, BIhar*
- *"We are only here for managing the Anganwadi work and not giving information. Anganwadi Worker"- Bethia, BIhar*
- *Only if we make some effort, we get the information, otherwise we do not know, what to inform the community members" – NGO staff, Chamba*

> In Barmer, Rajasthan the Soochna Seva staff informed first they look into the matter, and then they register the complaint, through a portal.

> In Madhya Pradesh the block official and the project staff gave a scoring of "5" for information flow in the block/Panchayat in comparison to other states.
>
> They felt that the channels of information flow in their community were very well defined, which resulted in clarity of information and the stakeholders were themselves aware of the information to be disseminated.

3.2 ICT Mediums used for Information Dissemination

There are many active and passive methods of information dissemination. Active methods include interactive methods like one to one discussions, discussions on open platforms, and putting up the information on a mass media, and then answering queries.

Passive methods include, making a public announcement, or passively informing the masses, about a public scheme, and not answering queries or supplying more than required information. Such methods, are traditional methods and are being used since years, without change.

This section, tries to understand whether ICT mediums are used for information dissemination and if yes, what mediums; if not, then what is the mode of information dissemination.

It was reported that the use of ICT mediums was not very expansive in information dissemination. Mostly the stakeholders relied on disseminating information through verbal discussions, where the stakeholders met the group of beneficiaries and informed them about new public schemes. They reported to use a cell phone, with an internet connection to call and disseminate information, however, may not put something on the local website for mass dissemination.

The project staff used the scheme App (MeraApp) to reach out to community members both at centre level (Soochna Seva Kendras) and in field visiting households.

Some of the relevant verbatims, are presented in the text box below:

> - *"Through staff members" Block Official, Chamba*
> - *"Through meetings" NGO staff, Barmer*
> - *"Call people and meetings" PRI staff, Barmer*
> - *" Through MeraApp scheme app in Centres and in fields", Project Staff, Soochna Seva*

3.3 Methods and Approaches used for Community Mobilization

There are generally two approaches of community mobilization, for the welfare of the community.

One, is the person centred approach, which ensures that the beneficiaries are at the centre of the decisions, which relate to their life. The other is active support, which means giving the right amount of support for them to avail benefits and build social relationships.

This section understands which approach of the two, do the stakeholders use for community mobilization, or do they use any other approach, which may result in empowerment of the community members.

The stakeholders informed that they provided active support to the community members, by informing them about the new schemes, its benefits for the end – beneficiaries and even helped them in filling forms related to the scheme. Among these, if the beneficiaries had any grievances, the stakeholders helped them in raising them and getting them addressed at the right platform.

The ensuing verbatim supports the above explanation.

> - *"Person Centered Approach: Services are provided in block as per need. People can come and get benefits". Block officer, West Chamapran, Bihar*
> - *"We call meetings and inform all the agencies about the projects. We deliver services to the beneficiaries" Block officer, Guna, Madhya Pradesh*
> - *Schemes me jo Documents ki jarurt hoti unhe complete karne me help krte hai (We help to complete the documents, that are required in taking the benefits of a scheme), PRI member, Guna, Madhya Pradesh*
> - *" We meet people and provide full information to them. We support them in a way that they can help others also"- Soochna Seva, project staff, Barmer.*

3.4 Grievance Redressal Mechanism

The community members may have grievances when utilizing the benefits of a scheme. It may range from not getting the rightful entitlements, or not having the authentic information to access a scheme, etc.

Thus, they turn to the opinion leaders or the local government, to help them in grievance redressal. This section, throws light on the approach of the stakeholders for grievance redressal mechanism.

Different stakeholders reported to use different approaches to address the grievances. The block officials of Tehri (Uttarakhand) and Guna (Madhya Pradesh), reported to listen to the complaints on CM helpline, through which it was routed to the respective department. However, in Barmer, the block official reported that complaints are solved through "jan sunvai", approach.

> In Tehri, Uttarakhand, the project staff informed that they have a register with all the data, and they try to solve the complaints by referring to that. In case of further grievance, they deal with the situation with the help of respective departments

The approach followed by other stakeholders is generally that they try to solve the complaints at their end, and if not successful, then either they involve the sarpanch or reach out to the respective department, for grievance redressal.

- *"Sambhandhit Vibhag ke saath coordination (we coordinate with the respective department)"—Soochna Seva staff, Guna, Madhya Pradesh*
- *"Review the documents and go to respective departments" ---- PRI member, Barmer, Rajasthan*
- *"Through Mukhya mantri helpline. For every complaint, we take it to the respective department and get it resolved" – Block Development Officer, Chamba, Uttarakhand*
- *"CM HELPLINE 181 And Department level par jan sunavai" – Block Development Officer, Barmer*

3.5 Management of Data about Information of Schemes

There is a large set of data available on schemes, its entitlements and the beneficiaries. This information is helpful in making decisions for the development of the community members. However, it is important to store the data, in right places, which can be used at the time of the need, for reference and decision making. This section throws light on how different stakeholders manage the large data and use it for the beneficiaries, for their empowerment.

All the stakeholders reported that the entire data management of schemes and its beneficiaries was done, online.

However, the Soochna Seva team maintained it online (in computer), on MIS and MeraApp.

- *"MIS, Computer, Reports" Soochna Seva Staff, Barmer*
- *"Management of data in MERA APP" Soochna Seva Staff, Guna, Madhya Pradesh*
- *"All systems are online", PRI Member, Bethia, Bihar*

Chapter – 4:

Operations of Soochna Seva

Soochna Seva, has been playing a crucial role, in linking the schemes benefits to the community. They help the end – beneficiaries in communicating the public schemes to the government, how will it benefit them and empower them. However, they can't play this role in isolation, and they need support from local stakeholders to reach out to people, bring them on one platform and bridge the existing gap.

This chapter thus, understands from all the stakeholders what has been the local support extended to and received by the Soochna Seva team and how in turn the team has coordinated with them to facilitate the community with the scheme benefits.

This chapter, thus describes, the operations of Soochna Seva, the coordination and support it requires from other stakeholders and provides to other stakeholders to enable the community, for effective utilization of the schemes and its benefits.

4.1 Role of Soochna Seva in Linkage of Information and its Benefits to the Community

This section describes the role of Soochna Seva in linking the information and its benefits to the community, from the perspective of stakeholders like – PRI members, block officials, community health workers and NGO/CBO staff.

The stakeholders informed that Soochna Seva delivered information related to government schemes, to all the beneficiaries. They further reported that they also provided online services, for passport, aadhar card, birth certificate, income proof, etc. to community members. The intervention also helps the community members, to access services related to schemes, for their rightful entitlements.

While, the above was reported by all the stakeholders, the community health workers had a different perspective altogether. They informed that, they got all the scheme forms from Soochna Seva Kendra, and also briefed them on how to help the community,for avaialing the scheme benefits.

The PRI members, like the community health workers, too had a different perspective about Soochna Seva. They mentioned that, Soochna Seva organized camps to sensitize the

community about public schemes, and through the Soochna Van, the community members were mobilized at one place, for community meetings.

> - *"We take all the forms from Soochna Seva office. We get all the services from SS office. We trust them as we get cheap services here" Aanganwadi worker, Chamba, Uttarakhand*
> - *"We meet people directly. Soochna Seva van get the people and provide the services free of cost." PRI Member, Barmer, Rajasthan*
> - *"They help us to connect with the community". Block Development Officer, Barmer, Rajasthan*
> - *"Suchna Seva schemes ki jankari or schemes ka benifit dilane ki bhumika nibhati hai" – NGO staff, Guna, Madhya Pradesh*

Coordination of Soochna Seva Staff with the Local Government and Block Officers

This section describes the role of Soochna Seva in linking the information and its benefits to the community, from the perspective of stakeholders like – PRI members, block officials, community health workers and NGO/CBO staff.

They acted as a bridge between the community members and the stakeholders at the Panchayat and the block level. They supported both community members and the service providers, with their information needs and service utilization. The stakeholders further reported that, they also receive support from Soochna Seva, on making important documents of the community like - ration card, adhaar card etc. In case a new scheme was launched and if the forms were not available in local offices, they accessed it from SSK.

The staff informed that they used own vehicle called "Soochna Van" to mobilize the community and help service agencies and authorities to address the community at a common platform.

> - *"They work as a mode between the department and beneficiaries" Block Development Officer, Chamba, Uttarakhand*
> - *"When we call them and inquire about a service, they support us in the ways possible." Block Development Officer, Barmer, Rajasthan*
> - *"They support us also. If we don't have any information, we would find it with them. We also suggest people to go to SS staff for any services.".NGO/CBO staff, Chamba, Uttarakhand*
> - *"It is good. For the services like ration card, adhaar card, we ask for their help"." PRI member, Barmer, Rajasthan*
> - *"If anyone needs a birth certificate, we send them to SS office"—Community Health Worker, Barmer, Rajasthan*

4.2 Coordination received by Soochna Seva Staff from Local Stakeholders

The Soochna Seva project staffs, who were interviewed for this study, informed that the stakeholders from the Panchayat and the block level, collaborated with them, in case any information related to a public scheme was to be delivered. Other than that, they also got full support from these stakeholders, related to grievances, as the block officials and the PRI members, coordinated with the respective departments, and personally took care that matters resolved timely.

> - *"All the members support us, at the personal level and at the department level. In case of beneficiary grievance, block officers connect us to the respective departments, and get the issues solved" – Project Staff of Soochna Seva – Madhya Pradesh*
> - *"All departments support us at every level" Project Staff of Soochna Seva – Barmer*

4.3 Soochna Seva as a Change Agent

Sochna Seva has changed the lives of community members as it has made people aware of their entitlement rights and has helped them to raise demands for schemes and benefits. It has sensitized people about their rights and has made an effort for people to achieve their rightful entitlements. It has helped the community members to get information at their doorstep, with avoiding the hassle to visit different departments, and gather information. Community members now exhibit confidence and have become pro-active in information gathering.

