# Impact Assessment Report of Five Star

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS


Setting the Scene ..... 03

Integrated Free Education, Digital Learning & Infrastructure Strengthening Program ..... 13

Single School Teachers Program – Supplementary Education & Holistic Development Initiative ..... 38

Toilet-cum-Bathroom Construction ..... 66

Strengthening Affordable Healthcare through Advanced Diagnostic and Surgical Equipment Support ..... 84

Strengthening School Infrastructure for Quality Education ..... 106

Ramakrishna Mission Students Home – Residential Polytechnic Education & Holistic ..... 130

Stand Without Legs – Livelihood Support for Persons with Disabilities ..... 156

NIOS Open School for Children with Special Needs – Inclusive Education
& Functional Development Initiative ..... 185

Infrastructure Development for Paradise Home – Residential Care & Special Education ..... 206
Facility for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Integrated Education, Health, and Livelihood Support for Scheduled Irular Tribal Families ..... 231

# Abbreviations

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility
FY – Financial Year
NBFC– Non-Banking Financial Company
RBI – Reserve Bank of India
SDG – Sustainable Development Goal
OECD-DAC – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
REECIS – Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability
NGO / NGOs – Non-Governmental Organisation(s)
MOU / MOUs – Memorandum of Understanding
IDI – In-depth Interview
KII – Key Informant Interview
FGD / FGDs – Focus Group Discussion(s)
HH – Household
NIOS – National Institute of Open Schooling
CBSE – Central Board of Secondary Education
IT – Information Technology
IIT-JEE – Indian Institute of Technology – Joint Entrance Examination
NEET – National Eligibility cum Entrance Test
IAS – Indian Administrative Service
STS – Single Teacher School
STSP – Single Teacher School Program
SVRDS – Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society
SMC – School Management Committee
NEP – National Education Policy
DPDP Act – Digital Personal Data Protection Act

# Setting the Scene

## About this Report

The Impact Assessment Report, developed by Chrysalis Services, presents a contextualised evaluation of Five Star Business Finance Limited's CSR interventions during the FY 2024-25. Drawing from a mixed method approach including onsite field visits, stakeholder engagements and secondary data. The report categorises initiatives across the logical framework of inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts.

The assessment reflects Five Star Business Finance Limited's sustainability values with emphasis on inclusive development, social upliftment, and environmental stewardship. The field surveys and beneficiaries' interactions were carefully designed as the report aims to enhance the strategic orientation and long-term effectiveness of Five Star Business Finance Limited's future CSR Programs.

## About Five Star Group:

Five Star Business Finance Limited is a registered Non-Banking Finance Company (NBFC-ND-SI) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Despite the numerous advancements India has made over the past few decades and the significant progress achieved in the financial services sector, a large portion of the country's population remains unbanked or underbanked.

The organization strongly believes that being "unbanked" does not necessarily mean being "unbankable." In a country as large and diverse as India, significant effort is required to reach, understand, and provide appropriate and responsible credit services to this segment of the population. Over the last two decades, Five Star has emerged as a specialized financial services company focused on addressing the needs of this segment by extending credit to individuals often perceived as unfundable.

The businesses supported by the company are closely connected to everyday life and contribute meaningfully to the grassroots economy. Its customers include small shop owners, flower vendors, domestic workers, masons, and other small and medium-sized enterprises that form the backbone of India's economic ecosystem.

# Key Initiatives of Five Star Business Finance Limited:

Five Star's CSR portfolio focuses on improving access to quality education, healthcare, sanitation, and sustainable livelihoods for underserved and vulnerable communities, with a strong geographic concentration in Tamil Nadu.

## 1. Strengthening Access to Quality Education

Education forms the largest component of Five Star's CSR investments. The organisation has supported:

- Construction of classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and school infrastructure
- Provision of school equipment and learning resources
- Financial support for teachers in rural and single-teacher schools
- Scholarships for polytechnic education, including tuition, boarding, and lodging for economically disadvantaged students
- Establishment of schools for special children and tribal communities.

These interventions aim to build strong academic foundations, improve retention, and enable students from marginalised backgrounds, including tribal and economically weaker sections, to access future employment opportunities.

## 2. Inclusive Education for Vulnerable and Special Groups

Five Star has supported dedicated infrastructure and learning facilities for:

- Special children through NIOS-based education centres
- Residential and institutional facilities
- Tribal communities such as the Irular population

The initiatives promote inclusive education, holistic development, and long-term social inclusion.

## 3. Healthcare Access for Underserved Communities

Support to hospitals through the procurement of medical equipment has strengthened their capacity to provide affordable, high-quality healthcare services to economically disadvantaged patients, helping bridge critical gaps in access to essential medical care.

## 4. Sanitation and Hygiene Infrastructure

Under rural sanitation initiatives aligned with the Swachh Bharat Mission, Five Star has supported the construction of household bathrooms. This has contributed to improved hygiene, reduced disease risks, and enhanced dignity and safety, particularly for women and children.

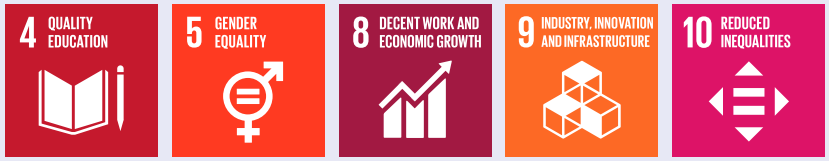
## 5. Livelihood Support for Persons with Disabilities

Through the "Stand Without Legs" initiative, Five Star has enabled livelihood opportunities for physically disabled individuals by providing:

- Bunk shell petty shops
- Refurbishment of existing units
- Auto-rickshaw support

These interventions promote financial independence, social dignity, and long-term income generation for differently-abled beneficiaries and their families.

# SDG Focus and Investment

| Major Intervention Area | Key Projects Included | Total Investment (Approx.) | SDG Focus |
|---|---|---|---|
| Education Infrastructure & Scholarships | School construction, classrooms, equipment, teacher support, polytechnic scholarships, special schools, tribal education initiatives | ₹18.98 crore |   |
| Healthcare Strengthening | Medical equipment support to hospitals | ₹2.24 crore |   |
| Rural Sanitation | Construction of bathrooms in rural communities | ₹1.10 crore |   |
| Livelihood for Persons with Disabilities | Bunk shells, enterprise support, auto-rickshaw | ₹1.92 crore |   |

Total CSR investment across listed projects: ~₹24.24 crore.

## Cumulative Number of Initiatives based on Sector

**61%**
Education

**33%**
Livelihood

**6%**
Healthcare

# Research Design:

The impact assessment followed a mixed-methods research design aligned with the project objectives, combining primary and secondary data with stakeholder consultations. Findings were triangulated through surveys, interviews, document review and field verification, with data analysed using standard statistical tools. The assessment is also conducted adhering to the OECD-DAC Framework (REECIS).

# Chrysalis Methodology:



## Research:

- Briefing meeting with Five Star Business Finance Limited to understand the sector of CSR initiatives supported by various Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). And at the next level, we interact with NGO/Trust about Program design, objectives, implementation model and timeline.
- Review of project documents, including proposal, MOUs with NGO/Trust, activities carried out and other related documents
- Secondary research on how the implemented project aligns with the UN Sustainable Development Goals



## Development:

- Design of quantitative survey tools covering all program Components to quantitatively assess the outcome.
- Development of a qualitative interview guide through In-depth Interviews (IDI), Key Informant Interviews (KII), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Case Studies to capture impacts through narration, lived experience and stories.



## Action (Data Collection):

- Field visit to all the project locations in districts such as Chennai, Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur, Tirchirappalli, Coimbattur, Tindivanam, Thanjavur and Chidambaram
- In-person quantitative data collection was captured through MS Forms, which included student surveys, community members survey, and household surveys.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and infrastructure observations were conducted based on project requirements.

## Data Analysis:

- Compilation, clearing, and validation of quantitative survey data.
- Disaggregation of findings from the data collected from the assessed programs implemented by the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs).
- Sectoral analysis of qualitative insights from various stakeholders involved in the program.

## Data Visualisation & Communication:

- The analysed data  converted into charts, tables and summaries for key findings.

## Reporting:

- Preparation of a comprehensive draft Impact Assessment report, including findings, interpretations, and evidence-based insights.
- Incorporation of feedback from Five Star Business Finance Limited.
- Finalisation of the report, including conclusions, SDG alignment, best practices, recommendations, and sustainability pathways.



