

Empowering Women Through Financial Inclusion

USE CASE

Story-based, financial literacy training reinforcement via 'missed call'.



PARTNER

CRISIL
Foundation

Assam, India

BACKGROUND

CRISIL Foundation in partnership with Assam-based NGO Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi (RGVN) targets rural women with limited access to financial resources through the programme 'Mein Pragati'.

Created from fieldwork and research on effective adult learning, Mein Pragati supports financial literacy and empowerment through six months of self-help group (SHG) trainings, workshops, and community meetings.

The trainings encourage women to monitor expenses, set financial goals, and use formal financial services. Trained community members called 'Mitras' and 'Sakhis' hold community meetings and are available to answer questions.

Currently, the programme works in 500 villages across six districts in Assam. CRISIL Foundation's goal is to impact 100,000 women in Assam through Mein Pragati while continuing to expand in other states across India.



THE CHALLENGES

Many rural families in Northeast India struggle with the following financial literacy issues:

- Difficulties with their financial decision-making and social pressures
- Lack of awareness of their income and expenses
- Limited access to formal financial services such as bank accounts, loans, and insurance

By providing training and in-person support to these women, CRISIL and RGVN help to empower women to take control of their finances and to access formal financial services. However, these trainings require regular follow-up to reinforce key learnings and to encourage behavior change, even after the initial training period. To do this in-person at scale is prohibitively expensive and logistically difficult, and would significantly limit CRISIL's growth.



AWAAZ.DE'S SOLUTIONS

Awaaz.De's content and platform plays an important and supportive role in CRISIL's Mein Pragati program. With input from CRISIL, Awaaz.De managed the process of scripting story-based mobile podcasts, recording with professional recording artists in local language, and sound design. Ten audio episodes of three to five minutes duration were produced in Assamese language.

The content was designed keeping in mind the cultural nuances and literacy levels of the target audience. These story-based, dramatic episodes reinforce financial literacy topics ranging from women's empowerment to claiming benefits from government pension schemes.

The messages provide both entertaining and valuable financial awareness content through on-demand access via missed-call, after the trainings and workshops have been completed. The CRISIL Mitras give Awaaz.De's phone number to the women and encourage them to place missed calls by themselves or during weekly SHG meetings. While the foundation of the programme is in-person trainings, Awaaz.De's voice messages offer critical follow-up to ensure that behavioural changes are sustained.

Recently, Awaaz.De's call data analytics tools and on-ground feedback showed users' demand for listening to multiple content modules in a single call. As such, Awaaz.De has developed a user-friendly voice menu to give easier access to different content topics.



VOICES FROM THE LAST MILE



Manju Medi
SHG member, Assam

“Before listening to the voice messages and training, I was scared to even step inside the bank. Now, I go to bank alone to deposit my monthly Rs. 1000 savings and feel more confident than before that I have an equal say in my family when discussing household financials with my husband.”



Mahindri Datta
SHG member, Assam

“I was unclear about the PMSBY post training, but after listening to the mobile episodes, I understood the benefits of the schemes and enrolled for the same. If I didn't have access to this information via mobile, I will have to go to the bank, find a person, and avail information which is too inconvenient.”

OUR IMPACT



6521
unique end users



26531
missed calls



3 mins 12 secs
avg. listen duration



End-users listened to three episodes on an average. The most popular episodes include topics on women's empowerment, reduction of expenses, and budget card.



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Research, writing and photos provided by Maya Tromburg and Nithya Vemireddy, of Miller Center for Social Entrepreneurship.
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