The intervention has been instrumental in getting the community members, their aadhar cards and bank accounts for them. It has brought a change in the community!

> - *"Now people know about documents, account opening" – Community Health Worker --- Barmer, Rajasthan*
> - *"Every beneficiary has a toilet now, their own aadhar cards and bank accounts, as a result of Soochna Seva" – Community Health Worker --- Guna, Madhya Pradesh*
> - *"Now people are aware, now people raise their voice for their rights" --- Block Development Officer, Tehri, Uttarkahand*
> - *"Now people have information, Now people can access services nearby rather than going to different departments, Now they get all the information at home, People approach SS for all their needs". NGO/CBO staff, Uttarakhand*

4.4 Improvements Suggested in Soochna Seva

The stakeholders suggested that there should be convergence of departments, and a public private partnership to facilitate the community members.

While the public – private partnership should be strengthened, Soochna Seva, should also work in sync with the local NGO/CBOs, so that if Soochna Seva Kendra's are not available/accessible, such infrastructures can offer assistance. Not only this, separate women departments and women staff should be employed, so that women can seek help, for issues which concern them.

The Soochna Seva staff should be trained for interpersonal communication, and should be trained to efficiently use digital media. Soochna Seva, currently caters to specific areas, in the state, but the reach has to be increased, to other districts as well.

- *"Women workers should be hired for their more involvement." – PRI Member, Bettiah, West Champaran, Bihar*
- *"Local convergence is required, so that schemes facilitation can become easier" --- Block Development Officer, Tehri, Uttarakhand*
- *"NGO should support them to carry forward their services" – NGO Staff, Tehri, Uttarakhand*
- *"SS staff should be educated and trained further to form a rapport with community members". PRI*

Moving on to the next part…

With not a well-defined information and awareness mechanism at the block and the Panchayat level to reach out to the general public, for public schemes, Soochna Seva was launched.

It was launched with an aim to spread awareness about existing public schemes, using ICT/non-ICT tools, among the deprived sections and enable them to derive benefits from the same.

Thus, the following section of the report, will now from the lens of the end – beneficiaries will provide a perspective how Soochna Seva, has impacted their lives, for good.

FINDINGS FROM THE
END – BENEFICIARIES SURVEY

Chapter – 5:

Profile of the End – Beneficiaries

Soochna Seva, in a span of five years (2014-2018) has reached out to more than one lakh end beneficiaries across 5 states of the country namely –Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

They belong to deprived background, have limited means of income, and have limited access to information. Soochna Seva, through its intervention has tried to get them their rightful entitlements, so that they can lead a quality life,

In order to understand the benefits, the end – beneficiaries may have availed from Soochna Seva, it is important to understand their profile first. An understanding of the profile of the end – beneficiaries would help understand their perception about Soochna Seva, the benefits received and how can the intervention be sustained.

This chapter focuses on the profile of the end – beneficiaries who were interviewed. It takes into account the proportion of males and females end – beneficiaries interviewed, their age group and their marital status. It further describes their education and occupational status, their household income, their religion, caste, the type of house they live and the type of family they live in.

> **Profile of the End - Beneficiaries**
> ➢ **A typical end beneficiary was a married male, aged 40 years. He was an illiterate who was working as an agricultural labourer on their own land, earning less than Rs. 5000 a month.**
> ➢ **Four out of ten beneficiaries reported to belong to scheduled tribe, and eight out of them were followers of Hindu religion.**

5.1 Demographic Profile of the End – Beneficiaries

This section describes the gender, age and the marital status of the typical end – beneficiary interviewed for the end –line evaluation.

As reported in the table below (table – 4), a typical respondent (who has been the end – beneficiary) for the end evaluation was a married male, aged 40 years.

Table 4: Demographic Profile of End - Beneficiaries	Overall
Base (n)	**275**
Gender	
Males	53
Females	47
Age	
18 – 25 years	14
26 – 32 years	20
33– 40 years	24
41– 48 years	17
49 years and above	25
Average age	**40**
Marital Status	
Married	86
Single	8
Widow/ Widower	5
Divorced	0
***Numbers reported in percentages**	

The soochna seva project has covered, more males than females, in over one lakh beneficiaries which they have reached out over a period of 5 years. Consequently, the coverage of males has been more than females, in the end – line evaluation as well.

5.2 Socio-Economic Profile of the End – Beneficiaries

The socio-economic profile of the end – beneficiaries, may have a direct impact on the type of schemes they access, the information they require and the assistance required in gaining the benefits of the scheme, depending on their educational status, occupation and their monthly household income.

This section, describes the educational status, the occupation and the monthly household income, of the end – beneficiaries interviewed.

Table 5: Socio Economic Profile of the End - Beneficiaries	
	Overall
Base (n)	*275*
Education Status	
Illiterate	44
Educated up to 8th standard	16
Educated up to 5th standard	15
Secondary up to class 10	11
Senior Secondary up to class 12	7
Graduate	5
Post Graduate	1
Occupation	
Agricultural labourer on own land	37
Agricultural Labourer on other's land	15
Casual Labourer	15
Housewife	15
Unemployed	5
Salaried – Government service	4
Salaried – Private company / service	2
Petty Trade	2
Skilled worker	2
Business	2
Others	1
Average Monthly Household Income	
Less than 5000	62
5001-10,000	28
10,001-15,000	2
15,001-20,000	2
More than 20,000	3
Don't Know/Can't Say	4
Numbers reported in percentages	

According to the table above (table – 5), the typical end – beneficiary was illiterate (44%) and was an agricultural labourer on their own land (37%). The average monthly income of their household was less than 5,000.

A significant proportion of respondents (43%) who reported to be an agricultural labourer on their own land, were illiterate, in comparison to others who attained some education, ever.

Little less than a quarter of respondents, who were educated upto fifth standard, were working as an agricultural labourer on somebody else's land, which was significantly higher than those who were illiterate (18%), as reported in table - 6.

Table 6: Occupation by the Educational Status of the Respondents								
	Total	Illiterate	Educated up to 5th standard	Educated up to 8th standard	Secondary up to class 10	Senior Secondary up to class 12	Graduate	Post Graduate
Base (n)	*275*	*122*	*42*	*45*	*31*	*18*	*14*	*2*
Agricultural labourer on own land	37	**43**	**40**	22	32	39	36	0
Agricultural Labourer on other's land	15	18	**24**	13	6	6	0	0
Casual Labourer	15	20	7	20	19	0	0	0
Housewife	15	17	21	9	6	17	14	0
Unemployed	5	0	0	20	13	6	7	50
Salaried – Government service	2	0	5	4	0	0	7	0
Salaried – Private company / service	2	0	0	0	3	11	14	0
Petty Trade	2	0	0	4	6	0	7	0
Skilled worker	2	1	0	2	6	6	0	0
Business	1	0	0	0	3	0	7	50
Others	4	1	2	4	3	17	7	0
Numbers reported in percentages								

5.3 Caste and Religion

As a part of the demographic profile of the respondent, the caste and the religion of the end – beneficiaries were also taken. The end – beneficiaries were given an option, where they could refuse to report about their caste and religion.

The idea of taking the caste and religion of the respondent, during the end – line evaluation was to understand, the reach of Soochna Seva, irrespective of these two.

Table 7: Caste and Religion of the End Beneficiary	
	Overall
Base (n)	*275*
Caste of the End-Beneficiary	
General	26
Scheduled Caste	19
Scheduled Tribe	39
Other Backward Classes	17
Refused to answer	0
Religion of the End-Beneficiary	
Hindu	86
Muslim	4
Christian	7
Other (please specify)	3
Numbers reported in percentages	

Close to two-fifths of the end – beneficiaries reported to belong to scheduled tribe, followed by 26% of them, who reported to be belonging to general caste, as reported in the table above (table – 7). About 86% end – beneficiaries reported to belong to the Hindu religion. This can be attributed to the fact that, only those end – beneficiaries were interviewed who were available at the time of the survey. They were not selected randomly, on the basis of their caste, religion or income.

Thus, this sums up that, the project has reached out to rural poor, irrespective of their caste and religion.

5.4 Type of Family

More than half of the end – beneficiaries reported to live in nuclear family (see table – 8) and majority of them lived in their own house, as reported in the table-9.

Table 8: Type of Family						
	Overall	Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
Base (n)	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Type of Family						
Nuclear Family	53	**69**	**27**	**64**	**85**	**23**
Joint Family	47	31	**73**	36	15	**77**
Numbers reported in percentages						
Table 9: Ownership of the House						
	Overall	Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
Base (n)	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Ownership of the Household						
Rented	2	6	0	2	2	-
Own	98	94	**100**	98	96	100
Informal settlement	0	0	0	-	2	-
Numbers reported in percentages						

Chapter – 6:

Digital & Information Literacy

Soochna Seva, has organized digital and information literacy camps in the areas of intervention, where the end – beneficiaries were trained to access different types of ICT medium, to gain information on government schemes, which may benefit them.

Not only this, they have developed an app, titled "MeraApp" which provided rural India's vulnerable population with a catalogue of welfare schemes, with comprehensive information on entitlements, in an effort to empower them with access to rights and benefits under the core areas of Health, Education, Social security, Finance and Livelihood.

Thus, this chapter discusses the awareness of the end- beneficiaries about Soochna Seva, uptake of digital and information literacy sessions and as a result of the sessions, the issues on which they access information. Further, it throws light on the rating given by the end- beneficiaries to the digital and information literacy sessions of Soochna Seva, with supporting reasons. This chapter also covers the awareness among them about MeraApp, its usage for accessing information related to public schemes.

Digital Literacy

> About 33% end – beneficiaries reported to own a mobile without an internet connection, followed by 27%% who reported to own a television with a dish connection. There is a significant difference in ownership of mobiles with an internet connection among males (28%) than females (16%).
> Close to 90% end beneficiaries are aware of Soochna Seva. Except Uttarakhand, the end – beneficiaries reported a high awareness of this intervention
> Three out of five respondents reported to access information on issues which concern their personal welfare.
> Out of 275 total respondents, 203 were aware of MeraApp, However, only 72 (largely the project staff) had ever used this app to deliver information services, to know the benefits of a particular scheme and to know about government schemes.

