



Strategic Plan 2025–2030

Empowering Women,
Strengthening
Communities

**Society for Agriculture Health Environment
Literacy Innovations (SAHELI)**

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CONTENTS

1. List of Abbreviations and Acronyms
2. Message from the President of SAHELI
3. Forward
4. Executive Summary
5. Introduction
6. Context of the Work of SAHELI – Internal
7. Context of the Work of SAHELI – External
8. Strategic Priorities
9. Strategic Directions
10. Strategic Approaches
11. Limitations and Challenges
12. Annexures

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Sl. No.	Abbreviation or Acronyms	Expansions
1	AGG	Adolescent Girls' Group
2	APF	Azim Premji Foundation
3	BEO	Block Education Officer
4	CDPO	Child Development Project Officer
5	DCPU	District Child Protection Unit
6	DCPO	District Child Protection Officer
7	CSO	Civil Society Organisation
8	CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
9	FPO	Farmer Producer Organisation
10	GBV	Gender Based Violence
11	GDP	Gross Domestic Product
12	GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
13	GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
14	GGPI	Global Gender Parity Index
15	GP	Gram Panchayat
16	HDI	Human Development Index
17	ICDS	Integrated Child Development Services
18	ICPS	Integrated Child Protection Scheme
19	IGR	Inspector General of Registration
20	IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
21	IPV	Intimate Partner Violence
22	ITC	Information Technology Communication
23	LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
24	MCA	Ministry of Corporate Affairs
25	MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
26	MIS	Management Information System
27	MMR	Maternal Mortality Ratio
28	MSW	Master of Social Work
29	NFHS	National Family Health Survey
30	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
31	PESTLE	Political Economical Social Technological Legal Environmental
32	PHC	Primary Health Centre
33	PLFS	Periodic Labour Force Survey

34	PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
35	SC	Scheduled Caste
36	SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
37	SHG	Self-Help Group
38	SP	Strategic Plan
39	ST	Scheduled Tribe
40	SWOT	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
41	UN Women	United Nations Women
42	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
43	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
44	VAW	Violence Against Women
45	WEF	World Economic Forum
46	WEI	Women Empowerment Index
47	YC	Youth Club

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Message from the President of SAHELI

Basta,
20/10/2025

Dear Partners, Supporters and Friends of SHEL, I,

Greetings from SAHELI!

I am proud to present the Strategic Plan (SP) of SAHELI for five years from 2026 to 2030. This is the first SP document drawn by SAHELI. I consider the publication of this SP document as an important mile stone in the journey of SAHELI. The SP document very clearly discusses the origin and growth of SAHELI. It provides information on where to drive SAHELI in the coming five years based on inferences drawn from objective data, aspiration of the Governing Body as well as staff persons, and expectations of a section of partnering communities as well as external stakeholders.

I am confident that the present SP document will guide us in our future activities. But the document offers SAHELI a major challenge of resource mobilization and partnership building. SAHELI, I hope, will be strong enough to address and manage these challenges successfully. By doing so SAHELI will be elevating itself to a higher level of organizational stature. While I sincerely acknowledge the hard work put in by all those who contributed to making the SP a reality, I would like to submit this document to our partnering communities because this document has been prepared for SAHELI to serve them better.

Once again thanking the Governing Body, staff member, partnering communities, and external stakeholders, I present this document for all of them.

**Dalia Antony,
President**

Forward from the Editor

Basta,
20/10/2025

Dear friends, partners and well-wishers of SAHELI,

We are happy to present the document of Strategic Plan of SAHELI for five years from 2026 to 2030. This document is a product of collective exercises – of all categories of staff members, members of the Governing Body (GB) and a section of partnering communities as well as representatives of secondary stakeholders including frontline functionaries of various line departments.

The importance of Strategic Plan and the process of developing the SP was discussed in the meeting of the GB held on 21/06/2025. After detailed discussion on the subject, the GB gave nod to start the process of drawing the SP and the President of SAHELI was authorized to do all the needful actions to make the SP for SAHELI. The president then constituted a small team of three members, one member of the GB and two Senior Managers from the staff of SAHELI to make the SP.

A workshop of all staff members of SAHELI along with the representatives of the Governing Body was then conducted on the 22nd and 23rd of June 2025 to start the process of making the SP. The SWOT analysis of SAHELI was done by the staff members and from that the strategic directions were derived. The result of this workshop has been included in the chapter of analysis of internal environment. A detailed scanning of external environment was done by wading through authentic and standard secondary sources. The results of that exercise have been furnished in the chapter on analysing external environment. Major facts brought out by the staff workshop, SWOT analysis, and scanning of external environment were brought together in identifying strategic priorities and strategic direction.

Sd/-
Shaju V. Joseph,
Treasurer

Executive Summary

The birth of the first SP document of SAHELI took place in a critical juncture in the journey of SAHELI since 2004 when more projects and along with that more villages and communities were added to SAHELI. Similarly, more donor-partners shook hands with SAHELI. The idea for drawing SP first came to the thinking of the leadership team when SAHELI started implementing multiple projects in the year 2024 because the need for better coordination and driving all project to a common end was felt. But the first practical step towards drawing SP happened when the meeting of the annual General Body of SAHELI gave assent to the idea of developing strategic plan for the forth coming five years (2025-26 to 2029-30). That meeting authorized the President to constitute a team drawing members from the Governing Body and staff members to draft the SP under the supervision of the President.

The committee constituted as per the above decision of the General Body, started brainstorming and one-to-one discussions among themselves and with the President. As a result, a clear road- map was made by the end of July 2024. Along with that after scrutiny, a suitable template along with steps for developing SP was selected. The first visible and concrete action towards drafting SP was the workshop for two days in August 2024 in which the entire staff members irrespective of functional areas assigned to them and the representatives of the Governing Body were actively participated.

After due consultation with individuals and relevant documents the scanning of internal environment (SAHELI) and external environment was done. This exercise used standard methods such as SWOT, document scanning, problem analysis, PESTLE etc. The findings from these exercises have been included in the SP as two separate chapters. Interactions with the selected representatives of the primary as well as the secondary stakeholders were also held to gather their views on SAHELI and their expectations of SAHELI for future. The data thus generated were reviewed against the history of SAHELI and the same were analysed within the standard framework for SP.

The process of drawing the SP identified the following strategic areas for SAHELI to focus on in the coming five years: freedom of women and girls from violence; education, skill building and knowledge; labour and financial inclusion of women and girls; and organizational development of SAHELI. These strategic or result areas or domains were analysed with data from various sources and the SP identified the following strategic directions that are applicable to all the above strategic areas: community strengthening, invoking community responses, engaging secondary stakeholders, agency building of women and girls, capacity enhancement of partner communities and SAHELI, optimizing opportunities for partner communities, dissemination learning from impact assessment, optimum utilization of social media, advocacy and lobbying, networking and alliances, working with governments and working with other agencies. The SP has identified three strategic approaches such as non-discrimination, gender inclusion and be integrated to guide the above strategic directions.

The final version of the SP is a product of collective thinking, joint action exercises, brainstorming and analysis by the members of the Governing Body, staff members, secondary stakeholders, and partner communities. Hope, the SP will be an effective instrument in guiding the operations of SAHELI during the forthcoming five years and detailed operational plans will be developed for each year keeping the strategic areas, strategic directions, and strategic approaches spelt out in this SP.

1. INTRODUCTION

(a) Origin and Brief History

SAHELI is a women-led, not-for-profit organization (NPO), currently working in the districts of Mayurbhanj and Balasore of Odisha, India. Ms. Dalia Antony, immediately after completing her post graduate studies in Social Work (M.S.W.) and got inspired by the values of social work, started community insertion activities in Mayurbhanj district, Odisha from 2002 onwards. It commenced with facilitating the formation of Self-help Groups (SHGs) on social capital mode among the most vulnerable women residing in the remotest villages of Mayurbhanj district. These women belonged mostly to Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes – STs), Dalits (Scheduled Castes – SCs), and backward castes (Other Backward Castes – OBCs). SHGs had not till then been reached these women and so had been other government programmes. There were, then, no civil society organizations (CSOs) including NGOs existing in the area chosen by Ms. Dalia for her activities. The leaders of SHGs in many meetings suggested the need for a CSO, fully owned and managed by women to address the sufferings of women, adolescent girls and other children. The result of such discussion was the founding of SAHELI with 11 women (founding members) in 2004. **Thus, SAHELI became the first CSO fully owned, managed, and led by women to address the problems experienced by women in Mayurbhanj district.** The situation in which SAHELI was founded is diagrammatically presented below.

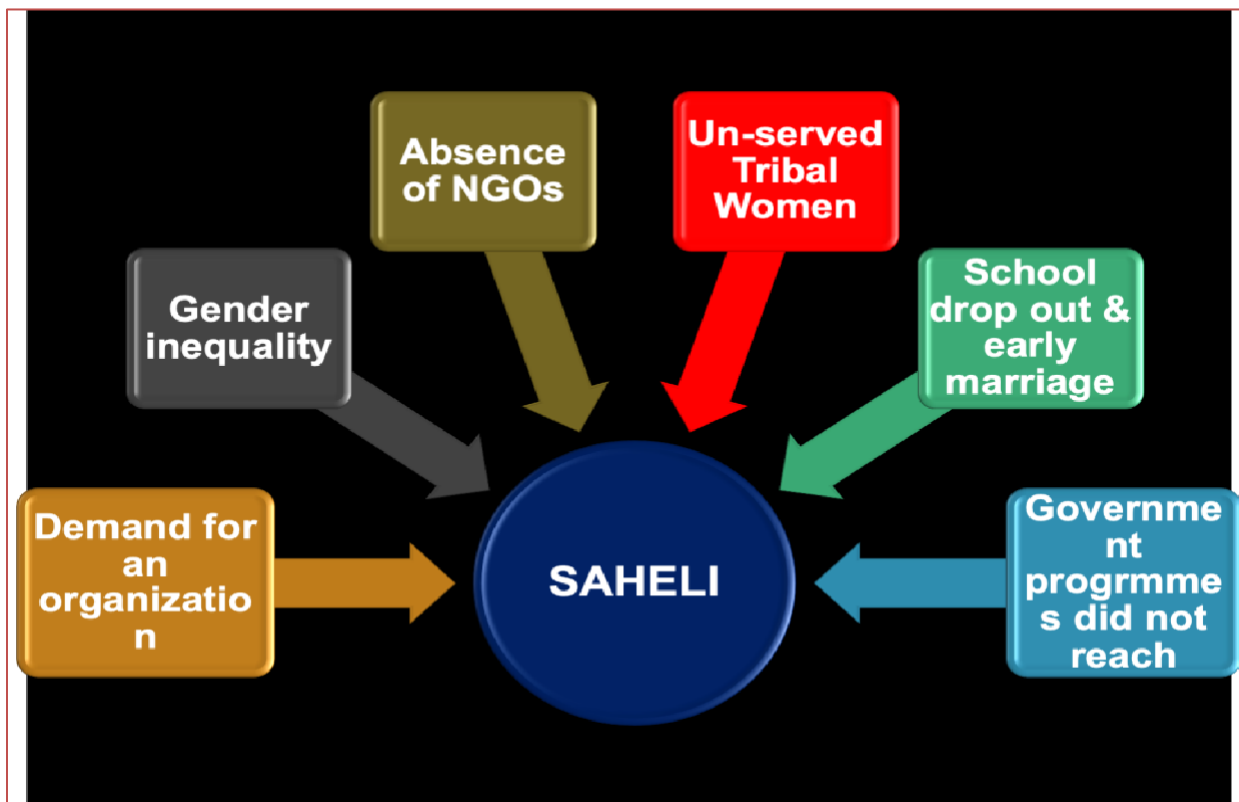


Fig – 1: Situation in which SAHEL was Founded

SAHELI became a registered charity in 2008 when it secured the certificate of registration on 09/01/2008 from the office of the Inspector General of Registration (IGR) for Odisha under the provisions of the Societies' Registration Act, 1860. Subsequently, SAHELI was registered in 2011 with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Government of India, under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010. The registration of SAHELI with the MHA has been remaining alive till date. The organisation has secured tax exemption under the sections 12A and 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act, 1961. SAHELI got registered with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) in 2025 making it eligible to receive grants from corporate bodies under the corporate social responsibility (CSR). Other mandatory requirements such as registrations for professional tax, payment of tax deducted at source (TDS) and so on for a registered charity in India are complied with by SAHELI. Thus, it is in the process of improving its statutory compliance status. A Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) by name the LAMP was floated in 2025 by SAHELI as an off-shoot of its activities and as a separate legal entity as well as autonomous body that got incorporated under the Indian Companies Act, 2013.