# Sampling Approach:

The research for this impact assessment used a mixed-methods approach. Key stakeholder interviews were conducted to analyse the situation and form an understanding of the environment. Qualitative discussions were validated with quantitative surveys. The survey methods effectively reflect the coverage across the beneficiary universe. By integrating perspectives from multiple stakeholders, the assessment captures nuanced insights while maintaining robustness through statistical validation.

| Sl. No | Projects | Stakeholder/ Cohort | Data collection Type | Tools of study | Sample Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sai Education Trust | | | | | |
| 1 | Purchase of Equipments for School on quartely basis | Students (Primary Beneficiaries) | Qualitative | Focus Group Discussion | 2 FGD's (8-10 students) |
| | | Students (Primary Beneficiaries) | Quantitative | Paper survey | 60 Surveys |
| | | Teachers & School Staff | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 2 KII's |
| 2 | Construction of Classrooms with Indoor Auditorium | School Management / Sai Education Trust | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview/Direct Observation | 1 KII & Observation |
| | | Infrastructre Observation | Qualitative | Direct Observation | - |
| Swamy Vivekananda Rural Development Society | | | | | |
| 3 | 216 Single Teacher Schools | Students (Primary beneficiaries) | Quantitative | Paper Survey | 30 Surveys |
| | | Parents & Community Members | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 6 KII's |
| | | Single Teachers | Qualitative | In-depth Interview | 10 IDI's |
| 4 | Construction of 211 Bathrooms in Rural Areas of Chennai & Around | Beneficiary Households (Primary Users) | Quantitative | Survey | 51 surveys |
| | | Women and Girls | Qualitative | Focus Group Discussion | 2 FGD's (8-10 person) |
| | | Community Members / Local Panchayats | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 1 KII |

| Sl. No | Projects | Stakeholder/ Cohort | Data collection Type | Tools of study | Proposed Sample Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vallurvar Gurukulam (Hindu Mission Hospital) | | | | | |
| 5 | Construction of Classrooms, Laborataries and Library | Students (Primary Beneficiaries) | Qualitative | Focus Group Discussion | 2 FGD's |
| | | Students (Primary Beneficiaries) | Quantitative | Paper survey | 60 Surveys |
| | | Teachers & Academic Staff | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 2 KII's |
| 6 | Purchase of Medical Equipments | Hospital Management / Gurukulam | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview/Direct Observation | 1 KII & Observation |
| | | Equipment Condition & Usage | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview/Direct Observation | 1 KII & Observation |
| Ramakrishna Mission Student Home | | | | | |
| 7 to 11 | Education Expenses to Underpriviledged Students- 1470 in 4 years | Beneficiary Students | Quantitative | Whatsapp Survey | 138 students |
| | | Ramakrishna Mission Home (NGO/Trust) | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 1 KII |

| Sl. No | Projects | Stakeholder/ Cohort | Data collection Type | Tools of study | Proposed Sample Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tamil Nadu Differently Abled Federation Charitable Trust | | | | | |
| 12 | Bunk Shell for Physically Disabled PersonsTo develop 5 disabled (below poverty line) entrepreneursCreate livelihood for 2 disabled families to lead a respectable life in the society. | Beneficiary Entrepreneurs (Physically Disabled Individuals) | Quantitative | Survey | 15 Surveys |
| 13 | Bunkshell to 22 Disabled Persons | Beneficiaries' Families | Qualitative | In-depth Interview | 2 IDI's |
| 14 | Bunk Shells - 11 Nos & Auto Rickshaw - 1 Nos for Physically Challenged | NGO/Trust | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 1 KII |
| 15 | Construction of a shed for community activities | Infrastructure Observation | Qualitative | Direct Observation | 1 Observation |
| Hope Public Charitable Trust | | | | | |
| 16 | Construction of School (NIOS) for Special Children at Annamedu Village, Thiruvallur | Local Community & Parents of Special Children | Qualitative | Focus Group Discussion | 1 FGD |
| | | Teachers & Special Educators | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 2 KII's |
| | | NGO/Trust | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 1 KII |
| | | Infrastructure Observation | Qualitative | Direct Observation | 1 Observation |

| Sl. No | Projects | Stakeholder/ Cohort | Data collection Type | Tools of study | Proposed Sample Size |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Paradise Home | | | | | |
| 17 | Construction of a Building for Special Children and Teachers | Parents & Caregivers of Children | Quantitative | Telephonic Survey | 17 Surveys |
| | | Teachers, Therapists & Support Staff | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 2 KII's |
| | | NGO/Trust | Qualitative | In-depth Interview/Document review | 1 IDI |
| | | Local Government / Education & Disability Department | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 1 KII |
| MSSRF | | | | | |
| 18 | Setting the foundation for basic education and enhanced Learning, Health and livelihoods of Scheduled Irular Tribal families @ Parangipettai, Cuddalore Dist | Irular Children (Primary Beneficiaries) | Qualitative | Focus Group Discussion | 2 FGD's (8-10 students) |
| | | Community Members | Quantitative | Survey | 17 Surveys |
| | | Irular Parents & Families | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 5 KII's |
| | | Women of the Irular Community | Qualitative | Focus Group Discussion | 2 FGD's (8-10 persons) |
| | | Saminathan Research Foundation (NGO/Trust) | Qualitative | Key Informant Interview | 1 KII |

# Ethical Considerations:

The study adhered to strict ethical principles to safeguard participants' rights, dignity and identity. Informed consent was provided to the NGO/Trust, stakeholders involved, and other persons who were part of the study.

**Informed Consent:** Participants were clearly briefed on the purpose, process, and expected outcomes of the study. They were free to ask questions and choose whether to participate, ensuring full autonomy. All data collection practices adhered to the principles of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, which emphasises lawful, transparent, and purpose-specific handling of personal information.

**Confidentiality & Privacy:** All participant data was handled with strict confidentiality. Names and photos used in testimonies and case studies were included only after obtaining explicit consent from the individuals featured. These narratives were shared voluntarily to illustrate lived experiences and do not compromise any participant's privacy.

**Voluntary Participation:** Participation was entirely voluntary. No pressure or incentives were used to influence responses.

**Respect & Fair Treatment:** Participants were treated with fairness and respect throughout the study. Their well-being was prioritised, and support was provided whenever needed.



# Integrated Free Education, Digital Learning & Infrastructure Strengthening Program

Impact Assessment for
FY 2020-2024

NGO/Trust:
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare



Image 1 :Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare Centre

# Executive Summary



**Project Name:**

Integrated Free Education, Digital Learning & Infrastructure Strengthening Program

**NGO/Trust:**

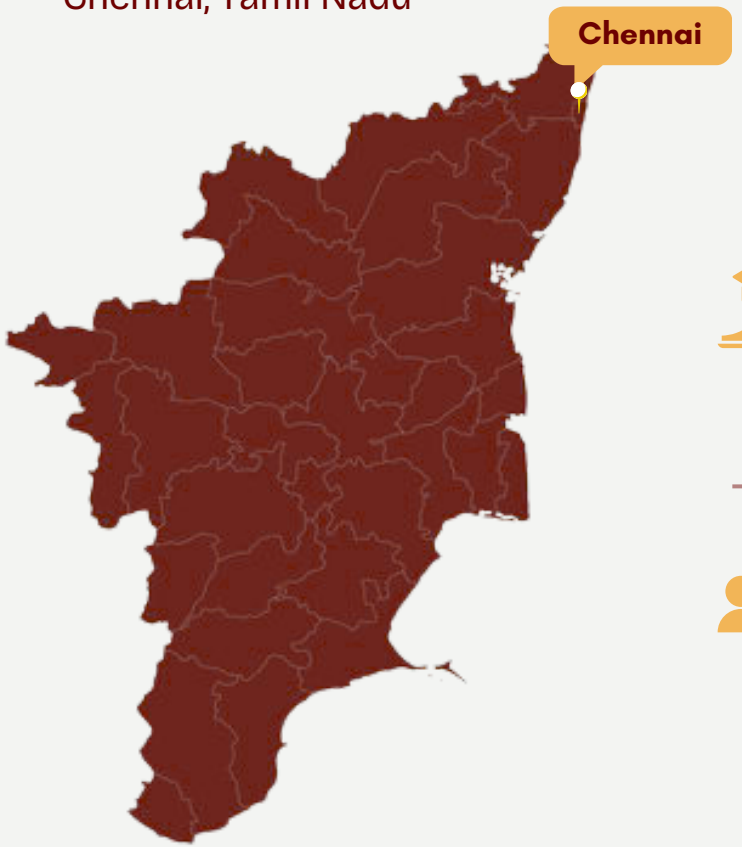
Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare

**Project Assessment Years:**

FY 2020-2024

**Project Location:**

Chennai, Tamil Nadu




Map 1: Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** ~400 students (LKG–XII) annually from economically disadvantaged families.

**Additional Direct:**

120 students (Classes IX–XII) – digital tablet access.

29 teachers – digital infrastructure support.

**Indirect:** Parents, school staff, and future student cohorts benefit from expanded infrastructure and improved institutional sustainability.

## Project Activities:

### Access & Equity

- 100% tuition-free CBSE education for all students.
- Noon meals and residential support (for senior students).

### Quality Education & Digital Enablement

- Distribution of 120 tablets for Grades IX–XII.
- Integration of e-learning platforms (DigiSchool, Extramarks, Digital Library).
- Procurement of teacher PCs, classroom computers, and LCD projectors.
- Digital content-based teaching and assessment.