6.1 Type of ICT mediums owned

This section discusses the ownership of ICT mediums, the end – beneficiaries own, to get information related to their personal and their family welfare.

Little more than three-tenths of end beneficiaries owned a mobile without an internet connection, followed by 27% of them, who possessed a television with a dish connection, which airs national network and other networks. Little less than a quarter of them owned a mobile phone with an internet connection, as reported in the table below (table – 10)

Table 10: Ownership of ICT mediums	
	Overall
Base (n)	***275***
Mobile without an internet connection	33
Television with a dish connection (airs national network and other networks)	27
Mobile with an internet connection	23
Radio	12
Television without a dish connection (only airs National Network)	7
Computer with internet	2
Mobile tablet with an internet connection	2
Mobile tablet without an internet connection	2
Computer without internet	1
Laptop with internet	1
Google Home	0
Don't own any ICT medium	9
****Numbers reported in percentages***	

A significant difference was noted in the ownership of mobile phone with an internet connection among males and females. Close to 30% men owned a mobile with an internet connection, vis-à-vis 16% females, as reported in table – 11.

Table 11: Ownership of ICT mediums by gender		
	Gender	
	Males	**Females**
Base (n)	*146*	*129*
Mobile without an internet connection	33	33
Television with a dish connection (airs national network and other networks)	31	23
Mobile with an internet connection	**28**	**16**
Radio	11	12
Television without a dish connection (only airs National Network)	6	9
Computer with internet	3	2
Laptop with internet	3	-
Mobile tablet with an internet connection	3	1
Mobile tablet without an internet connection	3	0
Computer without internet	-	2
Don't own any ICT medium	7	11
*Numbers reported in percentages		

Thus, it can be inferred that, the flow of information and the use of information for one's own/family welfare may differ for males and females.

Also, more youth (in the age group of 18-25 years) used a mobile phone, with an internet connection versus people with age group beyond 25 years. This can be a good sign, that the younger lot may have started to show interest in the development process, but it remains a question, as what aspects of development do they access through this medium.

Table 12: Ownership of ICT mediums by age					
	Age (in years)				
	18 - 25	26 -32	33-40	41- 48	49 years and above
Base (n)	*39*	*54*	*65*	*48*	*69*
Computer without internet	3	0	0	2	0
Computer with internet	5	6	2	0	0
Laptop with internet	-	4	3	0	0
Radio	5	17	15	6	12
Television with a dish connection (airs national network and other networks)	23	30	25	25	32
Television without a dish connection (only airs National Network)	3	6	8	8	10
Mobile with an internet connection	49	28	18	13	14
Mobile without an internet connection	21	26	45	31	35
Mobile tablet with an internet connection	5	2	2	4t	-
Mobile tablet without an internet connection	0	6	0	0	3
Google Home	3	0	0	0	0
Don't own any ICT medium	3	2	3	15	19
Numbers reported in percentages					

6.2 Awareness about Soochna Seva

In order to understand, about the benefits the end – beneficiaries may have attained from Soochna Seva, digital literacy sessions, it is important to understand their awareness about Soochna Seva.

Figure 2: Awareness about Soochna Seva

Awareness about Soochna Seva

12%

88%

■ Yes ■ No
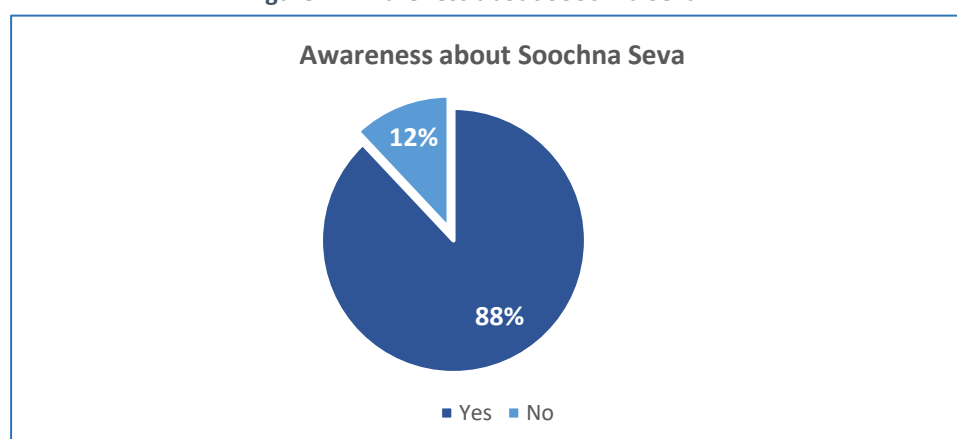
Close to 90% end-beneficiaries reported to be aware about Soochna Seva, project, as reported in figure – 2.

At the district level, significantly low awareness about Soochna Seva (57%) was reported among end-beneficiaries in Uttarakhand, as compared to other states (see figure - 3).

Figure 3:Awareness about Soochna Seva
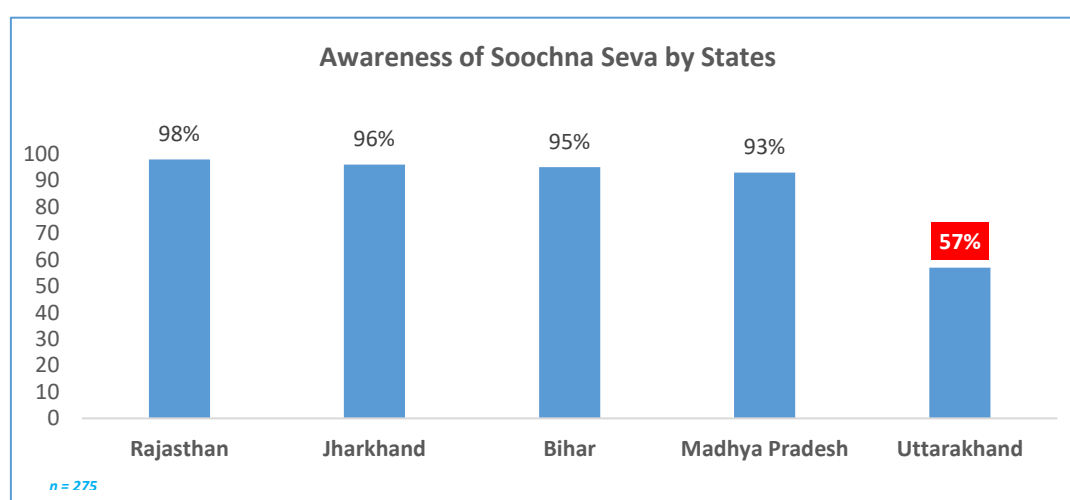
6.3 ICT mediums learnt as part of Soochna Seva

As a part of the Soochna Seva, project, the end – beneficiaries were taught to use the ICT mediums, to access information, which could help them in their own empowerment, by seeking benefits of schemes. Only those beneficiaries, who were aware about Soochna Seva, were asked about the ICT mediums they learnt as part of Soochna Seva.

A little more than a quarter of the end-beneficiaries reported to learn access information from a mobile device, connected to a computer, as reported in the table below (table - 13)

Table 13: ICT mediums learnt as part of Soochna Seva	
	Overall
*Base (n)**	*242*
Internet connected to a mobile device	24
Internet connected to the computer	29
E Mitra	1
None of the above	29
Numbers reported in percentages **Only those who reported to attend digital literacy sessions organized by Soochna Seva*	

State wise, it was reported that, 61% respondents from Madhya Pradesh, reported to learn to access internet connected to computer, which is significantly higher than other states, where Soochna Seva intervention was implemented. (see table –14).

Table 14: ICT mediums learnt as part of Soochna Seva (State Wise)					
	Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
Base (n)	*31*	*51*	*55*	*50*	*55*
Internet connected to the computer	10	61	24F	12	7
Internet connected to a mobile device	13	45	33	6	40
E Mitra	0	0	0	0	5
None of the above	48	2	38	64	0
Numbers reported in percentages					

Since the awareness about Soochna Seva, was less among the respondents in Uttarakhand, it can be seen that a significant proportion of respondents (48%), reported that they did not learn to use any ICT medium.

6.4 Accessibility of Information

This section, discusses the issues on which the end – beneficiaries access information. Only those end – beneficiaries have been covered, who learnt to access any ICT medium, during the Soochna Seva, digital and information literacy sessions.

The beneficiaries reported to access information, on various issues, which concerned their and the family's welfare. When asked, on what issues, which they access information on, more than three-fifths of the end – beneficiaries reported to access information, which

concerned their family's welfare, followed by 58% those beneficiaries who use ICT mediums to get more information about the schemes launched by the government, as reported in the graph below (figure – 4)

Figure 4: Accessibility of Information
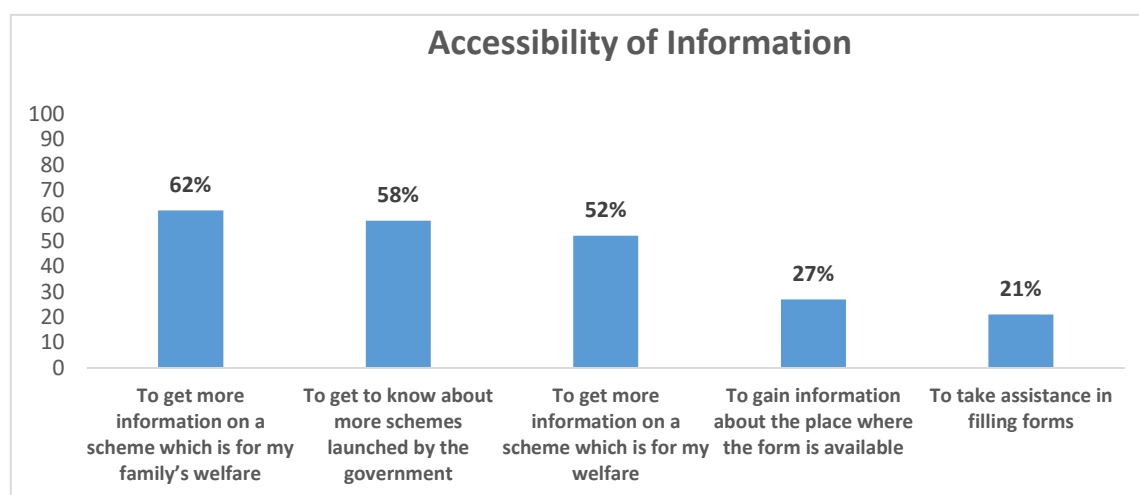
n = 214
Multiple response question

Understanding the accessibility of information by age, it can be seen that a significantly higher proportion of end – beneficiaries, in the age group of 18-25 years (71%) and 26-32 years (76%), reported to access information, which concerned their family welfare.