SAHELI is currently implementing project activities in partnership with MISEREOR, Germany; MANOS UNIDAS, Spain; and Azim Premji Foundation (APF), Bangalore, India. Besides, it is partnering with the Dhvani Foundation, the CPA Pvt. Ltd., and the Karl Kubel Institute of Development Education (KKID) for improving its organisational performance. SAHELI conducts regular on-line as well as off-line programmes for enhancing the capacities of its staff members. It holds special sessions with the members of the Governing Body for updating them the current as well as the emerging trends in the non-profit sector. These are efforts of SAHELI for improving the overall efficiency of its performance indicating that SAHELI is growing by learning.

(b) Trajectory of SAHELI

The diagram furnished below depicts the path of ideological and operational growth of SAHELI from 2004 till 2025.

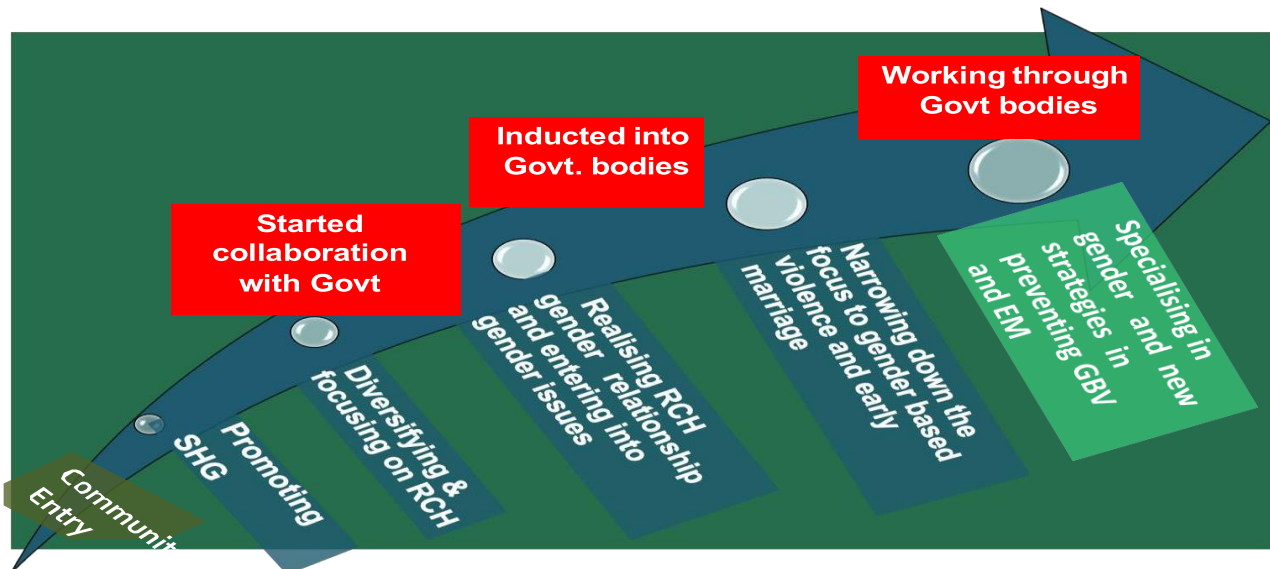


Fig-2 Trajectory of SAHELI

(c) Overview of growth over years

Currently, SAHELI operates in two districts of Odisha. There recorded in 2024 a growth in the number of projects and hence the area of operation. It rose from two CD Blocks in 2004 to 11 CD Blocks in 2025. Along with that the number of villages increased from 54 to 295 during the same period of time. The presentation below depicts the present coverage of target area.

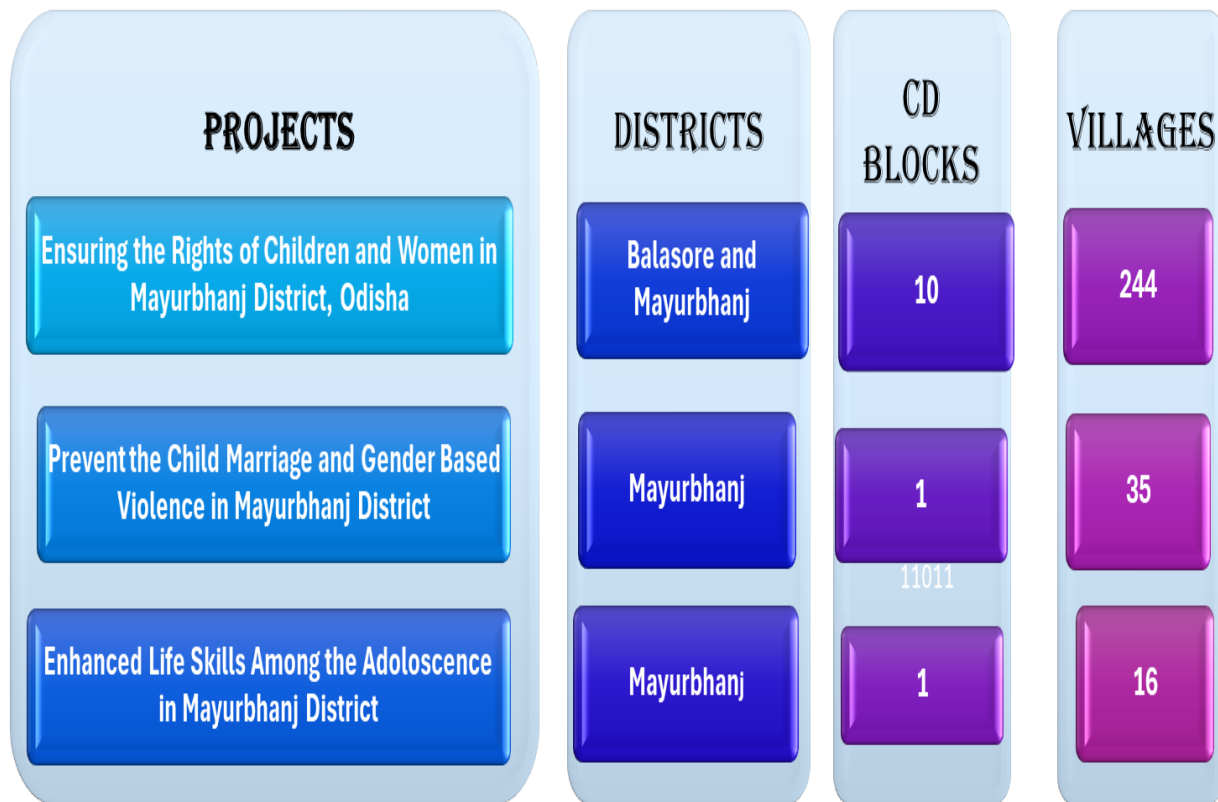


Fig – 3 Area of Operation of SAHELI

Besides, SAHELI is in partnership with Dhvani Foundation Bangalore and CPA Private Limited, Delhi for projects for organizational development as well as staff capacity building. These two projects are based in Basta with frequent visits to other locations. Hence, these are not included in the area of operation of SAHELI.

(d) Growth of Field Projects

SAHELI started with one project and later in 2008 it had two project and these two donor partners, viz., MANOS UNIDAS and MISEREOR continue with SAHELI in 2025. Azim Premji Foundation (APF) started supporting SAHELI from 2024 onward only. Thus, SAHELI is currently implementing three projects. SAHELI was fortunate to receive grant support from a few other donor organisations.

The details of all projects received by SAHELI are given below.

SL. NO	DONOR PARTNER	PERIOD OF PARTNERSHIP	PROJECTS
1	MANOS UNIDAS, Spain	2004 – 2014; 2024-2025	4
2	MISEREOR, Germany	2006 – 2027	7
3	CN Hilton Foundation	2007-2008	1
4	Global Fund for Women	2014- 2015	1
5	Friends of Children of Odisha	2014 – 2015	1
6	SPKF, Holland	2018- 2019	1
7	AZIM PREMJI FOUNATION	2024 – 2027	1
	Total	2004-2025	16

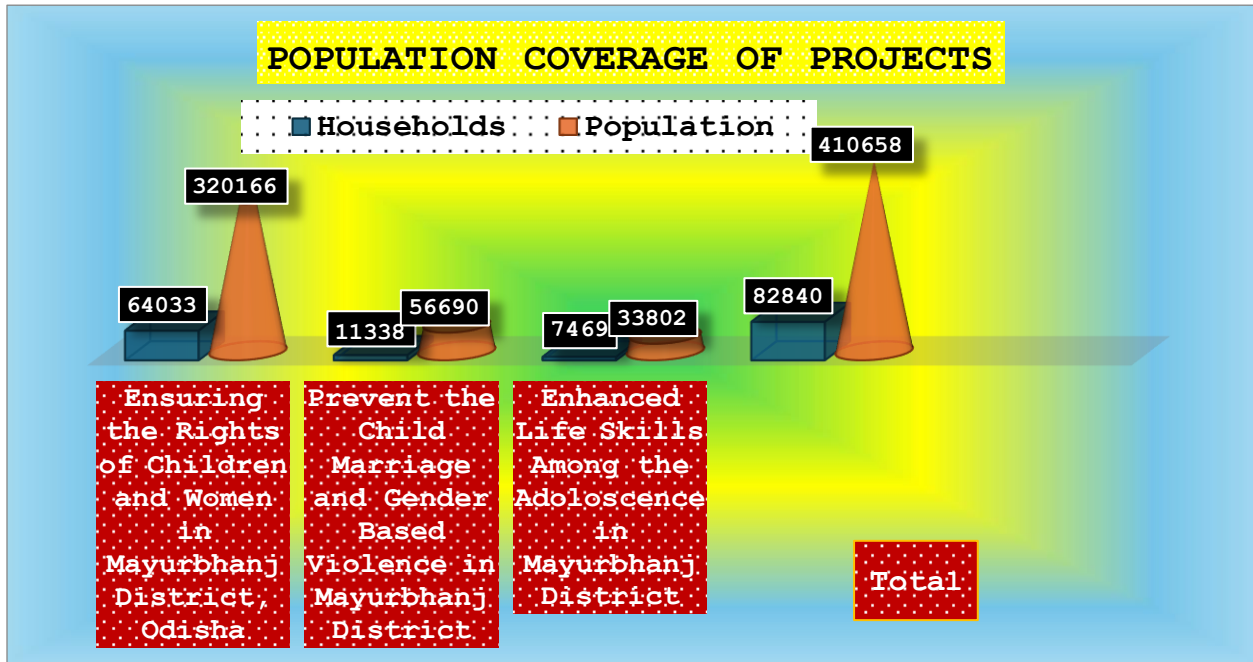
(e) Population under Coverage

The population reached by SAHELI through three projects under implementation during 2024-2025 is as shown below.