### Infrastructure Strengthening

- Construction of new classrooms (Ground + additional floors).
- Development of a permanent auditorium.
- Expansion to accommodate additional primary sections (LKG–V).

### Sustainability & Cost Optimisation

- Installation of solar power system (45 kW).
- Reduction in electricity costs and reinvestment into education.

## Performance Snapshot



**Distinctive Education Model Driving Enrolment:** Student inflow is largely driven by transfers from other schools, attracted by the institution's Gurukulam residential system and value-based education model, supported by the provision of free education.



**Strong Institutional Trust and Retention:** A stable base of long-term students reflects sustained satisfaction with the school's approach, with 31% of students enrolled for more than three years, indicating strong family trust and loyalty.



**Educated and Economically Stable Parent Base:** The student community largely comes from academically strong households, with 82% of parents holding graduate degrees and 63% engaged in private-sector employment, indicating a supportive educational environment.



**Facilitating Educational Mobility:** 23% of students are first-generation learners in English-medium/CBSE education, highlighting the institution's role in expanding access to nationally recognised schooling pathways.



**Preferred Over Other Private Schools:** 87% of students previously studied in private schools, indicating that families choose the institution for its holistic learning environment and value-driven education, rather than purely financial considerations.



**Strong Academic Outcomes:** 97% of students reported improvement in academic performance, with 62% experiencing significant improvement, reflecting effective teaching practices and strong academic support systems.



**Teacher-Led Learning Ecosystem:** 80% of students rely primarily on teachers to resolve academic challenges, demonstrating strong teacher-student engagement and personalised guidance.



**Effective Integration of Digital Learning:** 75% of students use digital tools daily for conceptual learning, revision, and practice assessments, strengthening independent learning and exam preparedness.

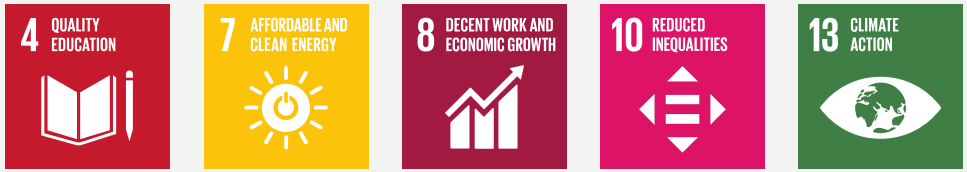


**Holistic Behavioural and Character Development**: Students report notable behavioural improvements, including greater discipline (75%) and increased responsibility (66%), reflecting the impact of the institution's value-based "Educare" philosophy.



**Operational Sustainability Through Solar Energy:** The 45 kW solar power system has reduced electricity costs and improved power reliability, enabling uninterrupted digital learning while supporting the sustainability of the free education model.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Gurukulam Residential Learning Model:** The structured residential environment has enabled strong mentorship, discipline, and peer learning, supporting both academic improvement and personal development among students.

**Value-Based "Educare" Approach:** The school's emphasis on character building, responsibility, and ethical values has contributed to noticeable behavioural transformation and improved emotional resilience among students.

**Strong Teacher–Student Engagement:** Close teacher involvement and personalised academic support have played a key role in improving learning outcomes, reflected in the high proportion of students reporting improved academic performance.

**Integration of Digital Learning Tools:** The controlled use of tablets and digital resources has enhanced conceptual understanding, self-study habits, and exam preparedness while building students' digital literacy.

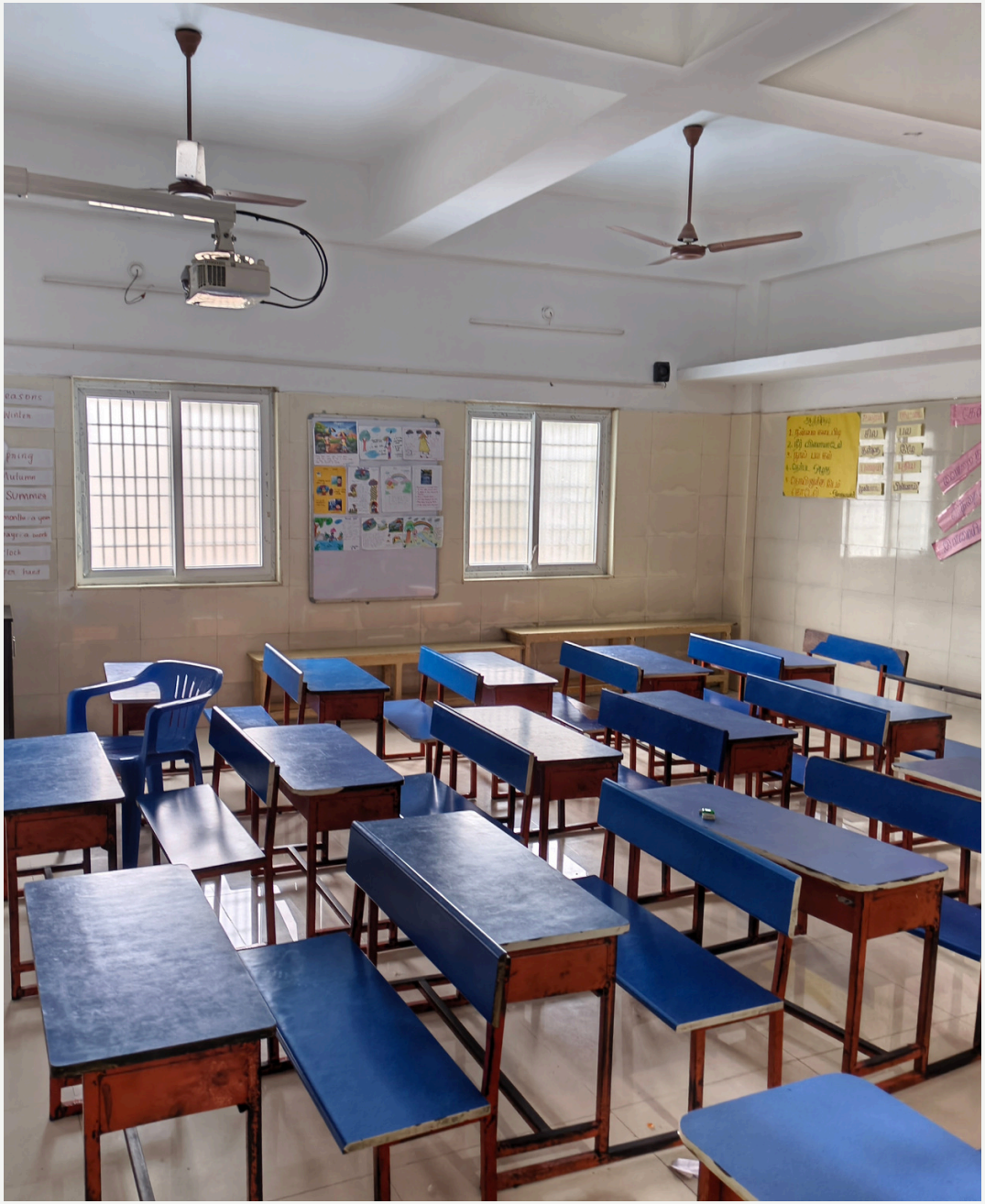


Image 2: Classroom supported by Fivestar CSR

# Project at a Glance





## Sai Educare Trust

**About the NGO/Trust:** Sai Educare Trust, a registered charitable organisation under the Indian Trust Act, operates the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare, a non-profit CBSE-affiliated school located in Nemilicherry, Chrompet, Chennai. The institution is dedicated to delivering integral, value-based education rooted in the philosophy of Educare — Education for Human Excellence. During the assessment period 2021-2023, the Trust strengthened its commitment to providing holistic, high-quality education to students from economically disadvantaged families through a series of strategic interventions aimed at access, digital inclusion, infrastructure expansion, and sustainability.

## Project 1: Infrastructure Expansion & Learning Environment Strengthening

**Objective:** To enhance the school's capacity and learning environment through the construction of additional classrooms and a permanent auditorium, enabling safe, adequate, and sustainable infrastructure to support free, value-based education.

### Thematic

Education - Infrastructure Strengthening & Institutional Capacity Building

### Geography

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

### Beneficiary Profile:

**Direct:** 400 students (LKG-XII)
**Indirect:** Teachers, school staff, parents, and future student cohorts

- Special relevance for primary-grade students due to the expansion of new sections to meet rising demand



Image 3: student survey in process

## Project 2: Free Education with Digital Learning & Sustainability Support

**Objective:** To provide free, high-quality CBSE education integrated with value-based learning, digital education tools, and renewable energy solutions to improve learning outcomes, reduce financial burden on families, and strengthen institutional sustainability.