Table 15: Accessibility of Information by age					
	Age (in years)				
	18 - 25	**26 -32**	**33-40**	**41- 48**	**49 years and above**
Base (n)	*35*	*42*	*49*	*37*	*51*
To get more information on a scheme which is for my family's welfare	**71**	**76**	**49**	65	**53**
To get to know about more schemes launched by the government	49	60	57	**78**	49
To get more information on a scheme which is for my welfare	74	52	47	41	49
To gain information about the place where the form is available	29	29	27	35	18
To take assistance in filling forms	17	17	20	30	12
Any other	0	0	0	0	0
Numbers reported in percentages Multiple response question					

Close to four-fifths of the end – beneficiaries, in the age group of 41-48 years, accessed information related to government schemes, which is significantly higher than other age groups, as reported in the table above (table – 15). This can be attributed to the fact, that at this time, people want to learn more about the government schemes, which can help them to secure their future, especially older years.

6.5 Rating of Digital and Information Literacy Sessions

In order to understand the quality of the digital and information literacy sessions, organized by Soochna Seva, the end – beneficiaries rated the sessions on a scale of "1" to "5", where "1" stood, for poor and "5" stood for excellent.

Majority respondents, rated the digital literacy sessions, "good and above", as reported in the table below (table – 16).

Table 16: Rating of Soochna Seva Digital and Information Literacy Sessions						
	Overall**	**States**				
		Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
	214	*19*	*55*	*34*	*50*	*56*
Only top 2 rank %						
Top 2 rank %	94	79	95	94	92	**100**
Excellent	31	21	40	38	14	36
Good	63	58	55	56	78	64
*Numbers reported in percentages ***Only those who reported to attend digital literacy sessions organized by Soochna Seva*						

All the end – beneficiaries, interviewed in Rajasthan, rated the sessions, "good and above", which was significantly higher than the end – beneficiaries, interviewed across other states, as reported in table - 9.

The reasons cited by the end – beneficiaries for a good rating were; the sessions were very informative & they were taught how to access information related to government schemes (69%). Further such sessions helped them to explore information about their entitlements to government schemes (49%).

Thus, it can be concluded that, digital literacy sessions, helped end-beneficiaries across intervention states, to access information related to their empowerment.

6.6 Awareness about MeraApp

MeraApp is a platform to empower rural & remote population with access to information and bring them closer to their rightful entitlements, thus bridging the digital gap, by Soochna Seva. This section understands the awareness about this app, overall and state wise. Further it understands, whether beneficiaries have ever used this app, to avail information on government schemes.

Figure 5: Awareness about MeraApp
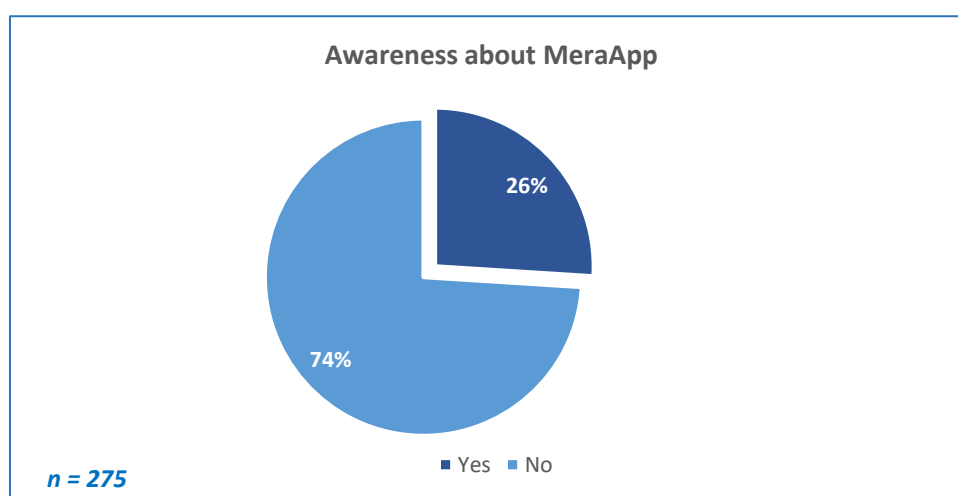
As reported in the chart above (figure – 5), only 26% end – beneficiaries reported to be aware of MeraApp. This is due to the fact that MeraApp is a mobile platform only made available to the information intermediaries / Soochna Mitras / Soochnapreneuers to deliver information and linkages to community members using the App. The App has not be made open for general public. While delivering information about schemes throug the App, it could have been the case that many end beneficiaries then got to know about the App.

Figure 6: Awareness of MeraApp by states
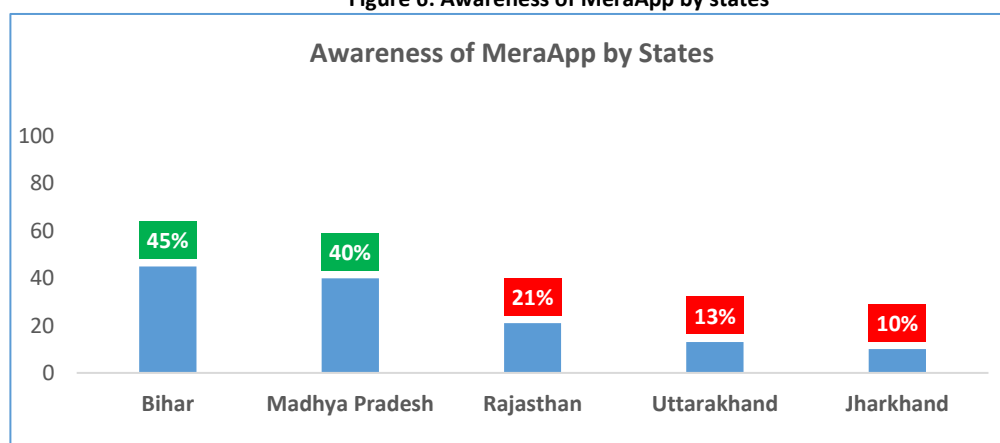
Little more than two-fifths of end – beneficiaries in Bihar, which is significantly higher than other states, reported to be aware of MeraApp. The awareness decreased by states, and the least awareness was reported in Jharkhand (Ranchi, district), as reported in figure – 6.

6.7 Ever Used MeraApp

Of those respondents, who were aware of MeraApp, were asked, have they ever used the app, to access information on government schemes. As stated above, the App has been made available for the project staff as Soochna Mitras / Soochnapreneurs to deliver information services using the App.

Figure 7: Ever used MeraApp

Ever used MeraApp to access information on Government Schemes

31%

69%

■ Yes ■ No

n = 203
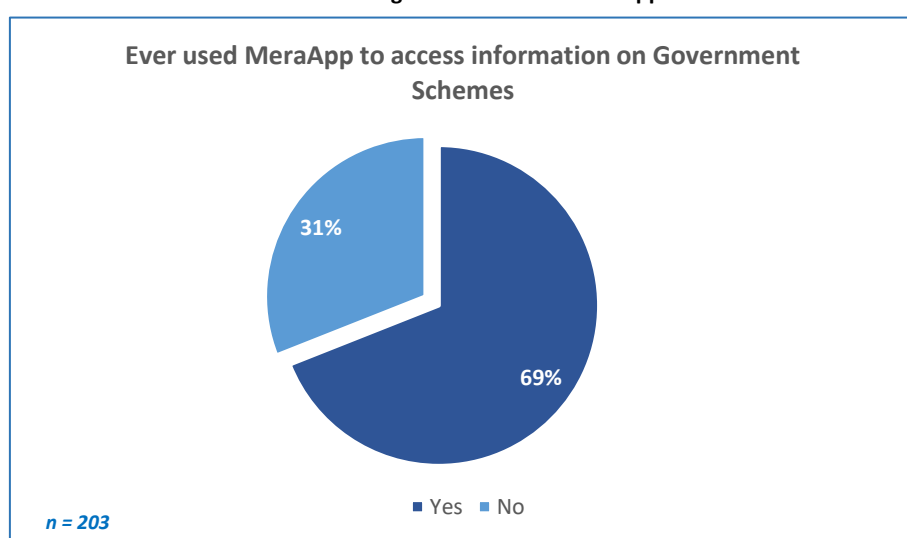
As reported in the chart above (figure-7), 69% end-beneficiaries reported to ever use this app, to access information on government schemes.

Every used MeraApp

Numbers reported in absolutes, due to low base

State wise, as reported in the graph above (figure – 8) out of total 72 aware end – beneficiaries, 21 from Bihar (West Champaran) and Madhya Pradesh (Guna), had ever used MeraApp.

6.8 Information accessed on Public Schemes

Since MeraApp, is an app, which helps people to access information, related to their rightful entitlements, it is imperative to understand the information end-beneficiaries may have accessed, through the Soochna Mitras / Soochnapreneurs as information intermediaries, using the app, in the past 6 months.