Sl. No.	Project Title	Households	Population
1	Ensuring the Rights of Children and Women in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha	64033	320166
2	Prevent the Child Marriage and Gender Based Violence in Mayurbhanj District	11338	56690
3	Enhanced Life Skills Among the Adolescence in Mayurbhanj District	7469	33802
	Total	82840	410658

There has been considerable growth in the extent of population reached out by SAHELI. The population covered increased in proportion to the enhanced area of coverage.

The growth in population under coverage of SAHELI is presented below.



SAHELI has, all these years, been supported by overseas donor – partners- The pie-chart presented below shows the share of different overseas donor-partners.

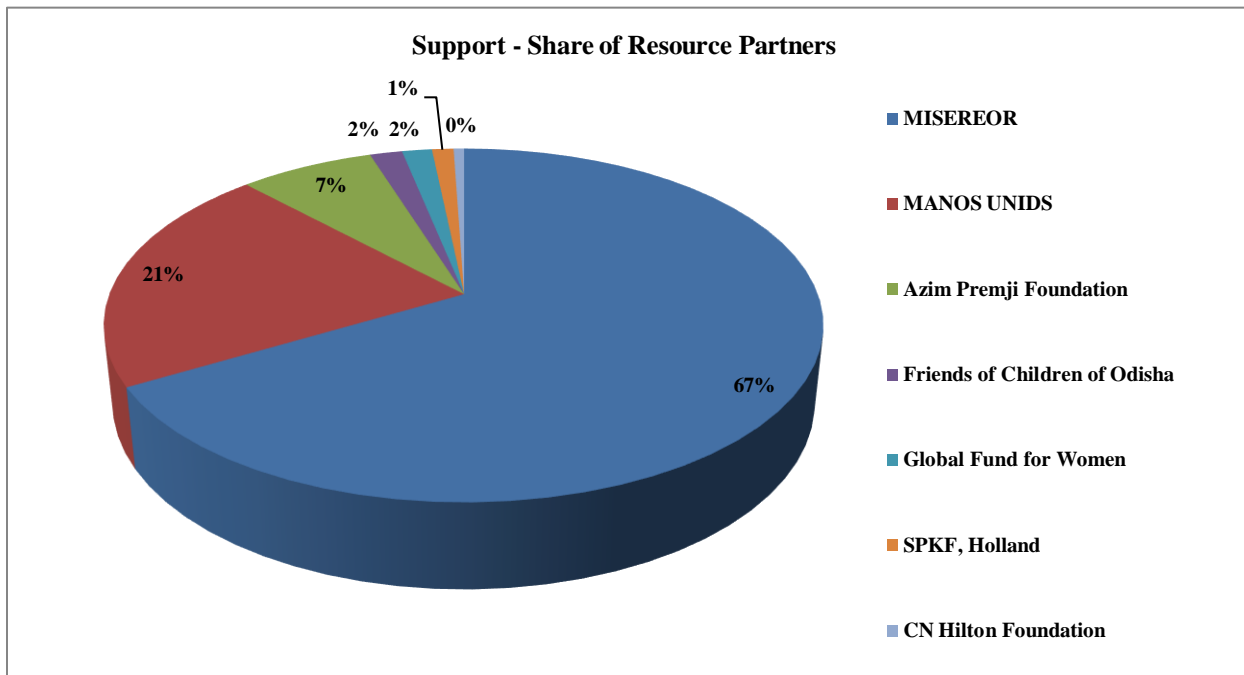


Fig- 4- Sharing the Donor partners

2. CONTEXT IN WHICH SAHELI WORKS – ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

a. Philosophical mooring of SAHELI

Human Rights constitute the philosophical mooring of SAHELI and it can be described as a human rights organisation. The vision of the organization is “**a society where dignity of women belonging to all sections of population, especially those belonging to vulnerable sections, respected and women gain equal opportunities in all frontiers of life**” and it works with a “**mission to empower all sections of society through appropriate institutions and processes and place such institutions in operational collaborative relations with governments and other stakeholders for integrated development with equal dignity for women as the focal point**”. It endeavors to promote dignified womanhood and to protect the rights of women and girls in its area of operation. The rest of the elements that describe SAHELI have emerged from this foundation.

Goal

Gender empowerment is the goal of SAHELI

Objectives

SAHELI endeavors to promote dignified womanhood and to protect the rights of women and girls in its area of operation. The specific objectives of the organisation in this regard are to:

- (i) Ensured life and good health of women and girls;
- (ii) Women and girls with enhanced education, skill building, and knowledge;
- (iii) More labour and financial inclusion of women and girls;
- (iv) Women and girls with capacity to participate in decision making; and
- (v) Women and girls freed from violence including child marriage

Values

While striving to achieve the above objectives, SAHELI upholds the value **RESPECT** for women. RESPECT stands for: Responsiveness, Equity, Self-reliance, Participation, Ethical operations, Competency, and Transparency.

Mandate

SAHELI is mandated to work for dignified womanhood

Motto

SAHELI – Women for Women

b. *Profile of SAHELI*

1. **Structure**

Governance Structure

The General Body is the ultimate authority of SAHELI. A Governing Body identified from among the General Body is vested with the authority of managing the affairs of SAHELI for and on behalf of the General Body. The Governing Body selects the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) designated as the Director of SAHELI. The Director is responsible for the day-to-day business of SAHELI in consultation with the Governing Body.

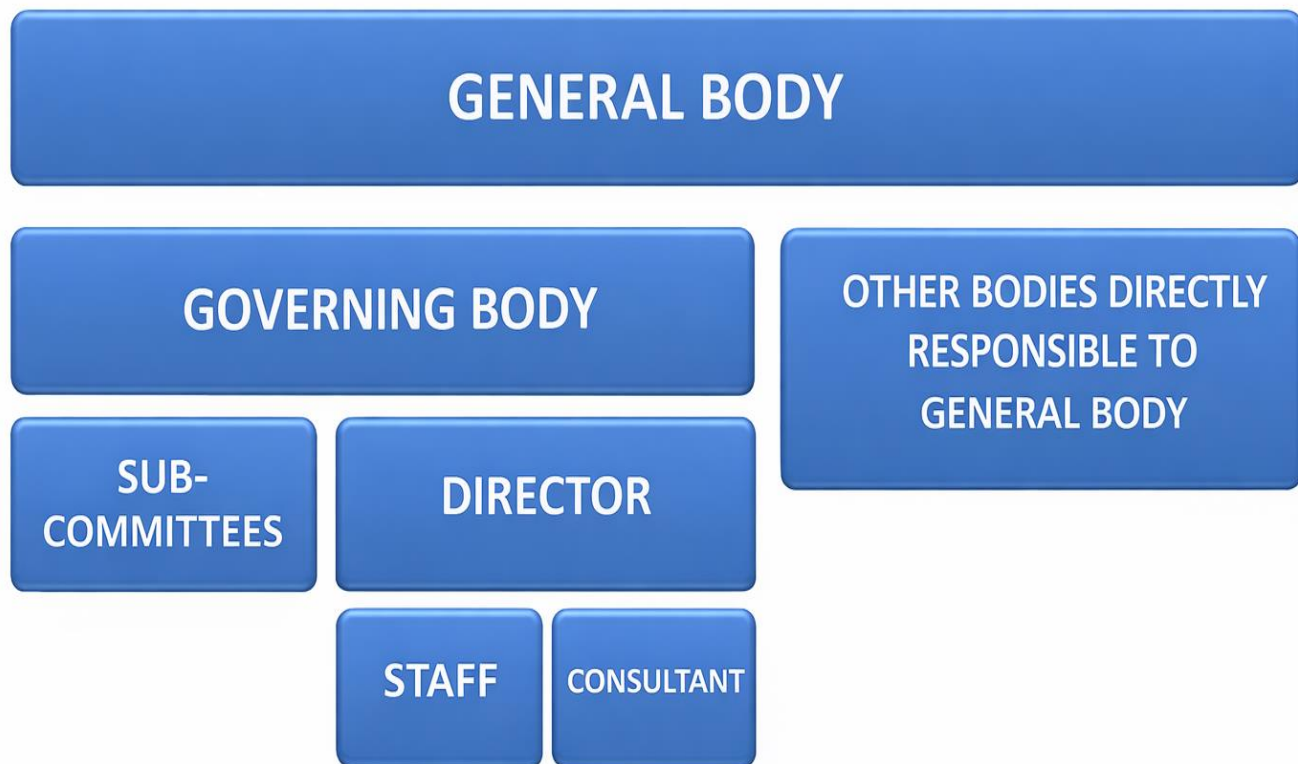


Fig – 5 Organogram – governance

There are different sub-committees accountable to different layers of governance, viz., General Body, Governing Body, and CEO (Director). This arrangement is for smooth going of governance. Governance is guided by the rule of the country, adhering to bylaws of SAHELI and adapting existing precedence. SAHELI envisages a flexible governance system.

Operational Structure

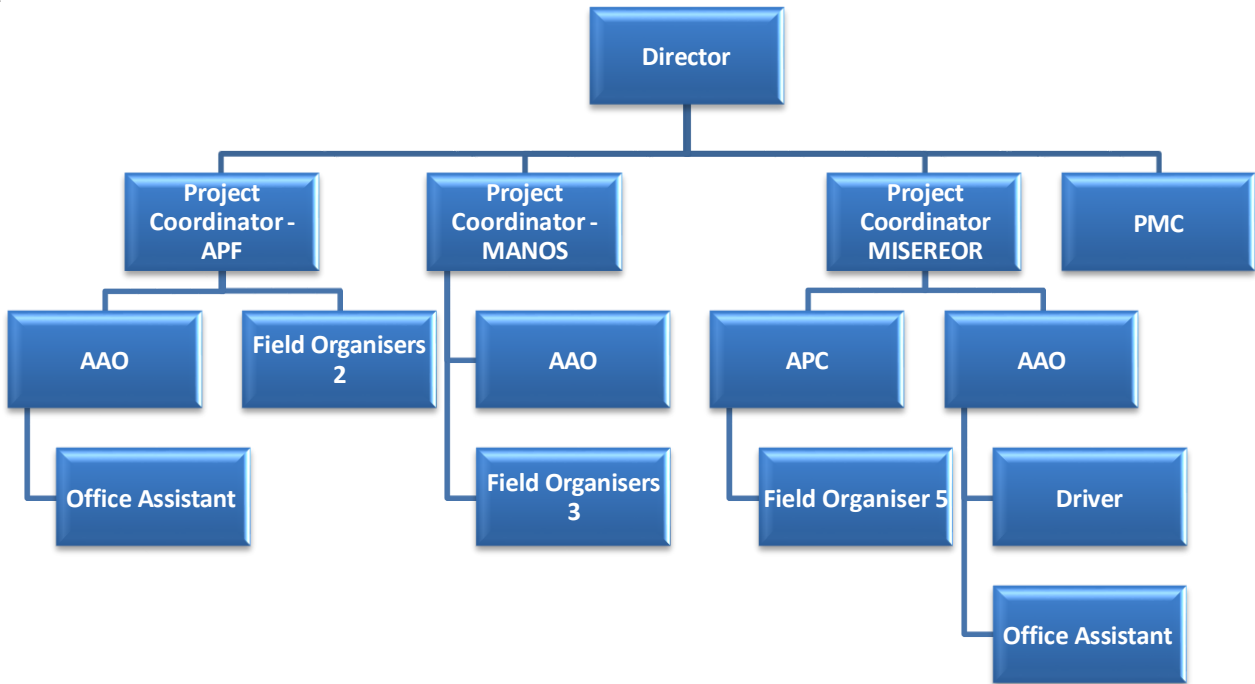


Fig – 6 Operational Structure of SAHELI

1. Policies

SAHELI has designed policies for Child Protection, Prevention of Sexual Harassment in work place, Conflict of Interest and Governance. It has manuals for human resource management and finance management. These policies and manuals are being rolled out into practice. These documents provide strength to the two structures discussed above.