### Thematic

Education - Access to Quality Education, Digital Learning, and Sustainable School Operations

### Geography

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

### Beneficiary Profile:

**Direct:** ~400 students annually (LKG–XII), primarily from low-income households

**Additional Direct:**

- 120 students (Classes IX–XII) – tablets
- 29 teachers – digital infrastructure support

**Indirect**: Families of students and future batches benefiting from improved infrastructure, digital systems, and cost savings through solar power




Image 4 : Notice Board of the Inauguration of the infrastructure



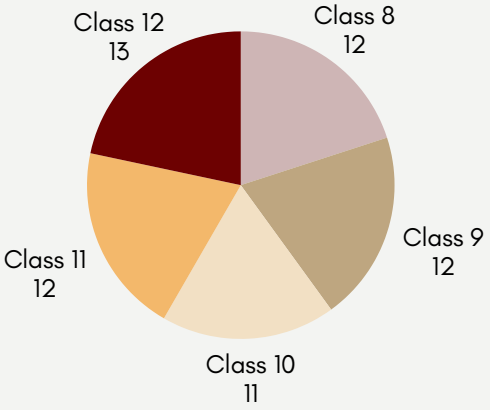
Image 5: Children learning in classroom

## Respondent Profile

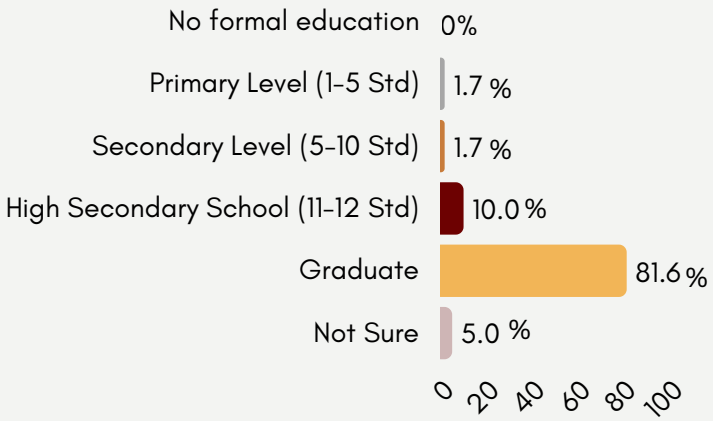
The study included 60 student respondents from secondary and higher secondary levels, with representation from Class 8 to Class 12. The distribution was relatively balanced, with 13 students from Class 12, 12 each from Classes 8, 9, and 11, and 11 students from Class 10, ensuring representation across different academic stages.

Most respondents come from well-educated family backgrounds, with 81.7% of parents holding graduate degrees, while 10% have completed higher secondary education, 1.7% primary education, 1.7% secondary education, and 5% respondents were unsure of their parents' education level.

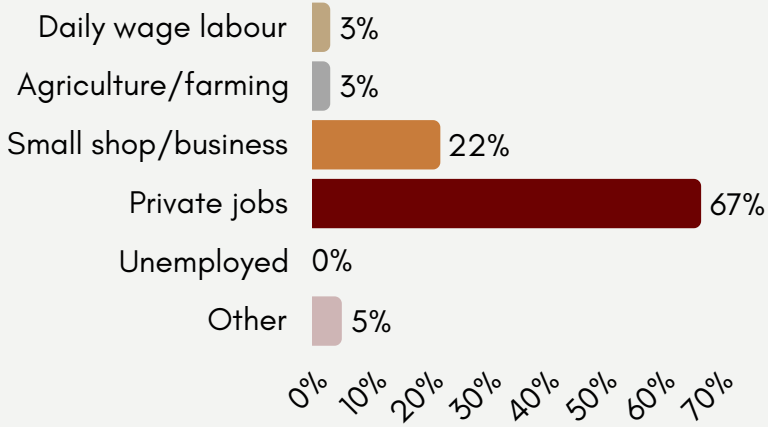
In terms of livelihood, 67% of parents are employed in private sector jobs, 22% run small businesses or shops, 5% fall under other income sources, while 3% each are engaged in agriculture/farming and daily wage labour, indicating that the majority of respondents belong to economically stable, formally employed or entrepreneurial households.




Graph 1: Total student respondents




Graph 2: Education status




Graph 3: Livelihood Pattern

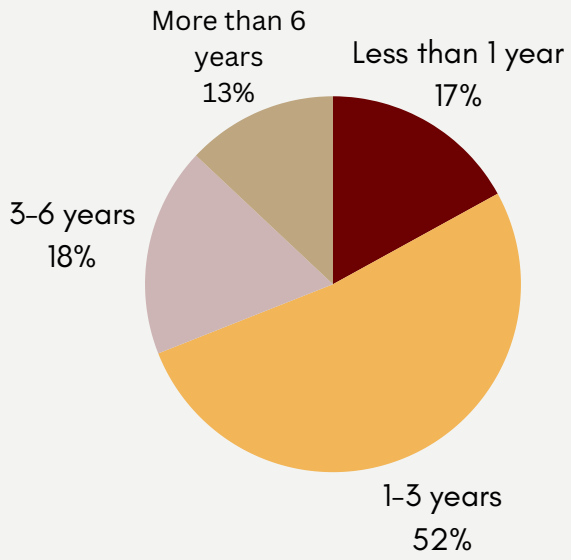
# Findings





## Study Findings

### 1. Enrollment Expansion and First-Generation Learner Participation



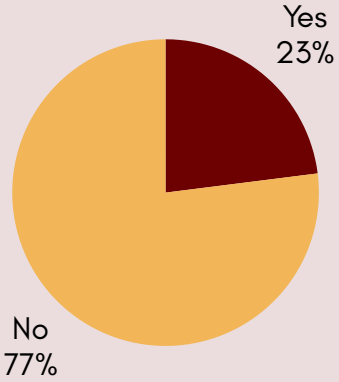

Graph 4 : Recent enrollments

The most striking finding is that a substantial majority of the current student body is relatively new to the school. Specifically, 52% (31 students) reported enrolling within the last one to three years, indicating a recent and significant surge in admissions. Furthermore, an additional 17% of students (10) have been studying at the school for less than 1 year. Taken together, these figures show that approximately two-thirds of the student population (69%) have joined the school in the past three years. This recent growth suggests that the school's programs are increasingly resonating with the wider community.

The data suggest that these newly enrolled students are largely transfers from other educational institutions. The primary factors driving this migration are the school's distinctive educational model: the Gurukulam system and the free education Program. The Gurukulam system, a traditional and holistic approach to learning, appears to be a powerful draw for families seeking an alternative to mainstream schooling. The provision of free education also removes significant financial barriers, making quality schooling accessible to a broader demographic. This combination of ideological appeal and financial accessibility is likely the main engine of the school's recent enrollment success.

**First-generation learners:**

**First person in your family to study in an English-medium / CBSE school**

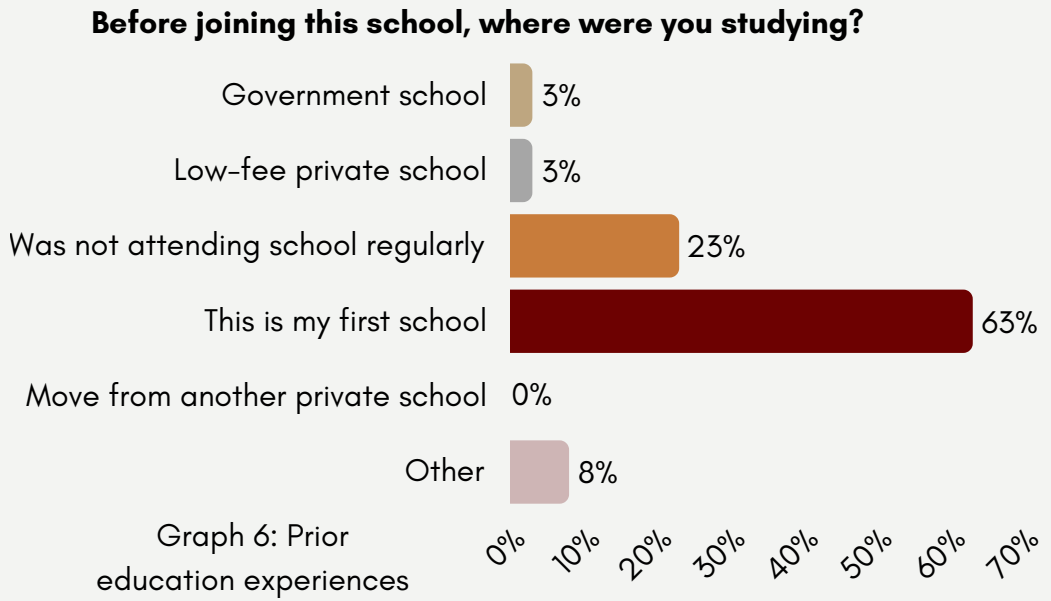



Graph 5 : First generation learners

The parents of this 23% cohort predominantly received their own schooling in institutions that differed significantly from the current system their children attend. Specifically, their education was obtained primarily from either private schools that did not operate as English-medium or CBSE institutions, or from the government-aided school sector. This suggests a generational transition from state-subsidised or locally focused private education to the nationally standardised, typically more resource-intensive, and globally aligned English-medium/CBSE model.