This section understands, the various type of information accessed by the end-beneficiaries, using this app with the help of Soochna Mitras.

Table 17: Use of MeraApp to access Information on Public Schemes						
	Overall**	States				
		Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
Base (n)	72	7	22	26	5	12
Benefits of the scheme	45	3	18	13	4	7
Type of scheme and its features	33	2	7	14	4	6
Potential beneficiaries of the scheme	32	3	10	9	5	5
Duration of the scheme	17	3	7	4	1	2
Compensation involved in the scheme	15	1	2	6	3	3
*Numbers reported in absolutes due to small base **Only those who reported to be aware of MeraApp						

Out of 72 end – beneficiaries, 45 of them were aware of being benefited by using this App through the Soochnapreneurs / Soochna Mitras, to know the benefits of a particular scheme. Less than 35 beneficiaries were aware of accessing this app to know the type of scheme and who are the potential beneficiaries of this scheme, as reported in the table above (table – 17).

However, different dynamics were observed state wise. In Madhya Pradesh, 18 out of 22 end – beneficiaries aware of accessing this app, to know the benefits of a scheme, and 10 of them aware of accessing this App to understand who are the potential beneficiaries of the scheme.

In Bihar, 14 out of 26 respondents were aware of accessing this app to know the type of the scheme and its features. In Jharkhand all the five end-beneficiaries who were aware of accessing this app, reported to access it to know the potential beneficiaries of the schemes.

All of the five project staff / fellows /Soochna Metras / Soochnapreneurs interacted, shared that they have used the MeraApp to deliver schemes information to community members, map beneficiaries with various schemes and linked beneficiaries for benefits.

Overall, it can be concluded that, the awareness about MeraApp needs to increase, which can lead to better utilization of the services of the app, for the empowerment of the rural poor. Selected beneficiaries of the project should be trained and oriented to use the App

(with their unique user password and Id) to reach out to communities further as extended Soochna Mitras.

Chapter – 7:

Accessibility to Soochna Seva Kendra

In the Soochna Seva, intervention, Soochna Seva Kendras have been established, which run integrated information services delivery and citizen entitlement framework in the five study districts – namely Tehri Garhwal (Uttarakhand), West Champaran (Bihar), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Guna (Madhya Pradesh) and Barmer (Rajasthan).

It was expected that this initiative will further strengthen the governance structure at district administration level and below where — due to difficult social, economic, geographical, geo-physical, poor development and weak infrastructures — it has become extremely difficult for the public authorities and agencies to reach out to the maximum (deserving) beneficiaries.

This chapter, thus throws light on the awareness of the end – beneficiaries related to Soochna Seva Kendra, frequency of its access, services availed at the Kendra and of which the schemes, the benefits were availed. Also, it describes the grievance redressal mechanism of Soochna Seva and whether Soochna Seva Kendra has helped register the grievances of the end – beneficiaries.

> **Accssibility to Soochna Seva Kendra**
>
> ➢ Nine out of ten end – beneficiaries reported to be aware of Soochna Seva Kendra. Of these, 77% have ever accessed SSK.
> ➢ The end – beneficiaries reported to access SSKs to avail the scheme form (85%) and to take assistance in filling form (64%).
> ➢ Eight out of ten respondents have accessed the Soochna Seva Kendra, for availing the scheme form and six out of ten have accessed SSKs for availing benefits for of more than three schemes.
> ➢ Close to three-fifths of the end – beneficiaries reported that SSKs helped in registering their grievances, which they had pertaining to a public scheme.

7.1 Awareness about Soochna Seva Kendra

All the end – beneficiaries, were asked about their awareness of Soochna Seva Kendra. Of the 275 end – beneficiaries, 242 were aware about it, as reported in the table below (table – 18).

State wise, the awareness in all the study states were significantly higher than Uttarakhand, where only 57% respondents reported to be aware of Soochna Seva Kendras (see table – 18).

Table 18: Awareness about Soochna Seva Kendra						
	Overall	**States**				
		Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
Base (n)	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Awareness about Soochna Seva Kendra						
Yes %	88	57	95	95	94	96
Numbers reported in percentages						

Significantly higher proportions of males (92%) were aware of Soochna Seva Kendras, when compared to female end – beneficiaries, as reported in figure – 9. This could be attributed to the fact that the awareness about Soochna Seva, is less in females (83%) than males (92%). Also, females tend to access less information than males, as they are more confined to household chores, and are either less interested or are not allowed to access information, for their benefit.

Figure 9: Awareness about Soochna Seva Kendra by Gender

Awareness about Soochna Seva Kendra (by gender)

Males (n = 146): 92%
Females (n=129): 83%
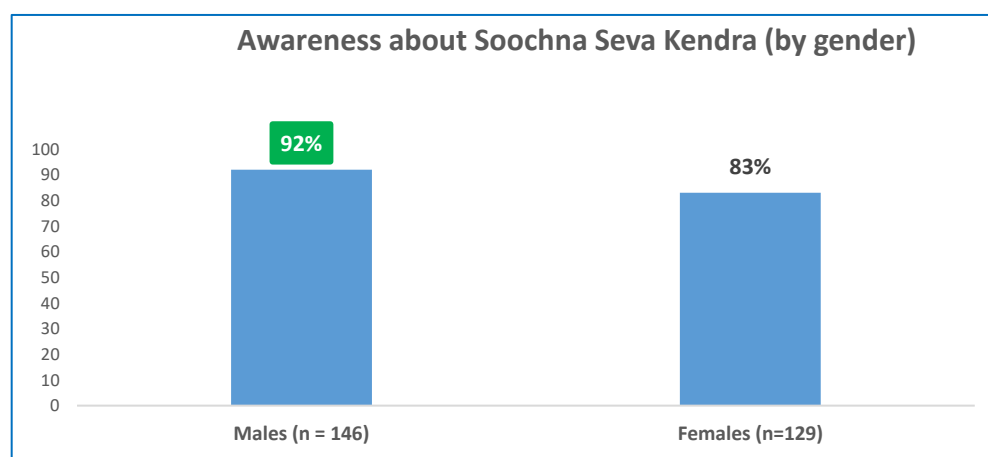
7.2 Frequency of accessing Soochna Seva Kendra

Those respondents, who were aware of Soochna Seva Kendra, were further asked about how frequently they access Soochna Seva Kendra, to access information related to schemes, which may be beneficial to them.

Table 19: Frequency of Accessing Soochna Seva Kendra	
	Overall
*Base (n)***	*241*
Accessibility to Soochna Seva Kendra	
Ever accessed Soochna Seva Kendra	*77*
Always	22
Very often	7
Sometimes	48
*Numbers reported in percentages ***Only those who reported to be aware of Soochna Seva Kendra*	

As reported in the table above, (table –19), close to 30% aware end – beneficiaries reported, to access the soochna seva kendra, very often (7%) and always (22%).

State wise, significantly higher proportion of end – beneficiaries from Bihar, reported to access Soochna Seva Kendra very frequently to access information, when compared to other states.

Table 20: Frequency of Accessing Soochna Seva Kendra by states					
	Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
	31	*52*	*55*	*49*	*54*
Accessibility to Soochna Seva Kendra					
Top 2 rank %	10	29	64	18	15
Always	0	27	55	8	9
Very often	10	2	9	10	6
Sometimes	29	42	31	51	78
*Numbers reported in percentages					

7.3 Service Utilization at Soochna Seva Kendra

Those end – beneficiaries who have ever accessed the Soochna Seva Kendra, were asked what all services have they utilized from the kendras. More than four-fifths of the end – beneficiaries reportedly accessed SSKs, to avail the scheme form, followed by 69% of them who reportedly sought help in filling scheme forms, from these centres, as reported in the graph below (figure - 10).

Figure 10: Service Utilization at Soochna Seva Kendra
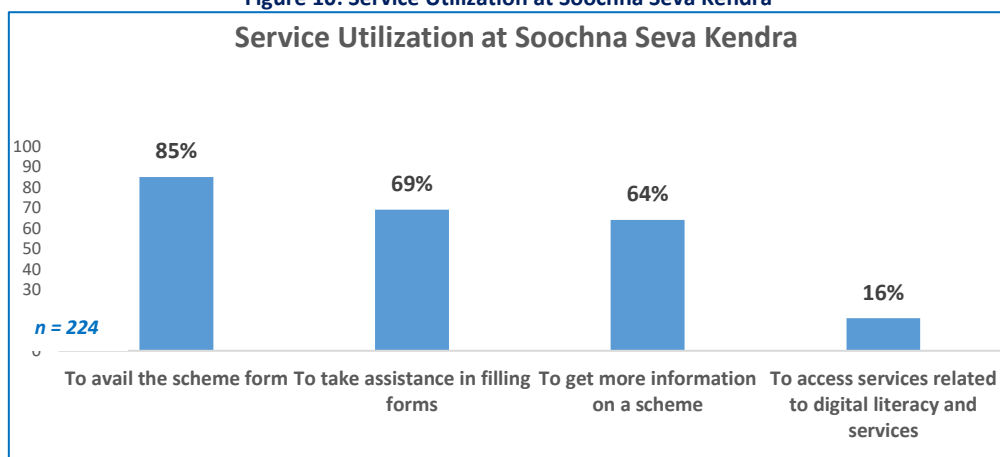
A significantly higher proportion (81%) of end – beneficiaries in Rajasthan (Barmer, district) reported to access SSKs, for taking assistance in filling forms, in comparison to Madhya Pradesh (63%) and Bihar (52%), as reported in table – 21.

Table 21: Service Utilization at Soochna Seva Kendra by States					
	States				
	Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
Base (n)**	21*	49	52	48	54
To take assistance in filling forms	71	63	52	77	81
To avail the scheme form	57	80	83	98	91
To access services related to digital literacy and services	19	18	4	25	15
To get more information on a scheme	14	65	77	81	56
*small base Numbers reported in percentages					

More than 90% end – beneficiaries in Jharkhand (98%) and Rajasthan (91%), reported to access the SSKs to avail the scheme form.