2. Processes

Processes activate structures and policies. Based on the policies and manuals, SAHELI has devised well defined process for governance and operations. The bylaws and the governance policy provide guidance in the processes for governance. Manuals guide in formulating processes for operations, recruitment, staff maintenance, finance management, project management etc.

3. Staff diversity considering gender diversity

SAHELI has taken two decisions on the staff structure. Maximum number of staff persons has to be from its area of operation and more than 50 per cent of staff members has to be from young women. These two conditions are honored with due consideration for merit (educational qualifications and experience). SAHELI always see to that the staff structure is less hierarchical with two to three levels only. It always insists on non-hierarchical performance pattern. All staff members belong to two thematic categories, viz., operations and technical support. SAHELI is

committed to enhancing capacities of staff and provides opportunities for staff members for enhancing their capacities based on the report of performance appraisals.

4. Partnerships

SAHELI expects different categories of partnerships to continue its operation, strengthening efficiency and making its results more effective. Resource Partners constitute the lifeline of the operations of SAHELI. This category of partnerships started with MANOS UNIDAS (Spain) which after a break continue to partner with SAHELI. Then SAHELI developed partnership with MISEREOR which concludes in 2027. The last in this list is Azim Premji Foundation that started in 2024. From 2004 for to 2019 another five resource partners, viz., Friends of Children of Odisha, Global Fund for Women, SPKF, and CN Hilton Foundation extended their support to SAHELI. Capacity building partners help to enhance the quality of performance. They will vary from time to time depending on the emerging needs. Partnering with alliances and networks will help to strengthen the results generated by SAHELI. It prefers to become alliances for protecting child rights, rights of women, working to enhance inclusion in education, and working for sustainable livelihoods.

5. Turning Points or Milestones



6. Capacities

SAHELI has capacities to implement multi-donor, multi-location and multi-year projects. It has all operational facilities and capacitated staff. It has established and sustains collaborative relations with secondary stakeholders. Partnering communities have complete trust in SAHELI.

7. SWOT Analysis

SAHELI conducted a participatory analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in a workshop. The workshop was attended by all members of staff without difference in designation and members of the Governing Body. Complete report of SWOT analysis along with the SWOT matrix is given as annexure. The results of SWOT analysis helped SAHELI to develop the present document on strategic plan.

a. Criticality of SP in our trajectory

This is the right time for drawing strategic plan for SAHELI because it is making a leap upward. SAHELI experienced a lot of challenges at this juncture. Therefore, SP will help SAHELI to streamline its operations by identifying priority strategic areas or result areas, strategic directions to move forward and strategic approaches.

The initiative started with a discussion in the meeting of the Governing Body on 21/06/2025. The GB gave consent to develop strategic plan and entrusted the President to do the needful to develop strategic plan. The President constituted a sub-committee consisting of the Treasurer and two senior managers to take the necessary measures to develop the document. An online discussion about the contents of SP document and the process of drawing it was held.

A workshop with all staff members and members of the GB followed. The editorial team followed up the workshop findings in virtual platform in which shared suggestions of a few members of secondary stakeholders (BDO, CDPO, DCPO, Supervisors of ICDS) AWW, Sarpanches, school authorities including teachers, BEO and PEO); and partnering communities (members of VLCPCs, local community and political leaders, representatives of various CBGs and public opinion makers) on the working of SAHELI. These were added to the findings of the workshop on SP. Thus, the draft SP document was made. During this workshop the existing identity particulars (vision, mission, values, goal, and objectives) were critically reviewed against the new situation and it was decided to retain the same in the new SP document.

b. Assessment of Programme of SAHELI

SAHELI reached at the present programme area of gender with a focus on defending the rights of women and girls in an evolutionary manner. This was much before the Government of Odisha came forward with the Strategic Action Plan to stop child marriages and reduce violence against women in 2019. Till date SAHELI has been able to generate two significant outcomes in the above thematic area. These are: (1) total or complete stopping of planned or arranged (by parents) and public child marriages, though child marriages in clandestine and associated with elopement

continue; and (2) considerable reduction in episodes of GBV along with a wide disapproval of GBV from a situation of taking GBV for granted. These outcomes vindicate the relevance of the thematic areas of intervention and appropriateness of strategy of SAHELI.

Following the SAP, that the Government of Odisha introduced in 2019, many positive measures to strictly enforce the provisions of the SAP were promulgated by the Government of Odisha. These measures helped SAHELI to move ahead with activities that have been endorsed by the Government of Odisha. The case of child protection committees envisaged by the SAP at different levels is an example. The Village Vigilance Committees (VVCs) that SAHELI had promoted in 2018 were converted in 2020 into Village Level Child Protection Committees (VCLPCs) by it to align with the provisions in the SAP. Being representative of civil society organisations (CSOs) in district and block level child protection committees, SAHELI was able to strengthen VLCPCs which were functional in namesake only. SAHELI took this pioneering work considering the fact that platforms for resolving child marriage and gender-based violence must be closer to the locations of such instances and such platforms must be activated with a cross section of community as well as local political leadership along with frontline functionaries of government departments. Another reason for SAHELI adopting this step is the proved experience that the instances of child marriage and gender-based violence can be well addressed and resolved by dialogues involving communities.

The Government of Odisha expanded the team of child marriage prohibition officers and more functionaries including teaching community were made responsible to prevent child marriage and GBV. Engagement of the Gender CRP under the Mission Shakthi is another example of the political will of the Government of Odisha. The efforts of SAHELI to work with schools and school children that had started much earlier to the SAP got official endorsement consequent to the new measures. But the most important players to stop child marriage and GBV are the community themselves. Efforts of SAHELI have been more in this direction. The role of a civil society organization, as envisaged by SAHELI, is to function as a bridge between the right holders (communities) and the duty bearers (government and political functionaries). SAHELI was able to discharge this role effectively as well as efficiently as the results of the interventions of SAHELI clearly indicate.

Thus, the current area of programme of SAHELI is relevant and the significance of the same is shared by the communities and the State. The strategy of SAHELI of bridging the right holders after empowering them and the duty bearers after sensitizing them worked well indicated by the results of various interventions of SAHELI. A conducive socio-political environment to continue the journey of SAHELI to protect the rights of women and children with thrust on adolescent girl has been made available. SAHELI has a team of efficient and dedicated staff members. They have proven expertise in addressing any instance of violation of rights of women and children. **Therefore, the Governing Body of SAHELI took a decision to continue its operations in the thematic areas in which it has been engaging itself for another five years and follow the time-tested strategic approaches for the same period with modifications in response to the unfolding external scenario.**

3. CONTEXT IN WHICH SAHELI WORKS – SCANNING OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

SAHELI is now operating in the entire Mayurbhanj districts and in the two CD Blocks in Balasore district that are adjoining with Mayurbhanj district.

National Scenario

India stood in the 139th position among 193 countries in Human Development Index (HDI) as per the Human Development (HDR) report for 2025 published by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). This report states that the HDI value for India in 2023 was 0.685. This value was 0.675 in 2022. There was an increase of 0.010 points in this value within a period of one year. Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in India for 2025 is 24.98, a 3.18 per cent decline from 2024. The Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) dropped significantly from 130 to 93 per 100000 live births. These are better indicators portraying the overall progress made by India.

But gender inequality still persists in India. Though gender inequality is a global phenomenon, it is more rampant in the Global South than in the Global North. India occupied 131st rank among 148 countries covered in the analysis of the Global Gender Gap (GGG) published by the World Economic Forum (WEF). India has a Global Gender parity (GGP) score of 64 per cent. Significant disparities remain in economic participation, health, and political empowerment. Women earn only one-third of what men earn. Women face problems like disproportionate sex ratios at birth, and declining representation in politics. Gender parity has been reached in educational attainment upto 10th standard, with near parity in literacy, but comprehensive gender equality in education reflected in gross enrolment ratio (GER), is still a major challenge. Other problems include low female labor force participation rate (LFPR), a substantial gap in economic contribution, the continued prevalence of son preference leading to sex-selective practices, and challenges in ensuring safety and equal representation of women in various sectors. Gender being a socio-cultural construct the gender inequality in India is a reflection of its cultural situation.

Indian society is under the spell of hierarchical order based on variables like caste and tribes. This primordial identity continues to determine the future prospects of an Indian. Added to that is the cross-cutting division of society based on religion. Consequently, India has a fragmented civil society and a united action from the civil society to emerge as a corrective force in relation to the State actions becomes difficult in India. This contributes to bureaucratic apathy that plagues all sectors of governance and administration impacting at varying rates the lives of the entire population. It also poses serious operational challenges to civil society organisations (CSO) in their operations.

India is a sovereign democratic republic following multi-party parliamentary democracy. There are regular elections to governments at the national and state levels. The governance is decentralized under three-tier local government system with Gram Panchayat in the lowest rung, Block Panchayat in the middle rung at the sub-district level and District Panchayat at district level. One third (33 per cent) of the seats in these local government bodies have been reserved for women and the same percentage of the heads of these local governments have been reserved for women. Women do get elected to these positions. But the husbands of the elected women representatives and heads of local bodies run the show. Even signatures on official papers are fixed by these husbands on many instances on behalf of the elected women. The male domination (patriarchy)

is so strong that it could dilute a well-intended legislation to give women their due share in governance. The country is governed by a powerful constitution and a strong legal framework based on this constitution. This legal framework provides transparent and supportive provisions to all domains of civic life. There are strong and stringent rules to protect the rights of women, children, Dalits, Adivasis, backward castes, and other vulnerable section of the society who primarily constitute the partnering communities of SAHELI. These strong legal provisions embody the political will of the State and the same political will is followed by the government of Odisha. And this gives hope for CSOs like SAHELI for operations.