## 2. Socio-Economic Profile & Accessibility

The study findings indicate that a large proportion of students enrolled in the school are first-generation school-goers. About 63% of the students reported that this is their first school, suggesting that the program is reaching children who previously had no formal schooling exposure. Additionally, 23% of students were not attending school regularly before joining, highlighting that the initiative is also supporting children who were previously at risk of irregular attendance or exclusion from the education system. Only a small proportion transitioned from other schools, with 3% coming from government schools and 3% from low-fee private schools, while 8% reported other prior arrangements.




Graph 6: Prior education experiences

Group discussions with students revealed a significant reliance on the fee waiver for their educational opportunities. Six out of eight students indicated they would not have had the chance to study in a high-standard CBSE board without the tuition fee concession. The School Correspondent, Mr Loganathan, cited that students are selected through a robust process. He attributed the ability to manage the tuition fees to the support of a strong alumni network. Furthermore, significant cost savings achieved through recurring reductions in electricity consumption are also instrumental in sustaining the school's charitable endeavours ("Swami works").

Overall, the study findings suggests that the school is playing an important role in bringing previously out-of-school or irregularly attending children into the formal education system.




Image 6: Tablet used for learning

## 3. Strategic Choice & Mission Alignment

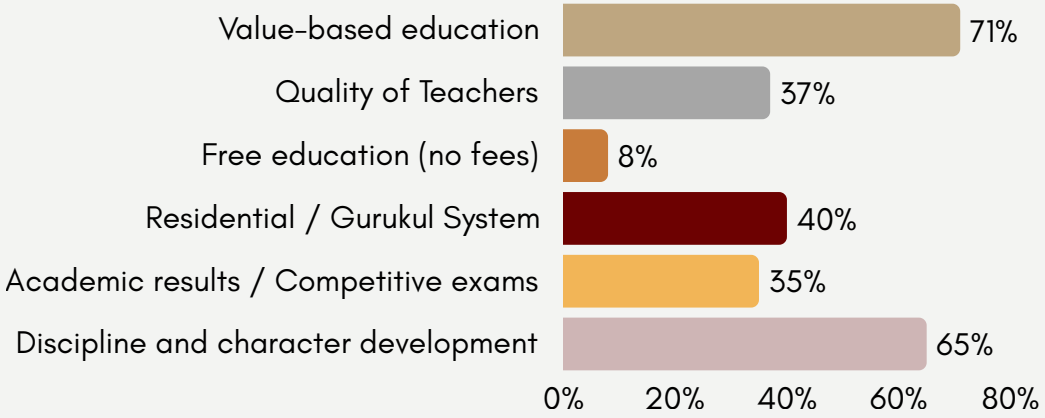
**Primary Drivers:** The top reasons families choose the Sri Sathya Sai Institute are Value-Based Education (71%) and Discipline/Character Development (65%).

**Gurukul Appeal:** The Residential/Gurukul System was cited by 24 of the respondents (40%) as a key decision factor, validating the Trust's objective to implement a model school of integral education.




Image 7 :Classroom Interaction with Students

**What is the main reason your family chose this school? (multiple answers)**




Graph 7: Reasons for choosing the education premises

Discussing with Mr Thangarajan, the computer teacher with over 10 years of experience at the school, he informed about a 12th-standard student named Vishal. Vishal had initially joined the school two years prior with a history of poor academic performance and significant stress stemming from family issues, which had led to mental illness. He was subsequently enrolled in the Gurukulam system, where he received support from teachers and peers to improve his outlook. Showing remarkable resilience, Vishal soon developed an interest in music and eventually formed a music group that went on to win various competitions. This journey of self-development has transformed him into a class leader and a top-performing student in his subjects.

Field observations also indicate that the school is widely perceived as a nurturing and corrective environment that supports behavioural, emotional, and academic growth.

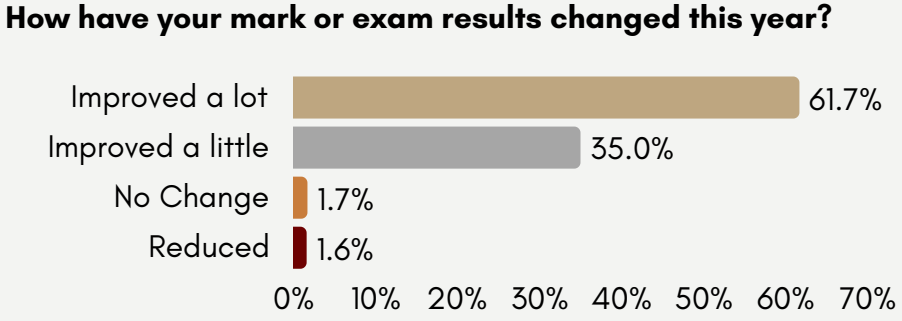
Overall, the findings suggest that the institution's strong reputation is rooted in its value-based culture and structured residential model, which serve as key differentiators, while also highlighting the importance of continuing to strengthen academic outcomes alongside its holistic development approach.

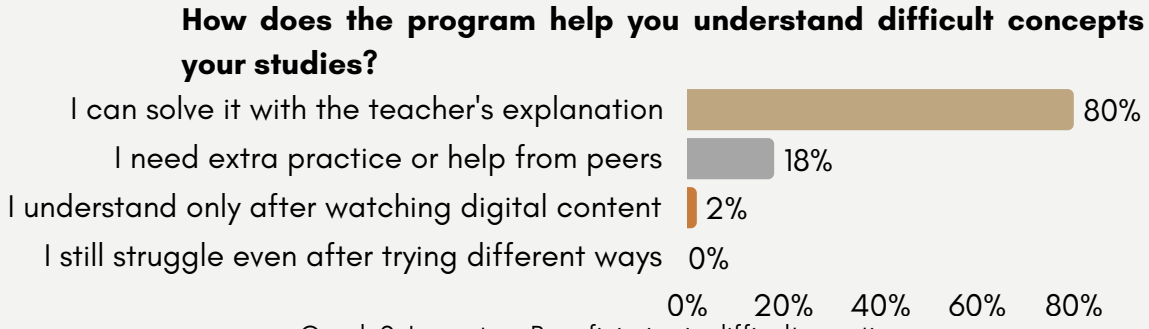
## 4. Academic Excellence & Positive Pedagogical Impact

**Improved Outcomes:** An overwhelming 96.7% of respondents reported an improvement in their marks this year, in which 61.7% stated that they have improved more than in their previous school of education.

**Teacher-Centric** Learning: Teachers were identified as the most significant support factor in learning. Most students, about 80% has stated that they feel comfortable solving academic challenges through teachers' guidance, and the other 18% said they would take the support of their peers in academics

Graph 8: Impact on Exam Results




Graph 9: Impact on Beneficiaries in difficult questions

Student Testimonial – Tuma Krishna, Class 8

Tuma Krishna, an 8th-grade student who has been part of the school community for the past six years, shared that the school has played a significant role in supporting his academic growth. According to him, the structured learning environment, combined with regular classroom activities, enrichment programs, and continuous guidance from teachers, has helped him make steady progress in his studies.

He recalled a time when he faced considerable difficulty in understanding a particular subject. Observing his struggle, his teacher provided additional support beyond regular school hours and worked with him individually to address his learning gaps. Through these extra sessions, the teacher patiently explained key concepts and helped him practice until he gained clarity and confidence.

As a result of this personalised support, Tuma's performance in the subject improved significantly, and his examination scores increased. His experience reflects the school's strong emphasis on personalised attention, close teacher-student engagement, and continuous academic support to help every student achieve their full potential.

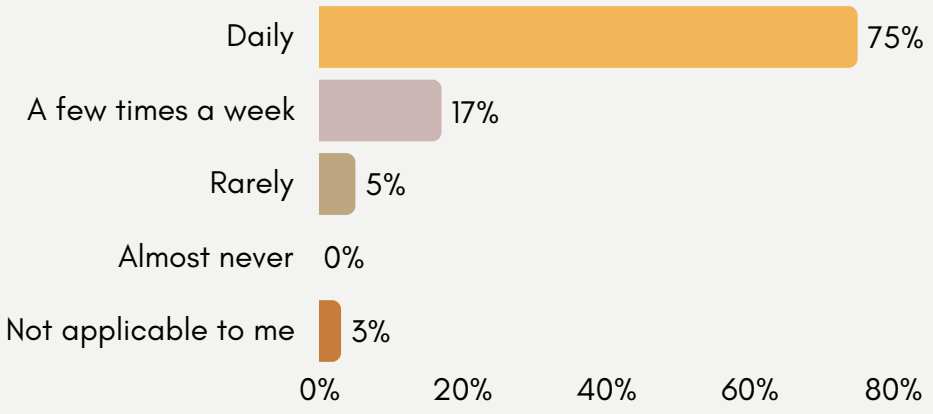
The findings demonstrate that the school's emphasis on personalised attention, close teacher-student engagement, and continuous academic reinforcement is translating into tangible learning gains and improved academic self-efficacy among students.