7.4 Schemes Benefits taken from Soochna Seva Kendra

Soochna Seva Kendra helps community members, to help get information on a scheme, avail the scheme form, and further assists them in filling the form.

This section understands, state wise, how many end beneficiaries benefitted from SSK, for the schemes they accessed. This section has been divided into two parts. The first part understands, for which scheme, and what assistance was sought, while the second part understands the number of schemes for which assistance was sought.

7.4.1 Type of Assistance Sought

a) Bihar

In Bihar, out of 40 end beneficiaries, 27 end beneficiaries reported to get more information on Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana, while 29 out of 43 beneficiaries availed the form for this scheme. Out of 27, 23 end – beneficiaries sought help from the Soochna Seva Kendra, to fill form for this scheme, as reported in the table below (table – 22).

Table 22: Schemes Benefits taken from Soochna Seva Kendra (Bihar)			
	To get more information on a scheme	**To avail the scheme form**	**To take assistance in filling forms**
Base	*40*	*43*	*27*
Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana	27	29	23
Indira Awas Yojana	20	23	16
Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (New Account)	20	22	10
Kanya Vivah Yojna	16	14	11
Old Age Pension	8	9	5
Numbers reported in absolutes *Only top 5 schemes reported*			

b) Jharkhand

In Jharkhand, out of 39 end – beneficiaries, 23 end – beneficiaries reported to get more information on Pradhan Mantri Ujjawala Yojana, while 30 out of 47 beneficiaries availed the form for this scheme. Out of 37, 25 end – beneficiaries sought help from the Soochna Seva Kendra, to fill form for this scheme, as reported in the table below (table – 23).

Table 23: Schemes Benefits taken from Soochna Seva Kendra (Jharkhand)			
	To get more information on a scheme	To avail the scheme form	To take assistance in filling forms
Base	**39**	**47**	**37**
PM Ujjwala Yojna	23	30	25
Anti Phuleriya dose	14	14	10
Aadhar Card	13	14	9
Ration Card	12	15	8
Job Card	12	12	12
Numbers reported in absolutes *Only top 5 schemes reported*			

In Bihar and Jharkhand, more beneficiaries were inclined to PM Ujjawala Yojana, as they got more information on this scheme, availed its scheme form and also sought assistance in filling forms for this

c) Uttarakhand

As reported in the table below (table – 24), 13 out of 15 people, reported to take assistance in filling forms for Ration cards, from Soochna Seva Kendra and 9 out of 12 people sort help to make the ration card.

Table 24: Schemes Benefits taken from Soochna Seva Kendra (Uttarakhand)			
	To get more information on a scheme	To avail the scheme form	To take assistance in filling forms
Base	**3**	**12**	**15**
Ration Card	2	9	13
MGNREGA	2	2	5
Old Age/Widow Pension	1	2	3
Subsidy on Farmer's equipment	1	2	2
Labor Cards	1	3	4
Numbers reported in absolutes *Only top 5 schemes reported*			

d) Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, the most common services for which people benefitted from Soochna Seva Kendra were vaccination and aadhar card. Out of 32 people, 20 reported to know more about vaccination and aadhar card. More than 50% end – beneficiaries reported that they sought the forms for the above two mentioned schemes from SSK, and took assistance in filling the forms, as reported in the table below (table – 25).

Table 25: Schemes Benefits taken from Soochna Seva Kendra (Madhya Pradesh)			
Base	To get more information on a scheme	To avail the scheme form	To take assistance in filling forms
	32	*39*	*31*
Vaccination	20	21	17
Aadhar Card	20	22	19
Avas Patta	19	20	17
Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana	17	20	15
Mukhya Mantri Annapurna Yojna (provide ration to poor people)	16	16	13
Numbers reported in absolutes *Only top 5 schemes reported*			

e) **Rajasthan**

In Rajasthan, just like Madhya Pradesh, SSKs were accessed to take help on making ration card, on priority. However, some end – beneficiaries also reported to get more information from there on old age pension scheme. More than 50% end – beneficiaries reported to get more information on ration card and others from SSK, followed by availing the required documents and further taking assistance from there in filling the forms, as reported in the table below (table – 26).

Table 26: Schemes Benefits taken from Soochna Seva Kendra (Rajasthan)			
	To get more information on a scheme	To avail the scheme form	To take assistance in filling forms
Base	*30*	*49*	*44*
Ration Card and others	19	26	22
Old Age Pension	13	21	17
Bhamashah Card and others	12	18	16
Aadhar Card	12	19	15
PM Ujjwala Yojna	11	16	16
Numbers reported in absolutes *Only top 5 schemes reported*			

7.4.2 Number of Schemes for which Assistance Sought

This section describes the number of scheme benefits the end – beneficiaries may have availed from the soochna seva Kendra. As reported in the chart below, little more than three-fifths of the end – beneficiaries reported to take assistance for three or more schemes.

Figure 11: Number of Schemes for which SSK accessed
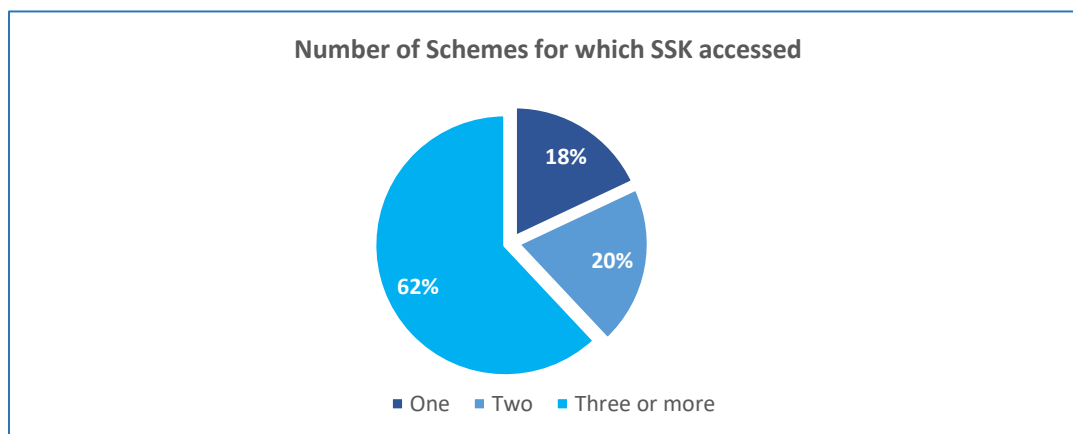
State wise also, end – beneficiaries reported to take assistance from Soochna Seva Kendras, for more than three schemes. Amongst, all states, end – beneficiaries from Rajasthan reported significantly higher proportion, who utilized more than three services from Soochna Seva Kendra (see table – 27).

Table 27: Number of Schemes for which Assistance Sought by States					
	States				
	Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
*Base (n)***	*21**	*49*	*52*	*48*	*54*
One	26	18	13	31	6
Two	32	16	27	23	11
Three or more	42	65	60	46	83
Small base *Numbers reported in percentages*					

7.5 Grievance Registration and Redressal

Soochna Seva Kendras, have been instrumental in registering grievances, of the end – beneficiaries related to a public scheme. These could be related to their entitlement issues, non – payment of subsidies or incomplete information about a scheme.

This section thus describes how many beneficiaries have been helped by SSKs, to register grievances.

As reported in the figure – 12, close to three-fifths of the end – beneficiaries reported that SSKs helped them to register their grievance, related to a public scheme.

Figure 12: SSK helped in registration of grievance

SSK helped in registration of grievance

41%

59%

■ Yes ■ No

n = 222

Further, Soochna Seva Kendras also redress the grievances, of the end – beneficiaries, which they may have related to a scheme, or may have with soochna seva fellow staff/their operations. Little less than half of the end – beneficiaries reported that their grievances were not addressed by Soochna Seva, as reported in figure – 13.

Figure 13: Grievance addressed by Soochna Seva

Grievance addressed by Soochna Seva

49%

51%

■ Yes ■ No
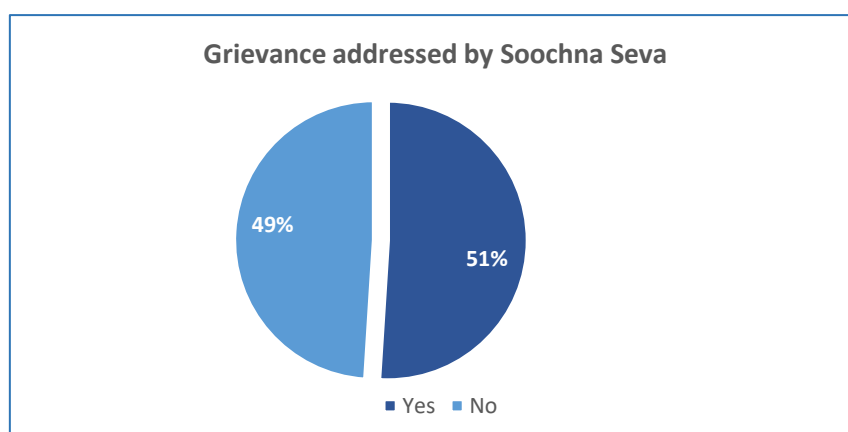
This could be attributed to the fact that many end – beneficiaries may not be aware that Soochna Seva Kendras, also help in grievance redressal or may not be aware of Soochna Seva kendras at all.

Table 28: Grievance addressed by Soochna Seva by states					
	States				
	Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
*Base (n)***	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Yes%	37	42	86	48	41
small base *Numbers reported in percentages*					

In West Champaran (Bihar), 86% end – beneficiaries reported that their grievance was addressed by Soochna Seva. This proportion is significantly higher than other states of the survey.

Thus, as a part of the Soochna Seva, intervention, especially in Uttarakhand, more awareness building activities are required around Soochna Seva Kendras, and the services offered by it.