Indian economy is a developing with notable presence of public sector in strategic sectors. Recently the proportion of growth in three sectors of economy became balanced with the long strides made by the service sector. It is the fourth-largest economy of the world by nominal gross domestic product (GDP) and the third-largest one by purchasing power parity (PPP) on a per capita income basis. However, the benefits of these advancements do not trickle down to the poor. India has reduced the rate of poverty on per capita income basis. But there still exists islands of poverty in India. The analysis of poverty in India using parameters of multi-dimensional poverty index (MPI) offers a very clear picture of real situation of poverty in India. The members of the target communities of SAHELI belong to these islands of poverty and majority of them are landless agriculture labourers. Future growth in the primary sector (agriculture) will help the target communities to improve their economic status.

India is a leading power in the sectors of science and technology showing excellent performance in information communication technology (ITC). The increased application of ITC, even in public administration, is enhancing the digital literacy of the general community. However, this growth is a skewed one and it adversely affects the digital illiterate sections of population. Digital literacy has become another variable in the prevailing socio-economic hierarchy and creating a new divide and further weakening the poor. Technology has become a double-edged sword because on the one hand it made public administration easier as well as more transparent and on the other hand it kept away the 'digital poor' from accessing services and entitlements. Thanks to the revolutionary progress made by IT based communication, more persons, both adults and adolescents, are drawn to social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, X, Snapchat, Reddit, Threads, Twitch, and Kickit). The adolescents in the age group of 9 to 17 years in India spend on an average three hours per day in social media platforms and lives a life of "Lotos Eaters" (if we adopt the term of Lord Alfred Tennyson and William Somerset Maugham) far away from reality and closer to fantasy. This can be attributed to the increased incidence of child marriages following elopements in the target areas of SAHELI.

The environment has two dimensions, viz., physical and socio-cultural. Climate change is the severest form of challenge to the physical environment. It negatively impacts India through extreme weather (floods, droughts, heatwaves), threatening agriculture, water security (glacier melt, erratic monsoons), coastal areas (sea-level rise), health (disease, heat stress), and the economy, potentially causing massive GDP losses, disproportionately affecting the poor and vulnerable populations reliant on climate-sensitive sectors like farming and fishing. The impact of socio-cultural environment narrated in the above paragraphs added to the impact of physical environment stated in the present paragraph make the lives of the poor in India miserable.

Odisha Scenario

Odisha is one of the most backward states in India. Its backwardness is reflected in all important indicators of development. The Human Development Index (HDI) for Odisha was 0.610 in 2022, placing it at a "Medium" level and ranking 33rd among the states and Union Territories in India. This value signifies a significant improvement, with HDI value for Odisha increasing from 0.310 in 1992-93 to 0.614 in 2021-22, reflecting progress in its health, education, and income dimensions.

The Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in Odisha was 61 per 1,000 live births in 2010 and 36 per 1,000 live births in 2020, showing a decline but still remaining high compared to many other states in India. Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in Odisha has significantly declined from 367 in 1998 to 119 per 100,000 live births in 2018-20. This represented a 49-point decrease and the second-highest decline in India during that period, though still above the national average. While progress is being made with interventions like institutional deliveries and digital health initiatives, challenges remain, including access to healthcare in remote areas and the need to meet the Sustainable Development Goal of an MMR below 70 by 2030.

The target area has a heavy concentration of the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST). They constitute nearly 70 per cent of the population in the target area¹. More than 50 per cent of the population belongs to two prominent tribal communities, viz. Santhal and Orao². There is a small percentage of Muslims and a smaller percentage (marginal) of Christians. Deep-rooted patriarchal structures in rural and agrarian societies, including communities like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, often discourage participation of women in activities outside the home. Gender stereotypes contribute to gender-based prejudices and influence the access to resources and opportunities by women. The practice of caste or ethnicity linked discrimination also still prevails in spite of very stringent statutory measures to curb it.

Gender inequality in Odisha is evident in the significant wage gap, where women earn substantially less than men, and a low female labor force participation rate compared to that of men. Other issues include limited land ownership by women, challenges in accessing financial services and mobile phone ownership for women, and minimal decision-making power for women in agriculture. Their involvement in key agricultural decisions, such as marketing and overall farming operations, remains minimal, although they play a significant role in the entire cultivation process.

Patriarchal structures, gender-based prejudices, stereotypes, and a lack of formal economic opportunities contribute to these disparities. Odisha has the lowest female-to-male wage ratio in India, with women earning only 59 per cent of what men earn. The female labor force participation rate is 53.5 per cent, while that of men is significantly higher at 86 per cent. Only a small percentage of land (4.06%) in Odisha is operated by women, which significantly impacts their agency and decision-making power, particularly in agricultural sectors. Women in Odisha face challenges in accessing formal banking and credit, hindering their financial independence. Disparities in educational attainment have emerged, particularly among marginalized communities in urban areas, such as the displaced Adivasi population.

¹ Census, 2011

² These were the original inhabitants of the region and had their own religion and cul

Target Area Scenario

The target area scenario is very much similar to those of India and Odisha. By and large the situation of the target area is worse than that in India and Odisha. The literacy rate of the target population is very low. Tribal men had literacy rate of 68.93 per cent, tribal women had 49.35 per cent literacy and all tribal population had 58.96 per cent literacy rate in Mayurbhanj in 2011³.

The situation of women and their health is poorer in Mayurbhanj district than that in other districts of Odisha. The latest source of information on the situation of women in Mayurbhanj district is the report on the fifth round of the National Family Health Survey (NFHS – V) held in 2021. As per this report, the percentage of female population aged six years and above who ever attended schools was 63.00 in 2021; women with education for ten years and above was 25.1 per cent; and the percentage of children of five years who attended pre-primary schools was 10.1 per cent. The percentage of women aged 20 – 24 years who were married before their getting 18 years was 31.3; and that of women aged 15 –19 years and who were mothers and pregnant in 2021 was 17.2. But in rural areas this was higher and in tribal areas it was much higher and almost double. Only 30.1 per cent of the population of the district has access to the sub-centre (the lowest institution for health care provisioning under the government) and only 3.2 per cent access health care services from the Primary Health Centre (PHC). The worst part of this situation is the disposition of communities as well as government officers that the gender inequality is a normal situation and hence, the apathy to respond to gender inequality.

The households having access to electricity was 90.3 per cent, with improved drinking water sources was 80.4 per cent, improved sanitation facility was 54.4 per cent and with clean fuel for cooking was 16.1 per cent.⁴ The condition of roads and highways is poor in the target area. The area has a network of roads with longer stretch of kuccha road (mud road) than pucca (black top) road.

SAHELI operates in the external environment presented in the above paragraphs. The fact of SAHELI taking sides with the poor and the most vulnerable sections among them with whom it partners is the fundamental value position in identifying its strategic areas or strategically priority areas of operations for the coming five years in this strategic plan document.

³The Census 2011

⁴NFHS V

4. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES (RESULT HEADS) OF SAHELI

After having done the analysis of internal environment along with SWOT analysis of SAHELI and scanning of external environment, four important strategic areas or result areas or result heads have been identified. These strategic areas were identified after considering the contribution of these areas to the empowerment of women and girls. The document ⁵ from which these areas were adapted provides five domains of gender empowerment. SAHELI, after considering the importance and operational feasibility, selected three cardinal ones from among those five domains.

These were customized to fit for the purpose of this document. Strategic priorities with activities and expected outputs are presented below.

1. Freedom of Women and Girls from Violence

1.1. Description

Child marriage is the worst form of violence against women (VAW) and this is violation of basic right of a child to growth and development. VAW including child marriage still persists in Odisha and India as well. The pace of controlling VAW in Odisha is very slow owing to multiple factors. While controlling child marriage has shown minor progress, other forms of VAW showed minor increase in the recent years in Odisha (Report of the 5th round of NFHS). This situation poses very serious challenge to gender equality and gender empowerment. SAHELI has for the last 15 years been addressing this challenge and it was successful in controlling child marriage and VAW to a great extent. Banking upon the achievements and keeping the learning of SAHELI, it has been decided to upscale this activity because the achievement of freedom from violence for women and girls is the foundation on which the edifice of empowerment of women and girls is built up and without that gender empowerment is simply impossible.

Freedom from violence for women and girls is a necessary prerequisite for the emergence of women and girls as an agency⁶ for their empowerment⁷. The real empowerment will take place if the dis-empowered groups emerge as agency for leading the process of empowerment. The convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women has recognized violence against women and girls as a direct expression of unequal power relation and domination of men. Its widespread and pervasive nature quite often perpetuates gender inequalities in households, schools, work places and society as a whole. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has included elimination of violence against women and girls as a target in SDG 5.

Violence against women and girls, mostly in the form of intimate partner violence (IPV), has been included as a woman specific indicator in Women Empowerment Indicators (WEI) with a view to capture information on that because there is no reliable data on this prior to 2015. The recent rounds of National Family Health Survey (NFHS) do capture this information. It has an indicator

⁵ UN Women and UNDP, The Paths to Equal Twin indicators on women's empowerment and gender equality

⁶ The term agency refers to a person's autonomous control over his or her actions — but also much more than this, including a sense of what individuals can accomplish them- selves and responsibility or ownership over one's actions.

⁷ WHO, UN Women and UNODC, DP, Respect Women Preventing violence against women

to capture information on the number of ever married women and girls in the age group of 15 to 24 years who experienced violence. It is hard to collect information on this because the veil of the culture of silence is very strong. A recent study has shown that less than 40 per cent of women experienced violence only resort to seek support of any sort and less than 10 per cent of such women only reported their experience of violence to the police.

Because, as already mentioned in the beginning of this section, it is crucial to gather information on this aspect and control VAW for empowering women and girls, SAHELI has resolved to work on this strategic area in the coming five years with the specific **objective of enhancing freedom of women and girls from violence including child marriages**. The following will be the major activities for this.

1.2. Activities

- (a) Disseminate the different aspects of the current situation of women and girls among the primary and the secondary stakeholders. It is proposed to organize different types of seminars at different levels; application of various social media techniques and platforms; conducting street theatres with customized messages; and holding campaigns and competitions.
- (b) Assess the operations of risk and protective factors working in the fields and other locations to devise actions to control the risk situation. This will be possible by gathering the field information and pumping back the learning into activities
- (c) Implementing strategies - strengthened relationship skills of women and girls, comprehensive empowerment of women and girls, ensuring the access to services, contribute to reduce poverty, make environment safe for women and girls, prevent abuse of women and girls/children, and transform attitudes, beliefs, and norms- to prevent violence against women and girls. These will be incorporated into the actions undertaken to prevent child marriage and reduce VAW (GBV)
- (d) Invoking organized community responses against gender inequality focusing on child marriage and violence against women (GBV)
- (e) Soliciting and securing collaboration of government functionaries and PRI leaders to ensure gender equality
- (f) Assess evidence for interventions in reviews and community discussions
- (g) Strengthening enabling environment in public facilities and service provision centres through discussions with authorities and advocacy measures for prevention.
- (h) Instituting physical as well as virtual centres for family counseling to intervene in the instances of marital discord in the beginning and follow up. This arrangement will prevent marital discord getting flared up.
- (i) Develop vibrant MIS system for monitoring and accurate documentation arrangements for keeping the progress in organizational archives.