## 5. Digital Transformation & E-Learning

**75%** of the student respondents stated that there is high daily adoption of digital tools (tablets/computers), which is reflected in learning the technology very quickly and in the ease of use.

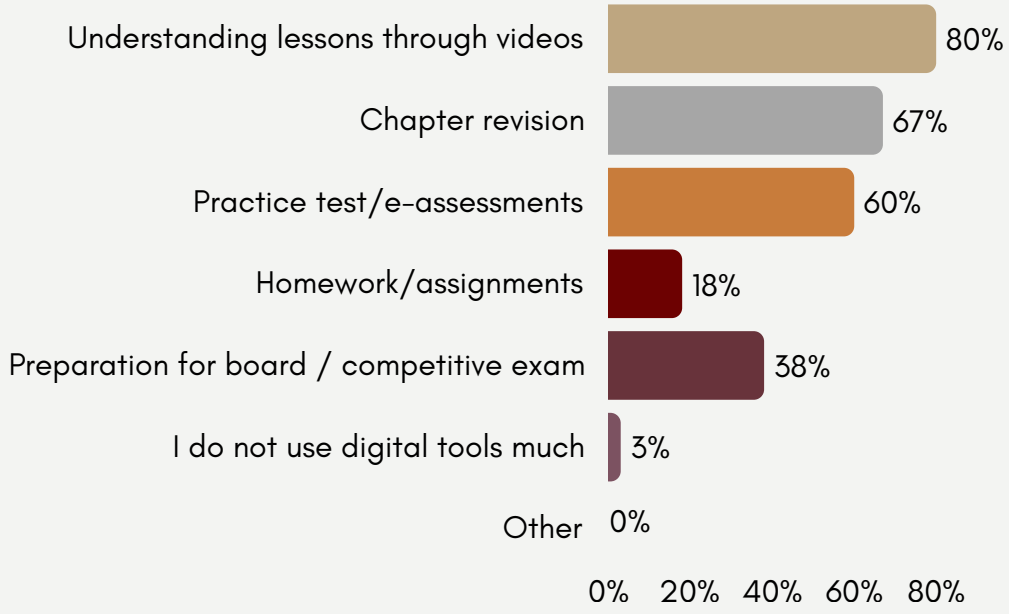
The digital tablets have increased in efficiency in students have responded, understanding lessons through videos (80%), Chapter revision (67%), Practice tests/e-assessments (60%) and preparation for board / Competitive exam (38%)

**How often do you learn using digital tools (tablet, computer, smartboard, e-content)?**




Graph 11: Perceived capacity of usage of Digital education tools

**What do you mostly use digital tools for? (Multiple answers)**




Graph 10: Perceived usage of Digital tools in everyday activities

The school's tablet program is strictly managed to ensure that students have access only to approved study materials. Mr Kathikayen, the school administrator responsible for the tablets (along with the technical team), confirmed that a controlled portal with separate login credentials for students and teachers prevents access to external content. Tablets are issued after class hours, primarily to senior students needing them for mock tests and teacher-assigned assignments.

## Student Testimonial

*"The tablets are issued to us in a proper system where our names and the device details are recorded, and we return them after use. All our study materials are available through the digital library portal, and there is also a dedicated space to charge the devices. Using the tablet has really helped me understand lessons better through videos and learn on my own. The mock tests available on the portal are especially useful for preparing for board and competitive exams. It has also helped me become more comfortable using technology."*

*— Sai Balaji, Class XI Student*



The digital initiative is functioning as a well-governed academic enabler that strengthens conceptual learning, self-study, and exam readiness, while simultaneously building digital competence and maintaining institutional discipline, positioning the school for both academic improvement and future readiness.

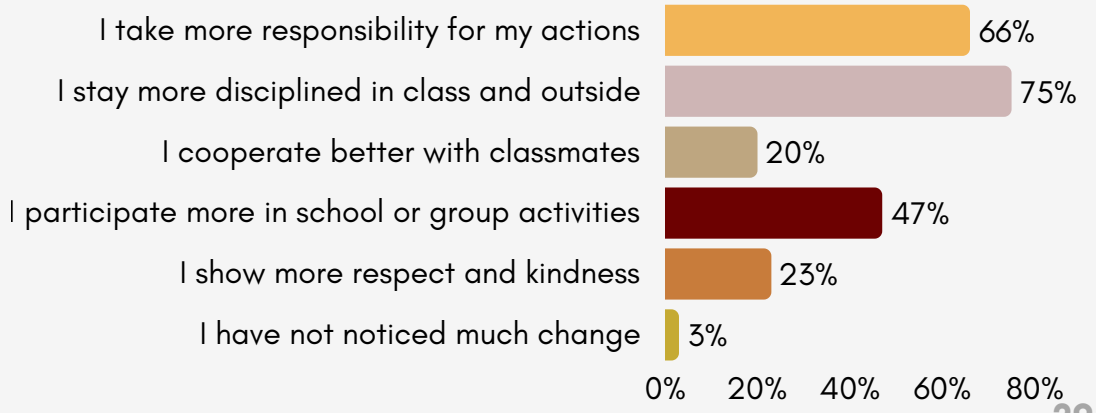
## 6. Holistic Development and Behavioural Transformation



**Behavioural shifts:** The "Educare" philosophy has led to observable character changes:

- 75% of the students stated that after joining the school, they have become more disciplined
- 66% feel they take more responsibility for their actions
- 61% of the students responded that showing more respect and kindness towards other human beings

**Which of these changes have you noticed in yourself after studying here? (multiple responses out of 60 students)**

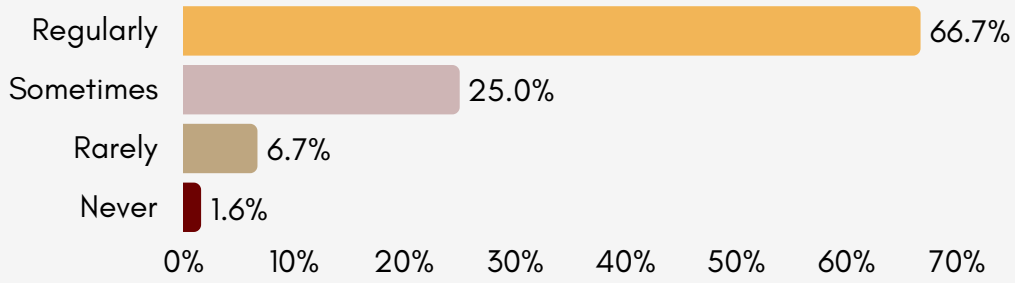



Graph 12 : Changes noticed by students after studying

The students in the school have responded that 61% of them said they resolve conflicts calmly, and 38% of them said they would seek support from teachers and mentors in the school.

**Engagement:** 66.7% of students participated regularly in school programs promoting values and leadership, while 25% participated sometimes.

**How frequently do you take part in school programs that promote values, discipline or leadership?**




Graph 13: Assessment of extracurricular activities

**Behavioural Transformation and Emotional Development among Students**

During the discussion with Mr Loganathan, the correspondent and the accompanying teacher, there was a clear consensus and observation regarding a significant and positive shift in student behaviour. This improvement was particularly noticeable in students' ability to manage challenges and in overall discipline within the school environment. Mr Loganathan offered a compelling anecdote to illustrate the school's success in this area, sharing the story of a student named Krishna. Krishna is currently in the 12th standard, having joined the school five years ago from a rural background. His initial adjustment to the school environment was tumultuous. He was frequently prone to bouts of severe anger and aggression, which manifested in him regularly initiating physical altercations with both his fellow students and members of the school staff. Tragically, this inner turmoil also led to instances of self-harm, indicating a deeper struggle with emotional regulation. Recognising the severity of his challenges, the school adopted a holistic and deliberate intervention strategy. Instead of focusing solely on punitive measures, the school gradually began to invest focused attention and support into Krishna's development. A key element of this strategy was assigning him meaningful responsibilities through school programs specifically designed to promote core values, instil discipline, and cultivate leadership skills. These programs provided a structured outlet for his energy and offered positive recognition for constructive engagement. This consistent and supportive approach has led to a remarkable and profound transformation. Krishna has developed robust coping mechanisms and now approaches potential problems and conflicts with notable calm and composure. Furthermore, his personal journey has equipped him to serve as a resource for others; he has proactively taken on the role of assisting other students who are struggling to manage their emotions and navigate interpersonal challenges. His story stands as a powerful testament to the school's commitment to nurturing student development and emotional well-being.

The study findings, field observations, and stakeholder discussions collectively indicate that the school's structured and nurturing environment is enabling meaningful behavioural transformation. The combination of disciplined routines, close mentorship, and opportunities for responsibility and leadership appears to be strengthening emotional resilience, social responsibility, and positive peer influence, positioning the institution as a space for holistic character development alongside academic learning.