Chapter – 8
Importance of Soochna Seva Services

Soochna Seva, has been an important rights based approach intervention, in bringing an impact in the lives of people. Attributing to the intervention, many people have been able to get entitlements, their documents made and digital literacy, which has been able to help them participate in their own development.

This chapter, thus describes the experience of the end – beneficiaries of accessing Soochna Seva services. Further it understands, if the end – beneficiaries have ever paid for availing soochna seva services, average amount paid and their willingness to pay to avail soochna seva services. To conclude, it understands, the importance of soochna seva services for the individual and the community.

Importance of Soochna Seva

➢ End – beneficiaries expressed their satisfaction with Soochna Seva, on all quality parameters of information – timeliness (92%), completeness (93%), accuracy (89%), ease of accessing information (92%) and overall quality (85%).

➢ About 16 people reported to pay to avail the services of Soochna Seva, and the average amount paid was INR 287.

➢ There was mixed opinion on willingness to pay to avail Soochna Seva services.

8.1 Rating of Benefits availed from Soochna Seva

This section, describes the satisfaction, expressed by the end – beneficiaries for availing scheme benefits from soochna seva. The satisfaction rating has been taken on a scale of "1" to "5" where "1" stands for "extremely dissatisfied" and "5" stands for "extremely satisfied". The parameters, on which satisfaction rating was taken are; timeliness of information, completeness of information, accuracy of information, ease of accessing information, and their overall experience with Soochna Seva, operations.

8.1.1 Timeliness of Information

Timeliness of information, refers to how quickly the information was provided to the beneficiary, so they could take timely decision, which can have a direct impact on their life.

Table 29: Timeliness of Information						
	Overall	Districts				
		Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
Base (n)**	275	54	55	58	52	56
Timeliness of Information						
Top 2 rank %	92	80	91	98	94	98
Extremely Satisfied	38	19	18	91	21	36
Satisfied	55	61	73	7	73	63
Reasons for Satisfaction Rating of Timeliness of Information						
The information was provided much before the due date of submission of application	70	54	85	67	48	93
I was informed about the application deadline	49	35	51	53	88	21

As reported in the table below, 92% end – beneficiaries reported their satisfaction, with respect to timeliness of information provided by Soochna Seva. Seven out of ten end – beneficiaries reported that the information provided to them was much before due date of submission of application, as reported in the table below (table – 29).

State wise, significantly higher proportion of beneficiaries, from Bihar and Rajasthan (98% each), reported to be satisfied with the timeliness of information. State wise, 85% end – beneficiaries from Madhya Pradesh reported that they were provided information much before the due date of submission of application.

In Jharkhand, close to 90% end – beneficiaries, reported that they were informed about the application deadline, thus they were satisfied with the timeliness of the information provided, as reported in the table above (table – 29).

8.1.2 Completeness of Information

Information will only be useful, if it is complete. If parts of the information are missing, then one is not being able to make use of it or make accurate decisions. This, section thus takes the experience rating from the end – beneficiaries for the completeness of information, provided by Soochna Seva.

Nine out of ten respondents reported to be satisfied with the completeness of information. Among all the states, significantly low proportion of end – beneficiaries from Uttarakhand reported their satisfaction with the completeness of information, in comparison to other states, as reported in table - 30.

Table 30: Completeness of Information						
	Overall	**Districts**				
		Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
Base (n)**	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Completeness of Information						
Top 2 rank %	93	80	91	100	96	98
Extremely Satisfied	41	17	18	90	23	54
Satisfied	52	63	73	10	73	45
Reasons for Satisfaction Rating of Completeness of Information						
The information provided was complete, in terms of eligibility documents to be submitted	58	50	78	57	40	64
The information provided was complete, in terms of my eligibility to the scheme	53	39	47	55	73	54
I was told where to submit my application form	36	13	36	55	60	14

The top two reasons reported for satisfaction are- completeness of information in terms of eligibility documents to be submitted (58%) and eligibility of the end – beneficiary to avail the benefit of the scheme (53%).

8.1.3 Accuracy of Information

Accuracy of information refers to presenting the information with facts and figures, without any mistake, so that people can take decisions of their lives based on it. Since Soochna Seva, is providing information, for empowerment of people, it is important, that the information which they give is accurate.

Overall, nine out of ten end – beneficiaries reported to be satisfied with the accuracy of information provided by Soochna Seva, as reported in table - 31.

Seven out of ten beneficiaries reported that when they reached the government office, to submit their form, they had all the required information, beforehand.

Table 31: Accuracy of Information						
	Overall	**Districts**				
		Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
*Base (n)***	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Accuracy of Information						
Top 2 rank %	89	82	94	100	96	96
Extremely Satisfied	39	17	16	88	19	48
Satisfied	55	65	78	12	77	48
Reasons for Satisfaction Rating of Accuracy of Information						
The information was accurate, as when I reached the government office to submit my form, I had all the requirement information beforehand	68	57	85	62	50	84
My eligibility information was accurate	44	35	36	41	79	30

All the beneficiaries from Bihar, expressed their satisfaction with the accuracy of the information, which was significantly higher among all the states.

8.1.4 Ease of Accessing Information

Ease of accessing information refers to, how easily the end – beneficiaries can access information from SSKs or Soochna Seva staff, and at what time of the day, without any hassle.

Majority people expressed their satisfaction with ease of accessing information (38% extremely satisfied and 54% satisfied) with ease of accessing information from Soochna Seva, as reported in the table below (see table – 32).

	Table 32: Ease of Accessing information						
	Overall	Districts					
		Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**	
Base (n)	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*	
Accessing Information							
Top 2 rank %	92	78	94	98	92	99	
Extremely Satisfied	38	17	16	84	15	54	
Satisfied	54	61	78	14	77	45	
Reasons for Satisfaction Rating of Ease of accessing Information							
The staff was responsible and was willing to help	68	50	80	71	54	84	
The staff was available at any time, we went for help	54	48	53	48	87	38	

In Uttarakhand, 78% of respondents were reported to be satisfied with the ease of accessing information, which was significantly lower than other states of intervention.

The prime reasons attributed to ease of accessing information were – responsible staff and always willing to help (68%) and availability of staff at time, when the end – beneficiaries wanted help (54%), as reported in the table above (table – 32).

8.1.5 Overall Experience

The overall experience of the end – beneficiaries was satisfying (33% extremely satisfied and 52% satisfied). More than three-fifths of the end – beneficiaries were reportedly satisfied because they could avail benefits of the schemes, for which they were eligible.

Table 33: Overall experience with Soochna Seva						
	Overall	Districts				
		Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
*Base (n)** *	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Overall Experience						
Top 2 rank %	85	87	93	61	94	96
Extremely Satisfied	33	24	18	47	21	55
Satisfied	52	63	75	14	73	41
Reasons for Satisfaction Rating of Ease of accessing Information						
My overall experience is satisfactory, because I could avail benefits of the schemes, for which I was eligible	63	69	80	24	58	88
Sochna seva was helpful to me, because I got the intended benefits	46	33	53	45	87	14

In Rajasthan 96% end- beneficiaries were satisfied with their overall experience with Soochna Seva, which is significantly higher than Uttarakhand and Bihar, where 87% and 61%, end beneficiaries, respectively reported their satisfaction, as reported in table – 33.

8.2 Ever paid for Sochna Seva Services

While Soochna Seva services, were largely free, it is important to understand, whether end – beneficiaries, to avail any service paid to avail its services.

This section, understands, if any end – beneficiary paid to avail the services, and if yes, then how much.

Table 34: Ever Paid for Soochna Seva Services						
	Overall	**Districts**				
		Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
*Base (n)***	*275*	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Yes%						
Only those paid for Sochna Seva Services	6	0	11	3	12	4
Ever paid for Sochna Seva Services by monthly household income						

	Monthly Household Income (in INR)				
	0-5,000	**5001-10,000**	**10,001-15,000**	**15,001-20,000**	**More than 20,000**
Base (n)	*171*	*76*	*6*	*5*	*7*
Yes%	6	1	17	40	0
Numbers reported in percentages					

Overall, 6% end – beneficiaries reported to pay to avail Soochna Seva services, of which 11% were from Madhya Pradesh (Guna district) and 12% from Jharkhand (Ranchi district), which is significantly higher than Uttarakhand, where none of the respondents reported to pay to avail Soochna Seva services (as reported in table – 34). However, it would be worth to make two points here; a) the awareness about Soochna Seva is very low in Uttarakhand, hence the values may not be comparable; b) further, it would be interesting to understand, for which services did the end – beneficiaries pay and to whom.

Analysing the data by income levels, 11 out of 171 end – beneficiaries, who had income less than 5,000 reported to pay some amount to avail the services of Soochna Seva. Two out of five respondents, whose income was in the range of INR 15,000-20,000 also reported to pay to avail services of Soochna Seva.

Here, it must be noted that the payment of services and revenue generated towards running the centres on sustainability mode were discarded in mid and later part of the project period. However, as it has been shared by the project team that the sustainability mode of running the community facilities of Soochna Seva has now being rolled out in a post project period

situation. The Soochna Mitras / Soochnapreneurs are now being trained on an entrepreneurship mode to run the services for the benefit of the community. And, DEF would continue to oversee and monitor the facilities.

8.3 Amount Paid to avail Soochna Seva Services

Those who reported to ever pay, to avail the services of Soochna Seva, were asked how much did they pay.

Out of 16 end-beneficiaries who reported to pay, 7 of them reported to pay upto Rs. 50, while 7 of them reported to pay Rs. 500 and above, to avail the services of Soochna Seva. The average amount paid to avail the services accounts to INR 287, as reported in the table below (table – 35).

Table 35: Amount paid for availing Soocha Seva Services (in INR)						
	Overall	States				
		Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
Base (n)**	16	0	6	2	6	2
Amount Paid for Soochna Seva Services (in INR)						
Upto Rs. 50	7	0	2	3	2	2
100-150	2	0	1	0	1	0
500 and above	7	0	3	3	3	0
Average amount paid	287	0	367	260	304	25
** Only those respondents who paid for availing Soochna Seva services *Numbers reported in absolutes, due to low base						

State wise, three end – beneficiaries each from Madhya Pradesh (Guna), Bihar (West Champaran) and Jharkhand (Ranchi) reported to pay Rs. 500 and above to avail the services of Soochna Seva. However, the average amount paid differs for each of these states. Among them, end – beneficiaries in Madhya Pradesh, reported to INR 367, which is the highest, to avail the services of Soochna Seva.