1.3. Expected Outputs

- Widely disseminated information on the deplorable condition of women and girls
- Enhanced understanding of SAHELI of risk and protective factors (again to pump back into activities at the time of re-planning)
- Reduced instances of violence against women

- Reduced instances of child marriage
- Built up evidence on freedom from violence in the form of videos, case studies, and short studies
- Vibrant MIS in place and up-running

2. Education, Skill Building and Knowledge

2.1. Description

Education and skill building are primary human right. These are intrinsically important as means for expanding capabilities of women and adolescent girls as well. These provide opportunities to women and adolescent girls to gain knowledge, use senses, imagine, think and reason. Education and skill building are key social and cultural right. Hence, these can contribute to lower the rates of poverty, child marriage, and early pregnancy, further empowering girls and women.

There has been progress towards gender parity in educational achievement. However, this progress is manifested in classes from 1 to 10 only. There is evident disparity in the rates of passing in class 10 and bigger disparity in general enrolment ratio (GER)⁸ in Odisha. The GER for all communities in higher education (in the age group of 17 to 23 years) in Odisha showed an increase from 18.4 per cent to 20.1 per cent during five years from 2016 – 17 to 2020-2021. This growth for the Scheduled Castes was from 16.8 per cent to 20.00 per cent and for the Scheduled Tribes it was from 10.9 per cent to 13.5 per cent for the same period. These data show that higher education (post-higher secondary) in India and Odisha is poor in general and that there exists disparity in accessing higher education among socially vulnerable communities like SCs and STs. This disparity is more in the case of STs⁹.

Women empowerment indicators (WEI) and Global Gender Parity Indicators (GGPI) consider this disparity as important. The population above 25 years who have completed secondary education or higher is an inclusion indicator for women empowerment. It is significant because women and girls having this level of education will get opportunities to access skills for future employment. This is related to targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) too. SAHELII realizes that women and girls can reach this strategic priority area through various means. General education though is an important door way to reach there, other specialized skill training and on job training will also enhance skill and knowledge.

Therefore, SAHELII proposes to implement the following important activities in this strategic priority area with the **specific objectives of more representation of girls in higher (post-higher secondary education) and increased employability of women.**

2.2. Activities

- (a) Disseminate the different aspects of education and its significance for women and adolescent girls in the context of gender empowerment along with hurdles in accessing education among the primary and the secondary stakeholders. It is proposed to organize different types of seminars at different levels; application of various social media techniques and platforms; conducting street theatres with customized messages; holding discussions with school authorities and conducting life skill sessions for school children; and holding campaigns and competitions.
- (b) Following up the above activities, SAHELI shall associate with education systems through the competent offices to ensure access to schooling – facilitating admissions, timely availing scholarships from all possible sources for all eligible students belonging to different sections of social group etc.
- (c) Activating adolescent girls' groups (AGG) and banking upon peer pressure endeavour to retain adolescent girls in education. The activities of AGGs will be designed in such a manner to generate interest in education that can be monitored by means of online interventions.
- (d) Bring back drop outs to education by motivating children and parents and extending the necessary encouragements.
- (e) Develop life skills by organizing specialized training for school children and following up the same by selected and orientated peer leaders with the support of school teachers
- (f) Promote and nurture leadership among adolescent girls to equip them to emerge as agency in intervening in the instances of disempowerment. The central (now, here block level) leadership team will be capacitated by training, orientation and taking part in direct actions and it is expected to lead such intervention in future paving way to sustainability.
- (g) Foraying into establishing physical as well as virtual well-equipped centres to support in all actions for promoting education from admission to securing suitable employment or assignment
- (h) Imparting and/or getting women and girls to gain new or additional skills that will help them to secure employments in future.
- (i) Build up data base of all activities of SAHELI for promoting education and employment
- (j) to furnish appropriate guidance.

Institute vibrant and computerized MIS to track the progress made by each individual and

⁸ A general or Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) is the total number of students enrolled in a specific level of education, regardless of their age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population for that level in a given year. It serves as a broad measure of a country's educational system's capacity and general level of participation in education

⁹ Reports of All India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) for the years from 2017 to 2022

2.3. *Expected Outputs*

- Established linkages with educational system
- Increased rate of admissions
- Supported students to access scholarships from various sources
- Imparted life skill training
- Career and educational guidance imparted
- Assisted to link up with skilling opportunities for future employment
- Enhanced GER at post-secondary levels
- Enhanced school retention rates
- Reduced dropout rates
- Enhanced employability of the dropouts
- Built up data base for regular follow up and tracking progress

3. **Labour and financial inclusion**

3.1. *Description*

This is an area of very important strategic significance in the empowerment of women and girls. Women who directly and alone perform household or domestic work will get lesser opportunity for engaging themselves in paid work. The percentage of women working and getting paid in cash was less than 30 per cent in Odisha as per the report of the 5th round of NFHS (2019 – 2021). This figure refers to the casual workers only. But official estimate of Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) of Odisha was 46.23 per cent in 2022 and this was against the country average of 49.25 per cent. This was an increase by 12.8 percentage points compared to the labour participation rate of 2019 when it was 33.43. The COVID 19 pandemic has been identified as the driving force for this reported increase. The latest document in this regard is the annual report of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2023 – 2034. But this document is silent on the LFPR for Odisha. The rate of female LFPR rate for Odisha for 2022 – 2023 was 44.7 per cent against national average of 41.7 per cent. This is very low in deed.

Nearly 60 per cent of women labour in rural Odisha is engaged in agriculture sector. This indicates that the vast majority of women labour in rural Odisha does not have skills other than that of physical manual labour in their possession. There is a link between unequal division of labour within the household and unequal access to labour force. There is urgent requirement to introduce new skills and to enhance the female LFPR for rural Odisha as well as to enhance the participation women labour in areas other than agriculture.

The LFPR by gender throws light into the division of labour between men and women in a household – women will assume either voluntarily or under the influence of social norms the responsibility of un-paid, domestic or household work leaving bread winning work to men. This arrangement has to go. Attention must be first given for change in young families, comprising couple of prime working age adult (25 to 54 years) and a child upto six years of age considering the ease of changing gender norms. This type of intervention will help to enhance female LFPR.

Another important indicator in this regard is the women controlling own earnings in variety of ways including possessing and managing own bank accounts. Holding own bank account will apart from storing own income safely, helps women to access other financial services. When women start controlling own earnings and contribute to household expenses, their bargaining power within household will increase resulting tilt in gender equations within household in their favour.

Considering the role played by labour participation and economic empowerment in the overall empowerment of women and girls, SAHELI decided to work in this strategic area with the objective of strengthened collective(s) of women cultivators and with the following major activities

3.2. Activities

- (a) Formation of collective(s) of cultivators as the platform to disseminate advanced information, guidance and so on; and the forum for implementing activities in this result area. Get these collectives enrolled in various schemes and programmes for promoting agriculture and allied operations
- (b) Encourage agricultural operations of landless women cultivators on lease land – paddy, millets and other crops suited for the soil and climate.
- (c) Promoting seasonal cultivations and allied feasible activities to enhance family income – pisci-culture, apiary etc.
- (d) Linking up both the landed and the landless women cultivators with other services for social security
- (e) Promote value addition to agricultural produces – start with training, organizing such activities, and supporting in marketing
- (f) Introduce labour saving arrangements (mechanized and/or semi-mechanised devices, and implement) in agriculture operations and arrange to make such arrangements available to members of the collectives of cultivators at subsidized rates
- (g) Setting up facilities to store non-perishable agriculture produces to sell these when the market becomes favourable and extend support in marketing perishable agricultural produces.
- (h) Establish strategic partnership with the LAMP a women – led FPO in the area of operation of SAHELI and emerged as an off – shoot of one of its project activity
- (i) Focus on building up additional skills not only among women cultivators, but also among the other members in their families for ensuring increase in LFPR
- (j) Introduce non-farm activities for additional income
- (k) Supporting to own and manage bank accounts for financial inclusion and strengthening the bargaining power of women cultivators in their own households.
- (l) Establish more sensitive MIS and documentation system for tracking changes and progress of achievements.

3.3. Expected Outputs

- Vibrant collective(s) of women cultivators
- Brought more land under cultivation
- Increased yield (productivity) per acre of land under cultivation
- Ensured stable family income for women cultivators from agriculture
- Storing facility for agricultural produces in place

- Cultivator friendly markets emerged
- Increased number of women cultivators accessing social security schemes
- More landless women cultivators with new skills for making value added agricultural products
- Ensured additional income to the families of landless women cultivators
- Increased female LFPR in the area of operation of SAHELI

4. Organisational Development

4.1. Description

Organisational development is another strategic priority area for SAHELI. It includes the capacity enhancement of partnering communities, the entire staff force and the organisation per se, its structures, systems and processes. In the absence of organizational development, SAHELI will not be able to meaningfully intervene in the other strategic areas. Though it may look like a transverse or cross-cutting result area, it has been taken as a key strategically important result area by SAHELI. Therefore, SAHELI proposes to work in this strategic area with the objective of making SAHELI a vibrant CSO in Odisha. The following activities have been proposed to realise this objective.

4.2. Activities

- (a) Holding workshops, training and discussions with the members of the GB, and the representatives of partnering communities as well as external stake holders with a view to strengthening the governance structure and processes
- (b) Organise orientation of staff both separate and combined with the members of the GB and the representatives of partnering communities as well as external stakeholders for aligning staff members with organizational philosophy and strategies
- (c) Conduct exposure visits to the organizations reputed for their organizational practices and programme implementation systems
- (d) Ongoing engagement of stakeholders for programmatic and organizational discussions
- (e) Revamping governance systems and process of programme implementation using the latest tools of Information Technology for Communication (ITC)
- (f) Initiate actions to enhance visibility of SAELI – social media product on non-programmatic aspects of SAHELI, presence in both the print and electronic mainstream media
- (g) Making efforts to develop both programmatic and organizational (non-programmatic) collaboration and partnership

4.3. Expected Outputs

- Governance structure made vibrant
- Increased responsibility of the Governing Body
- Staff aligned with organizational thought process
- Better or efficient functioning project management system
- SAHELI reach out to more public
- Increased number of collaborators

4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE

Strategic direction refers to the foundational ideas or actions that allow for greater consistency in strategy over time. It ultimately helps an organisation to achieve its vision and helps it fulfill the goals of its organizational strategy or strategic plan. When an organization has a strategic direction, it helps determine its objectives and its plans to accomplish the strategic plan. It also helps in mobilizing the required resources, and helps identifying how an organization needs to operate in order to find success. Keeping these general ideas in view, SHELI has identified the following strategic directions to reach at the strategically priority result areas described in above paragraphs. These strategic directions are not result area or strategic area specific and these cut across all strategic priority areas.

1. Community Strengthening

This is the most important strategic direction for SAHELI for the coming five years. The motto of SAHELI is women for women. Women need strengthening to reach the stage of becoming a group for themselves. Along with achieving that end, others in the partnering communities will also be strengthened to intervene in support to women and adolescent girls at appropriate junctures.

2. Invoking Community Responses

Closely related and complementing to the above strategic direction is invoking community responses to the instances of blockades and barriers in the path to gender empowerment. These responses are expected to route through various channels like community-based groups, community-based organizations, federations of adolescent girls' group, and institutionalised and semi-official forum like child protection committees operating at different levels. This strategic direction helps SAHELI to propel and move forward.