## 7. Solar Savings, Educational Gains: Strengthening Sustainability and Learning Continuity

The installation of a 45 kW solar power system at the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare has emerged as a critical enabler of financial efficiency, environmental sustainability, and institutional resilience. The solar initiative has significantly reduced dependence on conventional grid electricity, resulting in substantial savings on recurring electricity costs. Stakeholder discussions with the school administration confirmed that the cost savings are being redirected toward core educational activities, including student support and infrastructure maintenance, thereby strengthening the long-term sustainability of the free education model. From an operational perspective, the solar system has improved power supply reliability, ensuring the uninterrupted operation of digital classrooms, computer systems, projectors, and tablet charging infrastructure. This has directly supported the school's growing digital learning ecosystem and enhanced the efficiency of academic delivery.

## Alignment with OECD Framework

The overall impact assessment finding can be mapped according to the criteria of the OECD-DAC framework: REECIS (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability) as,

### Relevance

The program is directly relevant to the target community by providing a 100% tuition fee waiver for ~400 students from economically disadvantaged families who otherwise could not afford quality CBSE education. The e-learning initiative is highly relevant to students' aspirations, specifically addressing the need for competitive exam preparation (NEET, IIT-JEE, IAS).

### Effectiveness

The school has achieved a 97% improvement in marks, with 62% of students reporting a significant academic leap compared to their previous schools. Character-building goals have been successfully met, with 75% of students showing increased discipline and 66% taking more responsibility for their actions

### Efficiency

Resource use is optimised through a 45 kW solar power system that reduces electricity costs, enabling reinvestment in direct educational activities. Digital tools, such as tablets and upgraded IT infrastructure, have increased learning efficiency, with students using them daily for chapter revision and e-assessments.

### Coherence

The project is internally coherent, seamlessly blending a modern digital curriculum with the traditional values of the Gurukul system. It maintains external coherence by operating in full compliance with the Indian Trust Act and CBSE academic standards. Also, it aligns with NEP 2020, Digital India and Samagra Shiksha

### Impact

The project is breaking generational barriers, as 23% of students are the first in their families to attend an English-medium or CBSE school. Long-term social impact is evident in the promotion of social mobility, dignity, and improved conflict resolution skills among the student body

### Sustainability

Financial and environmental sustainability are bolstered by the solar energy initiative, which reduces long-term operating costs. The construction of seven new classrooms and a permanent auditorium ensures the institution has the physical capacity to meet future demand and sustain its impact for years to come.

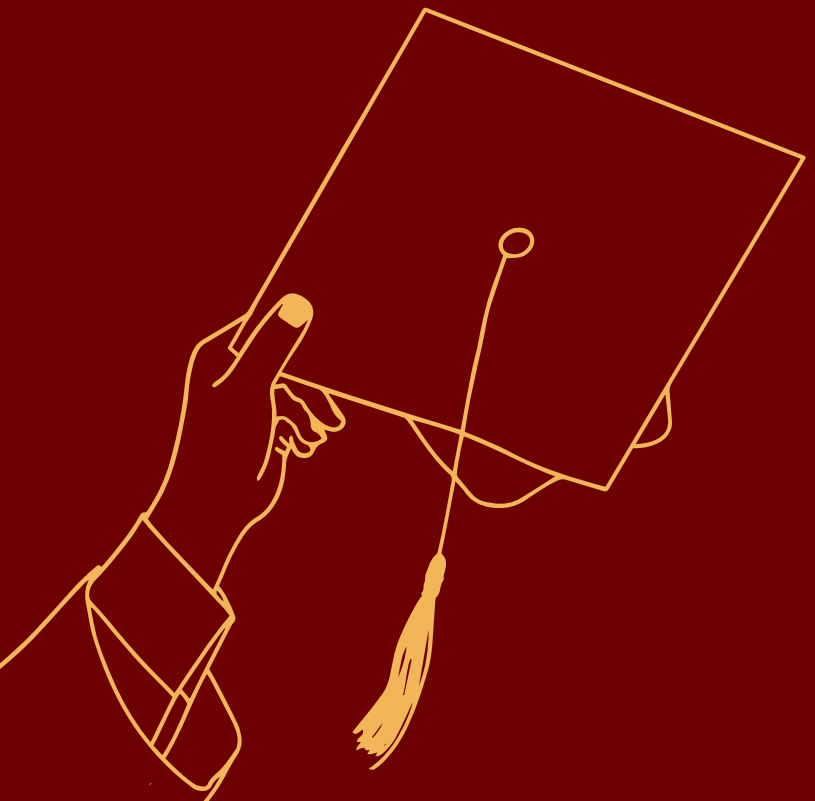





Image 8: Modern digital Infrastructure

| SDG Goal | Relevant Sub-Targets | Project Alignment - Sai Educare Trust |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 4.1: Ensure all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education. | Provides a 100% tuition fee waiver to ~400 students from economically disadvantaged families annually. |
|  | 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all. | Distributed 120 digital tablets and upgraded IT infrastructure to bridge the digital divide for low-income students. |
|  | 7.2: Increase the share of renewable energy substantially in the global energy mix. | Installation of a 45 kW solar power system, drastically reducing carbon footprint and operational costs |
|  | 13.3: Improve education and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation and adaptation. | Implemented eco-friendly school operations through solar energy to foster environmental stewardship in students. |

# Recommendations





The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare is the gold standard for philanthropic education in Chennai. To maintain and amplify its impact, the Institute's future strategy focuses on three core pillars: infrastructure scaling, pedagogical evolution, and research dissemination.



### Pillar 1: Scaling Infrastructure

To meet high demand and stop turning away qualified students, the Institute could expand its physical infrastructure. This includes building new classrooms, modern laboratories, and enhancing existing facilities to maximise capacity and serve all deserving community students.



### Pillar 2: Deepening Digital Pedagogical Training

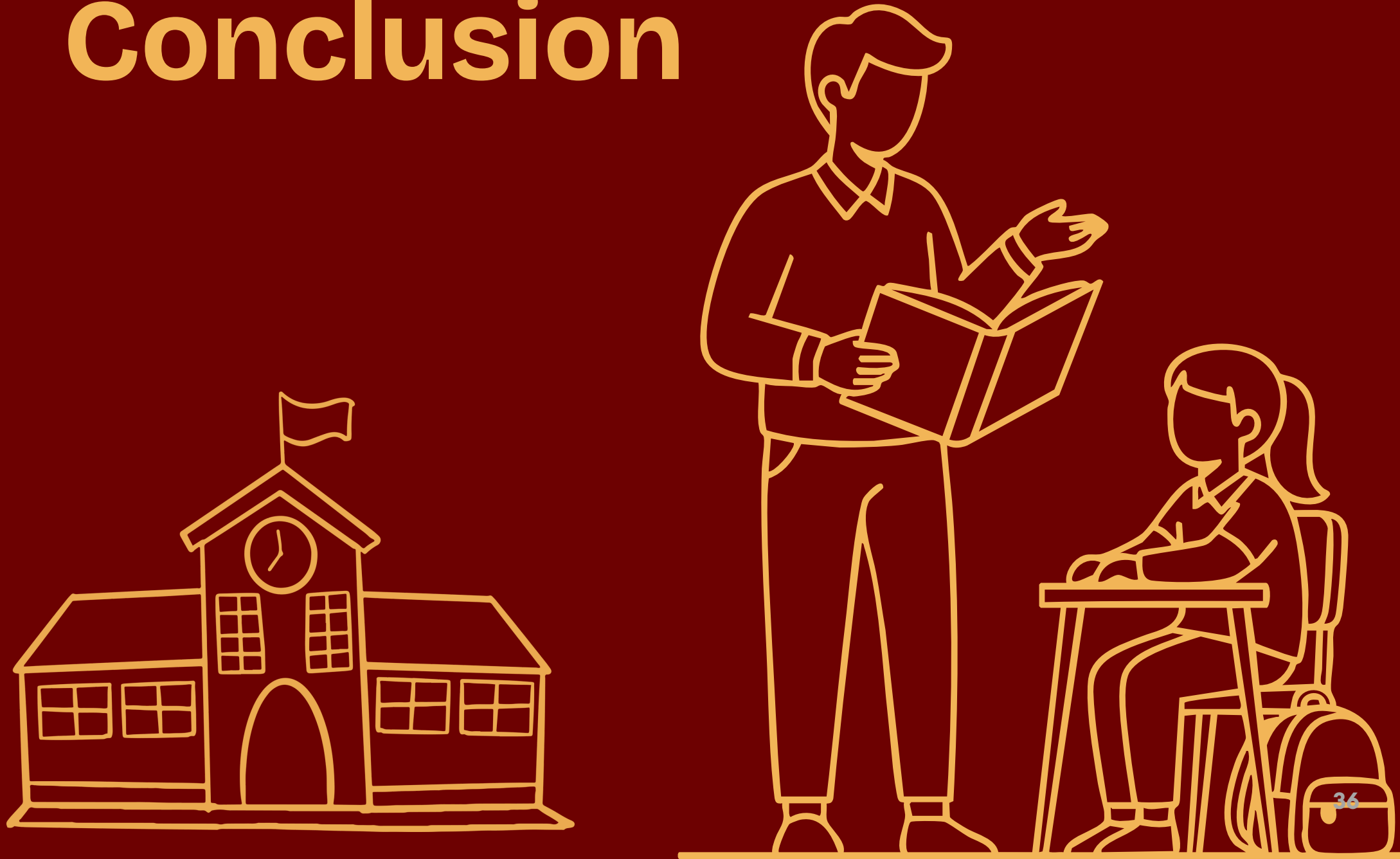
To maximise its robust e-learning investment, the 29 teaching staff will undergo intensive training. This program will move beyond basic competency to focus on advanced integration of digital tools, data analytics, and interactive platforms, ensuring technology delivers personalised, highly effective learning outcomes.