Though not captured during this survey, it would be interesting to understand, for which services did they pay, and which services costed them to pay Rs. 500 and above.

8.4 Willingness to pay for Soochna Seva Services

About 94% end – beneficiaries did not pay anything to avail the soochna seva services, while 6% of them did pay, to avail the services.

But all of them were asked, if Soochna Seva starts charging for its services, were they willing to pay. Mixed responses were received, where three out of five respondents expressed their willingness to pay to avail Soochna Seva services and three out of ten expressed their unwillingness to pay, as reported in the graph below (figure - 14).

Figure 14: Willingness to pay for Soochna Seva Services
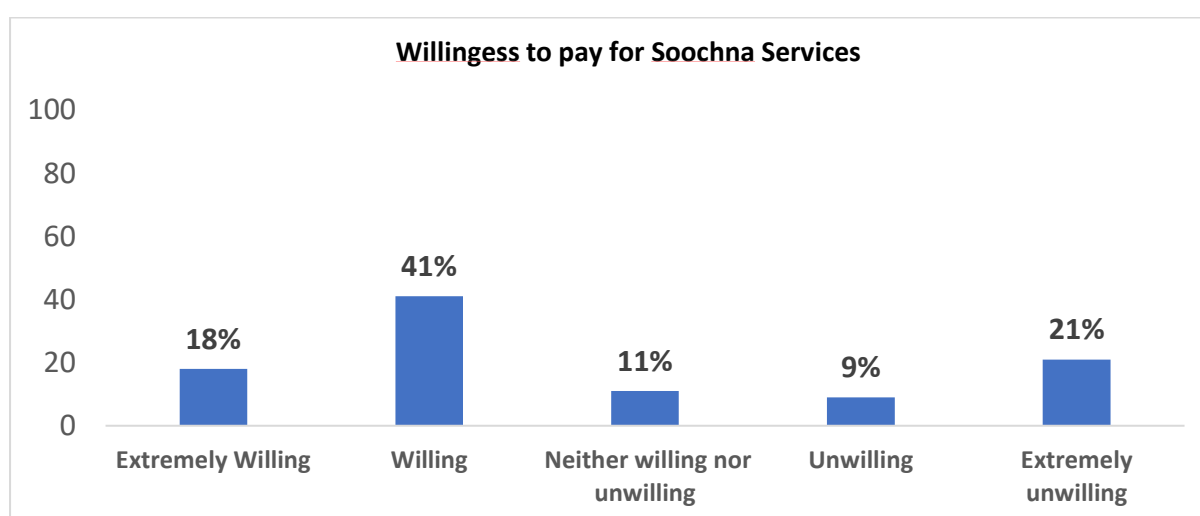
End – beneficiaries in Rajasthan (84%) and Bihar 981%) are willing to pay for Soochna Seva services, which is significantly higher than other states, of intervention, as reported in the table below (see table – 36).

Table 36: Willingness to Pay for Soochna Seva Services by states					
	States				
	Uttarakhand	**Madhya Pradesh**	**Bihar**	**Jharkhand**	**Rajasthan**
*Base (n)** *	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Top 2 Box %	42	64	81	20	84
Extremely Willing	9	2	40	8	30
Willing	33	62	41	12	54
Numbers reported in absolutes, due to low base					

When probed for reasons, for unwillingness to pay, the end – beneficiaries cited their lower income status. They further stated that information related to government schemes should

be provided for free. While the willingness reasons accounted for, if work done, they can consider paying and soochna seva has been a great help in getting entitlements, thus can consider paying.

8.5 Importance fo Soochna Seva Services

Soochna Seva services has proved to be an important platform, for citizens, to access and deliver rights, entitlements, related to government services. Not only this, it has also helped the end – beneficiaries to register their grievances, related to public schemes.

While, this has been achieved, more or less, it is also important to understand from the end – beneficiaries how important do they perceive these services, which can lay a platform, for its continuity. This section describes the importance of soochna seva.

Figure 15: Importance of Soochna Seva Services
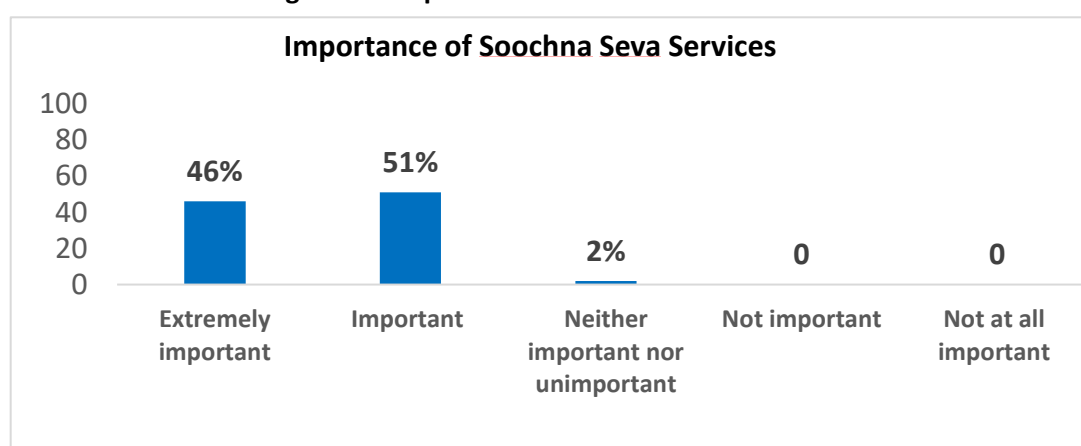
As reported in the figure-15, 97% end – beneficiaries, stated that Soochna Seva services is important for them (51% important and 46% extremely important).

Table 37: Importance of Soochna Seva Services (by States)					
	States				
	Uttarakhand	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar	Jharkhand	Rajasthan
*Base (n)***	*54*	*55*	*58*	*52*	*56*
Top 2 Box %	93	98	100	100	96
Extremely Important	22	49	91	33	32
Important	70	49	9	67	64
Numbers reported in absolutes, due to low base					

State wise, all the beneficiaries in Bihar and Jharkhand reported that the services of Soochna are important for them, which is significantly higher by 7% in Uttarakhand, as reported in table – 38 (see table above)

The top two reasons cited for the importance of Soochna Seva services were that the individual/the community members have benefitted from the information provided (65%) and the authenticity of the information (62%).

> *Thus, it can be concluded, that Socohna Seva has been a change - maker, and has been able to bring a change in the lives of people. The end – beneficiaries look for a continued support from Soochna Seva.*

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for further strategy development

1. **Community Outreach & Awareness:** A program is successful, if the participants know about it and are able to understand how will it help them in their development. Programmes, like these, should first focus on sensitizing the masses about the program, its duration of implementation, the infrastructure available and the staff involved. Further, how can such a program benefit them, and form a path for their development. This can in the long run, also ensure community involvement in sustainability of the project, even after the external support is withdrawn.

2. **Gender Inclusion:** Soochna Seva, has been one such project, which has worked for and with both genders. However, the reach to women has been limited. The percentage of females who are aware of Soochna Seva, is significantly lesser than males. Such a project should reach out to equal proportion of females in comparison to men, to understand their needs and guide them to their empowerment. This can be done, by deploying trained female staff, who can build rapport with women and work with them.

3. **Digital Literacy on Smartphones:** Since the government is getting into the mode of e-governance, it is imperative for such projects to empower the masses with digital literacy. Such classes should aim to reach out to all masses and should be conducted at frequent intervals. Also, these trainings can beyond usage of computers and laptops, to smartphones, with internet, so that masses with limited facilities can still avail the benefits of the government schemes.

4. **Training and Capacity Building:** A project like this requires regular and customised training with value additions time to time. The Soochna Mitras and Soochnapreneurs require regular engagement on their works, their learning and experiences and then again feed into their capacity building. Regular trainings should be provided to Soochna Seva staff, for interpersonal communication, community mobilization and stakeholder relationship management. The idea of engaging relevant and active local beneficiaries of the project as end Soochnapreneurs to further reach out to the community is a positive and relevant step.

5. **Sustainability of the Operations:** In order to sustain the operations, Soochna Seva can now start charging for services in providing information, facilitation, digital services and for digital literacy classes; the charges can be decided by the community time to time with DEF support; It has to be strictly ensured that the Soochnapreneurs do not deviate and charge for services in an unreasonable and unaffordable manner. Further, the Soochnapreneurs can be facilitated to get affiliations from various services providers like the Common Services Centre (CSC) of the Government and various other State governments and private service affiliations to provide services to communities at door steps. Banking and educational services could be other possibilities.

6. **Replication and Scaling up of Soochna Seva Framework:** In places where Soochna Seva Kendras have not been established, infrastructure like anganwadi center, Panchayat meeting halls, and other local government infrastructure can be utilized and can be used as SSKs. Awareness generation activities should be taken into consideration, to sensitize the masses about SSKs, and the services available there. They can tie up with community health workers, sarpanch and other opinion leaders, who in their weekly meetings/household visit, can inform the community members about SSKs. It is recommended that the Soochna Seva Framework be replicated and scaled up in new locations and geographies in a public private partnership mode with incorporating key learning and experiences from the Soochna Seva project interventions. Already, there are trends visible as it has been shared with the evaluation team including the NGO / CSO partnerships taking place with DEF to replicate the SSK framework on a technical collaboration mode. Also, it is suggested that if some of the active and dynamic end beneficiaries wants to be part of the Soochna Seva services network, they could be identified, trained and taken on board to start the SSK work in their localities under DEF supervision and guidance.