3. Engaging Secondary Stakeholders

Secondary stake holder in the context of this document refers to an individual, group, or entity that is indirectly affected by the actions or decisions of an organization, and can also influence the operations, reputation, or success of an organisation, though they are not essential for the survival of the organisation. A few among them will be key stakeholders¹⁰ such as the Child Development Project Officer (CDPO), Block Development Officer (BDO), Block Education Officer (BEO), District Child Protection Officer (DCPO), Sarpanches, school authorities, local public opinion

¹⁰ A **key stakeholder** refers to any stakeholder that presents higher potential risk or reward and is more critical to the success of the work of SAHELI. They may come either from primary or secondary stakeholder groups. Key stakeholders often include regulators, government officials, and policymakers. But it may also include influential organizations (such as media groups), leaders within the local community, influential people within organizations, individuals that control your sources of funding, and any activists or advocates that others are likely to listen to. These stakeholders will require closer management, frequent monitoring, and/or higher levels of engagement.

makers and so on in the context of empowering women and adolescent girls such. Regular engagement with them provides feedbacks, suggestions, opportunities and precautions. These pieces of information will help the organisation to improve its performance. Engagement with secondary stakeholders will not be periodicity linked or event linked. It will be a regular and an ongoing exercise.

4. Capacity Enhancing of Partner Communities and SAHELI

The clientele of capacity enhancement will be representatives or leaders of partnering communities, staff members and the GB to bring all of them into a common level of understanding and preparedness for action. Such a team will enhance the capacity of SAHELI to act quickly as well as unitedly.

5. Agency Building

Though this is essential for the central leadership of AGG federations, it will equally applicable to other community groups as well. The selected persons from the relevant community will be imparted with more information skills. They will be initiated into direct actions which will be supported by SAHELI. When the agency become strengthened, they will be entrusted with the responsibility of carrying on with the activities, leading way to sustainability.

6. Optimising Opportunities Available for Organisation and Partnering Communities

All the activities proposed in the strategic plan will be designed and implemented in such a manner to optimize cash as well as non-cash opportunities for SAHELI and its partnering communities. The results of successful application of this strategic direction will be sustainability.

7. Dissemination of Learning from Impact Assessment

SAELI is a learning organisation. Hence, the learning gained from concurrent impact assessment will be shared online and off line with all stakeholders to gather feedback to get reconfirmed of learning by SAHELI. This will provide new ideas to improve the performance of SAHELI.

8. Optimum Utilisation of Social Media Space

Social media have emerged as very powerful and influential platforms now. SAHELI will make optimum use of all social media platforms, face book, WhatsApp groups, You Tube, Instagram etc. This will be useful in enhancing the visibility and attracting followers for SAHELI. A network of such followers will be useful in building virtual support and feedback system.

9. Advocacy and Lobbying

Advocacy and lobbying with persons and offices in power and authority is an important strategic direction. SAHELI can effectively engage in district level advocacy and lobbying based on its current strength. In future, it may be able to undertake state level advocacy and lobbying. Through these endeavours SAHELI can create more conducive external environment by effecting changes in rules, regulation, modes of implementation and even policies,

10. Networking and Alliance Building

Project oriented and generic networking and alliance building is important for building repute. This will provide enough opportunities for SAHELI to show case itself. SAHELI will be in look out for such opportunities and utilize the same for the advantages of SAHELI.

11. Working with Governments

SAHELI is committed to work with governments from national level to local levels, at Gram Panchayath level. This decision of SAHELI is based on the firm belief that the second natural heir of the results produced or generated by SAHELI is the government. Therefore, it is essential to work with government while creating or generating results and this will help the governments to own up the results along with the process of generating those results. This is an important strategy for ensuring sustainability.

12. Working with Other Agencies

On a similar line SAHELI will work with other organisations and agencies engaged in the empowerment of women and adolescent girls. The mode of working together will be decided after consider the context, and the nature of organistion to work with.

5. Strategic Approaches

1. Non-discriminatory Approach

The overall organizational value of SAHELI is RESPECT and practices a non-discriminatory approach to all irrespective of age, gender, caste, class, religion and physical ability. SAHELI has framed policies to protect all these sections of population. Being an organisation endeavoring to protect gender right, SAHELI has to protect rights of all persons for equal treatment.

2. Gender inclusive Approach

SAHELI analyse the internal and external environment in the perspective of gender empowerment. The overall approach to development for SAHELI is gender inclusive.

Very strong and ongoing gender analysis of the contemporary situation is the foundation from which this approach emerges.

3. Integrated Development

SAHELI stands for integrated development with a thrust on gender equality. The mission of SAHELI makes it clear. When some projects are specific sector based, SAHELI upholds integrated approach to them also. SAHELI proposes to keep this approach going by mobilizing additional resources to complement sector-based projects. The belief that integrated development alone can lead to holistic and sustainable development is the reason for adopting this approach.

6. LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Overseas Donor Dependency

The diagram on share of resource partners in the hitherto support to SAHELI depicts that only seven per cent of the support is from Indian philanthropic organisation. The rest was from overseas resource partners. Major overseas resource partners are either fully withdrawing from India or restricting their areas to work or supporting in a reduced scale.

a. Increasingly Shrinking Funds

The recent political changes in the North have led to shrinking budget for international cooperation. The European countries and the US have made drastic cut in grant making.

b. Need for funding core organizational activities

Previously, overseas donors rarely supported core organizational activities. Now, in the emerging contest of increasingly shrinking overseas grant portfolio, it is becoming all the more difficult to fetch such funding.

c. Fund Raising

In the context discussed above, fund raising has become a big challenge. There is urgent need to identify new sources of funding. It will be unwise to expand the search for overseas resource partners. Indian government, especially three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions have huge amount of funds. There needs to have special skills and aggressive lobbying at different levels it fetch the funds from PRIs. Indian business is another important source for funds. The CSR is of course a channel of fund raising. However, there is a need to lobby with the government to amend rules governing the CSR more NGO friendly. SAHELI is seriously considering to change its fundraising mechanism.

d. Practicing Economy in Operation

This is another possible means to address scarcity of funding. SAHELI shall revise its project management practices to ensure maximum economy.

7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The appropriateness of the time of developing the SP is important. It was in the juncture of SAHELI entering into two decades of its existence referring to the fact that it came out of infancy and associated infantile disorders; the time of a big leap in the expansion of area of operations and population coverage along with enhanced partnership base; making its relationships with other CSOs, partly owing to the association with Dhvani Foundation as per the reference given by the Azim Premji Foundation (APF); and in the near total alignment of the strategies of SAHELI with the provisions of the governments. This overall scenario offers possibilities for a successful implementation of the SP. But still there are challenges well-articulated in this document. SAHELI commits to harness the opportunities prevailing in the external environment and to mitigate or overcome the challenges upholding the principle of converting stumbling blocks to stepping stones. It is believed that the SP will be the major guiding document in the future journey of SAHELI.

REPORT ON SWOT ANALYSIS OF SAHELI

1. Introduction

The Society for Agriculture Health Environment Literacy Innovations (SAHELI) is a women-led not-for-profit non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha. Founded in 2004 by Ms. Dalia Antony, SAHELI was registered as a charity in 2008 under the Charitable Societies Registration Act, 1860. Subsequently, it secured registration with the Ministry of Home Affairs to receive foreign funds in 2011 under the Foreign Contributions (Regulations) Act, 1976. Afterwards, it gained the relevant exemption under the Indian Income Tax Act and obtained full compliance with statutory provisions. The SAHELI is now implementing three field projects and one project for organizational development (OD).

The SAHELI has a vision of “a society where dignity of women belonging to all sections of population, especially those belonging to vulnerable sections, respected and women gain equal opportunities in all frontiers of life” and it follows the mission of “empowering all sections of society through appropriate institutions and processes and place such institutions in operational collaborative relations with governments and other stakeholders for integrated development with equal dignity for women as the focal point”

2. Context

The SAHELI has completed 21 years of its existence and has been implementing multiple projects for more than a year. The implementation of the project for OD is progressing well.

The organization is preparing for its diversification and expansion. In this context, it was decided to hold the exercise for developing strategic plan for the period of 2025 – 2030. A SWOT analysis was undertaken as the first step of this exercise.

3. SWOT Description

A SWOT analysis is a planning tool used to understand key factors - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats - involved in a project or in an organisation. It involves stating the objective of the organisation or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are either supportive or unfavourable to achieving that objective. SWOT is often used as part of a strategic or planning process, but can be applied to help understand an organisation or a situation, and also for decision-making for many different scenarios. SWOT analysis is commonly used by businesses, but also by [nonprofit organizations](#) and, to a lesser degree, individuals for personal assessment. SWOT is also used to assess initiatives, products or projects. For example, a chief information officer could use SWOT to help [create a strategic business planning template](#) or perform a competitive analysis.

The value of SWOT lies mainly in the fact that it offers self-assessment for management. The methodology has the advantage of being used as both a quick tool or a comprehensive management tool. This flexibility is one of the factors that have contributed to its success. The primary goal of a SWOT analysis is to increase awareness of the factors that go into making an organisational

decision or establishing an organisational strategy. To do this, SWOT analyzes the internal and external environment and the factors that can affect the viability of a decision.

The process increases the possibility of identifying internal and external strengths and weaknesses, and can be used to determine how closely an organization or project is aligned with its goals. Since its creation, SWOT analysis has become a valuable tool for organizations.

However, while the elements can appear deceptively simple and easy to apply, experience shows that to do a SWOT analysis that's both effective and meaningful, requires time and a significant resource. Deciding what the strengths and weaknesses of an organisation are, as well as assessing the impact and probability of opportunities and threats, is far more complex than first appears. It requires a team effort and cannot be done effectively by just one person. Further, the inherent risk of making incorrect assumptions when assessing the SWOT elements can cause senior management to procrastinate when deciding between various strategic alternatives, frequently resulting in undesirable delays.

SWOT analysis is most often used at the start of, or as part of, the [strategic planning](#) process. It can also be performed periodically to check current business landscapes and industry trends. The analysis is more effective when used before a key decision-making moment, however. Ideally, this should help to develop business strategies and improve operations while also helping to set more realistic goals.

3.1. Elements of SWOT

A SWOT matrix, as given below, is often used to organize the items identified under the four elements, viz., strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The matrix is usually a square divided into four quadrants, with each quadrant representing one of the specific elements. The participants of this exercise identify and list specific strengths in the first quadrant, weaknesses in the next, opportunities and then threats.

INTERNAL FACTORS	
Strengths	Weaknesses
EXTERNAL FACTORS	
Opportunities	Threats

This matrix help to record factors related to the internal situation of the organization and the environment external to the organization. Analysing these factors, it is expected, will provide an objective picture of the situation of the organization at the time of this analysis which will help the management to take appropriate strategy of plan for the future of the organization.

As its name states, SWOT analysis examines four elements:

- **Strengths.** Internal attributes and resources that support a successful outcome, such as a diverse product line, loyal customers or strong customer service.

- **Weaknesses.** Internal factors and resources that make success more difficult to attain, such as a weak brand, excessive debt, or inadequate staffing or training.
- **Opportunities.** External factors that the organization can capitalize on or take advantage of, such as favorable export tariffs, tax incentives or new enabling technologies.
- **Threats.** External factors that could jeopardize the entity's success, such as increasing competition, weakening demand or an uncertain supply chain.

3.2. Uses of SWOT

SWOT analysis should be used to help an entity gain insight into its current and future position in the domain of its operation and against a stated goal.

Organizations or individuals using this analysis can see competitive advantages, positive prospects, and existing and potential problems. With that information, they can develop business or project plans or personal or organizational goals to capitalize on positives and address deficiencies.

Once SWOT factors are identified, decision-makers can assess whether an initiative, project or product is worth pursuing and what is needed to make it successful. As such, the analysis aims to help an organization match its resources to the competitive environment.

SWOT analysis can be used to assess and consider a range of goals and [action plans](#), such as the following:

- Creating and developing business products or services.
- Making hiring, improving, promotion or other human resources decisions.
- Evaluating and improving project delivery service opportunities and performance.
- Setting organizational strategies to improve programme performance - efficiency, sustainability, visibility etc.
- Making investments in technologies, geographical locations or markets.

SWOT analysis might sometimes be overlooked, but it is a very useful tool. SWOT analysis is also similar to PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) analysis, which helps organizations analyze external factors that affect their operations and competitiveness.

3.3. Importance of SWOT Analysis

The SWOT framework is considered a powerful support for decision-making because it enables an organization to uncover opportunities for success that were previously unarticulated. It also highlights threats before they become overly burdensome.

Overall, SWOT helps to enable better strategic planning processes. It can be used to challenge assumptions and potentially risky business decisions. It encourages an organization to systematically evaluate its own strengths, weaknesses, potential opportunities and even possible threats, leading to a clearer perspective on the position of the organization..

Even if an organization has realistic insights into its business internally, it still might not understand external issues, like increased competition or fluctuating demand. In this way, SWOT analysis helps keep an organization grounded in reality.

Conducting a SWOT analysis can, for example, identify a niche where an organization has a competitive advantage. It can also help individuals plot a career path that maximizes their strengths and alert them to threats that could thwart success.

This type of analysis is most effective when it's used to pragmatically recognize and include programme issues and concerns. Consequently, SWOT often involves a diverse cross-functional team capable of sharing thoughts and ideas freely. The most effective teams use actual experiences and data -- such as revenue or cost figures -- to build the SWOT analysis.

4. Process of SWOT Analysis

The workshop for conducting this exercise was held on 23/06-2025 in the office of the SAHELI. The participants consisted of --- members of the field staff and two representatives of the Governing Body of SAHELI and one among them facilitated the workshop. The context was first shared with the participants. The objective of the exercise was also shared with the meeting. The purpose of the exercise was stated as one of the steps involved in developing strategic plan. The report on SWOT analysis will contribute to the parts or sections of “internal scanning” and “external analysis”. The results of this exercise will be strengthened with data from other sources for including in strategic plan.

Having clarified the objectives of the exercise, the facilitator introduced the matrix of SWOT and explained each quadrant. After this the participants divided themselves into three groups. Thereafter, the facilitator explained the element strength. It refers the factors internal to the organization and which can be considered as potential for the future prospects. These can pertain to the organization, staff, leadership, reputation, credibility etc. Each item must be specific, simple to understand and clear. The participants were requested to work in three groups and note down there ideas on a chart paper. The three groups then made a presentation after a discussion in the plenary those outputs were kept aside for the next step of the exercise.

The same process was repeated for weaknesses defined as those factors internal to the organization which adversely affect the expected or possible or better performance of the organization. These can as in the case of strengths, pertain to the organization, staff, leadership, reputation, credibility etc. Each item must be specific, simple to understand and clear. The participants were requested to work in three groups and note down their ideas on a chart paper. The three groups then made a presentation after a discussion in the plenary those outputs were kept aside for the next step of the exercise.

Then the team looked at the external environment starting with opportunities. The facilitator explained the idea of opportunities as the external factors which would help the organization to enhance its performance. Social, economic, and political situation prevailing in the area of operation, policies and mechanisms of the state (government), response of the wider community, existing statutory arrangements, potentiality for partnership or collaboration with the state and the

civil society organizations were cited as examples of opportunities. Each item, it was reiterated, must be specific, simple to understand and clear. The participants were requested to work in three groups and note down their ideas on a chart paper. The three groups then made a presentation after a discussion in the plenary those outputs were kept aside for the next step of the exercise.

The discussion on threats followed this. The facilitator explained threat as those factors external to the organization and which will adversely affect the future prospects of the organization. New government instructions, shrinking of external funding, apathy of a few members of secondary stakeholders, resistance of a section of primary stakeholders under the influence of social custom etc. were cited as examples. Each item must be specific, simple to understand and clear. The participants were requested to work in three groups and note down their ideas on a chart paper. The three groups then made a presentation after a discussion in the plenary those outputs were kept aside for the next step of the exercise.

After this primary exercise was completed the factors written by the three groups on each quadrant were examined one after another. This exercise was to check and correct the factors identified by the three groups. At first checked the wording and then assured if or not the particular item is specific and belonged to the same quadrant. This exercise was repeated for all quadrants and the final filled up matrix was made ready by the team.

5. Observations on the Process

The exercise was fully participatory. The discussions in the groups on each quadrant and same. A lot of enthusiasm and energy was present in the conference hall during the exercise. During the feedback session all participants expressed their satisfaction in bringing out a product with the consensus of all staff members. Apart from a few instances of repetition, overlaps and jumping quadrants, the exercise was without serious mistakes. Late one of the Project Coordinators volunteered to transcribe the results of the exercise. That final product after editing by the facilitator is presented below.

6. Final Product

	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT	Office Infrastructure: The organization has the essential, but bare minimum infrastructure (space, equipment and furniture) to support smooth functioning and program delivery at present.	Staff Turnover: Frequent staff changes disrupt program continuity and require repeated investment in recruitment, orientation and staff capacity enhancement.
	Mission and Vision-Driven Work: The mission of SAHELI to empower women and children and restore their dignity and rights serves as a guiding force for all staff. This clarity helps ensure that activities are aligned with the organization's values and the needs of the community, leading to impactful outcomes.	Unequal Experience Levels of Staff: Some staff members have limited experience in comparison with many among staff, which can impact the quality of community engagement and program delivery.

	<p>Understanding the pulse of the primary stakeholders: By recruiting local women and men from the target communities as staff, the organization ensures better field-level engagement and rapport with the members of the target communities, because these staff are already familiar with the community context.</p>	<p>Overburdened Staff: Due to limited manpower, individual staff often handles multiple responsibilities, affecting efficiency and well-being.</p>
	<p>Capacitated Staff: Staff members with enhanced capacity to properly internalize organizational objectives and to effectively delivery of program and services, consequent to proper training as well as field experience.</p>	<p>Absence of institutionalized Staff Motivation Systems: There exist no institutionalised incentive or reward system exists to boost staff performance and maintain motivation.</p>
	<p>Team Cohesion: There is strong unity and the spirit of team work among staff members, fostering a positive and productive work environment within the organisation.</p>	<p>Absence of arrangements for continuing Staff Capacity Building: There exists no ongoing training and learning opportunities to add to staff capabilities.</p>
	<p>Motivated and committed staff: The consistent support to and retention of the staff created a team of staff with motivation and long-term commitment.</p>	<p>Inadequate Documentation system: There exist no institutionalized system for data gathering, cleaning, analysing and raising proper documents on organization as well as programme activities to enhance the visibility of the organization.</p>
	<p>Community and Stakeholder Relationships: SAHELI has built trust and strong relationships with local communities and external stakeholders, which supports effective outreach and collaboration.</p>	<p>Weak IT performance: The organization has weak IT credentials causing difficulties in catching up with latest developments affecting data entry, reporting, and communication</p>
	<p>Positive Organizational Reputation: SAHELI has earned a good reputation which increases its credibility and visibility among communities and secondary stakeholders.</p>	<p>Inadequate Project Budgets: Financial limitations in project design often result in insufficient allocation for staffing, infrastructure, and logistical support.</p>
		<p>Dependence on External Funding: The organization is heavily reliant on donor-driven project funding, which affects its ability to plan</p>
EXT ERN AL ENV IRO NM ENT	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
	<p>Political Will: Endorsing SDGs, the Union and the State government showed its commitment to end child marriages and reduce GBV. This overall national positive environment will support the interventions of the projects by SAHELI</p>	<p>Natural Disasters: Floods, cyclones, and droughts severely impact community livelihoods and disrupt program</p>

<p>Favourable government decision: Following the political will a number of government measures have been adopted by the government of Odisha and in these the roles of civil society organisations are well defined and more frontline government functionaries have been assigned the responsibility of stopping child marriage and reducing GBV</p>	<p>Political Interference: Local political dynamics may obstruct outreach efforts or influence program decisions.</p>
<p>Need to Strengthen Statutory Bodies: There are many sub-district level child protection committees. Except CD Block level committees, all other bodies need to be strengthened.</p>	<p>Slow responses from bureaucracy: Change in officials, denial of support, or administrative delays can hinder timely implementation and weaken collaboration.</p>
<p>Government schemes for empowering adolescent girls: There exist many schemes for empowering adolescent girls and that can be properly rolled out by collaborating with the ICDS, the DCPU, Mission Shakthi, WCDD, education department, LSGD etc.</p>	<p>Youth Migration: Outmigration to cities leads to reduced youth engagement and weakens local participation.</p>
<p>Pressing Community Needs: The area of operation witnesses' large number of incidences of CM, GBV, school dropouts; and prevalence of health and nutritional complaint among all sections of population and among adolescent girls in special.</p>	<p>Dependence on of Communities Government Freebies: Community expectations for incentives can reduce genuine participation in awareness initiatives.</p>
<p>Absence of actively working CSOs: The area does not have other active CSOs fully dedicated to protecting the rights of women and children.</p>	<p>Religious and Cultural Resistance: Deep-rooted traditions and religious beliefs can create resistance to change, especially in issues like child marriage and gender equality.</p>
<p>Expansion of Media, especially social media: Rapid and widely growing social media facilities such as WhatsApp, YouTube, news channels, and social media platforms provides chances to create awareness and engage the community widely.</p>	<p>Gender Discrimination: Patriarchal norms often hinder women and girls' participation, causing resistance to gender-based programs.</p>
<p>Increased application of Digital Literacy: Opportunity to educate the community on the use of digital platforms, improving access to information and services.</p>	<p>Backlash Against Girls: Girls who speak up against social norms may face stigma, isolation, or backlash from family and community.</p>
<p>Community and Institutional Engagement: The presence of active</p>	<p>Protests and Opposition: Opposition to awareness activities or protests on</p>

	SHGs, youth clubs, and CBOs, and schools provides chances for community engagement supported by ANMs, ASHAs, teachers, and headmasters to strengthen community-based work.	unrelated issues can disrupt project execution
	Private Sector Partnerships: Scope to collaborate with businesses and CSR initiatives for funding, livelihoods, and additional support	Staff Safety Concerns: Field workers may face harassment, violence, or threats, especially in sensitive or conflict-prone areas.

7. Explanation

The final product clearly reflects the present situation of true organization. If it can utilizes the opportunities describe in the matrix of SWOT and control the threat factors, the strength of the organization will be consolidated. This situation would minimize the weaknesses the same would be converted to STRENGTH for the organization. This explanation leads to clear strategic directions for the future of SAHELI.

8. Conclusion

The exercise took a full day. All members of field staff irrespective of designation actively participated in this exercise. The final product presented above is fully owned up by the staff and the Governing Board of SAHELI. As stated above, this leads to the strategic plan of SAHELI for 2025 to 2030.