### Pillar 3: Strengthening Research and Dissemination

To fulfil the original Trust's vision of sharing its successful methodology, the Institute will systematically document and formalise its unique "Educare" pedagogical approaches. The resulting high-quality research and guides will be actively shared through conferences and publications, positioning the Institute as a thought leader in philanthropic educational reform beyond its campus.

# Conclusion



The impact assessment of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare for the 2021-2023 period confirms that the institution is a successful and scalable model of Education for Human Excellence. By integrating high-quality CBSE academics with the "Educare" philosophy, the Trust has effectively addressed the educational and developmental needs of approximately 400 students from economically disadvantaged families annually.

## What Changed

**Educational Equity:** The 100% tuition-free Program has removed financial barriers, allowing students to access quality education without the burden of cost, supported by a monthly investment of ₹8,25,000.

**Digital Inclusion:** The distribution of 120 tablets and the modernisation of IT infrastructure have bridged the digital divide, empowering senior students to prepare for competitive national exams like IIT-JEE, NEET, and IAS.

**Institutional Sustainability:** The installation of a 45 kW solar energy system has reduced operational overheads, demonstrating a commitment to eco-friendly management and long-term financial efficiency.

**Behavioural Transformation:** Significant behavioural shifts were recorded, with 75% of students reporting increased discipline and 66% feeling more responsible for their actions.

## Why It Matters

This project aligns deeply with the OECD-DAC criteria for international development. Its Relevance is supported by its target demographic, and its Effectiveness is demonstrated by a 97% improvement in students' academic performance. By fostering social mobility for families—where 23% are first-generation CBSE students—the Trust is not just educating individuals but transforming community futures.

## What Remains to be Addressed

**Capacity Constraints:** While the current infrastructure is robust, rising demand for primary education (LKG-V) necessitates the swift completion of the 7 new classrooms currently under construction.

**Mentorship Depth:** As 18% of students seek peer support for academic challenges, there is an opportunity to formalise a peer-mentoring framework within the residential system.

# Single School Teachers Program – Supplementary Education & Holistic Development Initiative

Impact Assessment for FY 2021 - 2025

NGO/Trust: Single School Teachers Program-Supplementary Education & Holistic Development Initiative

SINGLE TEACHER SCHOOLS
(Unit of Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society)



Image 9 : gathering insights from teachers and NGO/Trust

# Executive Summary





| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
|---|---|---|
| Single School Teachers Program – Supplementary Education & Holistic Development Initiative | Single Teachers School Program– Supplementary Education & Holistic Development Initiative | FY 2021 - 2025 |

## Project Location:



**216**

rural learning centres in the underserved habitations of Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** ~5,800–6,000 children (5–12 years) across 216 teachers supporting the village learning centres

**Indirect:** Parents, siblings, and community members benefit from improved academic support, discipline, and a strengthened community learning environment

## Project Activities

### Village demographic survey

Educational gap assessment

- Selection of high-need villages
- Establishment of accessible STS learning centres within the community

### Foundational Learning Support

- Core subjects: Tamil | English | Arithmetic | Basic Sciences
- Focus on homework support, concept clarity, and learning continuity

### Holistic Child Development

- Character and value education Hygiene, punctuality, discipline, yoga, moral values
- Structured daily routines beginning with prayer and the national pledge

### Access to Supplementary Learning

- Evening classes (5:00–8:00 p.m., weekdays) with an average of 30 children per centre
- Academic reinforcement aligned with the government school curriculum.

### Learning Resources & Enabling Environment

- Provision of teaching-learning materials, library books, solar lighting, first aid kits, and basic sports equipment.

### Co-curricular & Exposure Opportunities

- Arts, quizzes, storytelling, and games, sports meets, science exhibitions, and cultural Programs to build confidence and talent.

## Performance Snapshot

**Bridging Rural Learning Gaps:** The STS Program has created a structured evening learning environment for children who previously lacked guided academic support at home due to parental work constraints and limited educational resources.

**Strengthening Foundational Learning:** The intervention has reinforced core academic skills, with 90% of students reporting improved understanding of school lessons and 60% showing improvement in reading and mathematics, strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy.

**Improved Confidence and Classroom Participation:** 80% of students reported increased confidence in their regular school classrooms, with many now actively asking questions and participating in discussions.

**High Participation of Girls:** With 77% female participation, the Program is significantly expanding access to learning opportunities for girls in rural communities.

**Strong Student Engagement and Attendance:** The Program demonstrates high relevance and acceptance within communities, reflected in 97% regular attendance at evening classes.

**Positive Teacher–Student Learning Environment:** 100% of students reported that teachers are supportive and approachable, creating a safe and encouraging environment that promotes active learning.

**Strengthened Linkages with Formal Schooling:** 96.7% of students reported receiving positive feedback from their government school teachers, indicating that the Program effectively complements formal education.

**Increased Learning Motivation and Aspirations:** Students expressed growing pride in their learning achievements and 100% indicated their desire to continue studying, reflecting strengthened educational aspirations.



## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Community-Based Evening Learning Model:** Locating learning centres within the community made it easier for children—especially girls—to attend regularly and access structured academic support.

**Dedicated Single Teacher Support:** Consistent mentoring by local teachers helped build trust, encouraged students to ask questions freely, and strengthened conceptual clarity.

**Focus on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy:** Targeted support in reading, language, and mathematics helped students consolidate core academic skills and better understand school lessons.

**Interactive and Holistic Learning Methods:** The integration of games, storytelling, recitation, and sports alongside academics kept students engaged and motivated to attend classes regularly.




Image 10 : Community learning space

# Project at a Glance



**About the NGO/Trust:** Single teachers school a unit under Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (SVRDS) is a non-profit organisation working to empower marginalised rural communities through education, social development, and humanitarian services. The organisation operates primarily in rural areas of Tamil Nadu, where communities face multiple challenges, including poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, and intergenerational deprivation.

SVRDS focuses on improving quality of life through integrated interventions in education, health, eco-friendly development, and disaster rehabilitation. Its initiatives aim to address basic service gaps while promoting sustainable livelihoods, community self-reliance, and long-term socio-economic development.

**Objective:** To improve access to quality foundational education for children in underserved rural communities by establishing and supporting single-teacher schools that strengthen basic literacy, numeracy, and learning continuity, while fostering regular school attendance and community participation in education.

## Thematic

Education

## Geography

Rural and underserved habitations in and around Chennai, including Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu.

### Beneficiary Profile:

**Age:** The children are from 9 to 14 years old, and about 30 children are supported in each centre through the Single Teachers School (STS)

**Gender:** The STS accommodates both boys and girls. From our study, we found that girls outnumber boys in the centre. The study shows that about 77% of the students are girls in the STS.

**Educational status:** The students in the STS are in classes 3rd to 8th, learning their mainstream subjects as well as the SVRDS syllabus for children based on the New Education Policy (NEP).

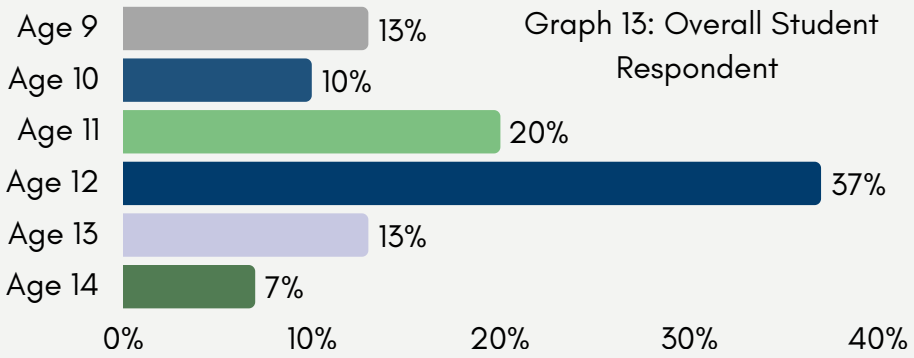
**Parents' Education and Livelihood Status:** Most STS centres are located in rural villages in the tier-2 and tier-3 districts of Tamil Nadu. Considering the education status, we can support our after-class hours education for children.



Image 11 : Discussion In an STS meeting

## Respondent Profile

### Age of the children

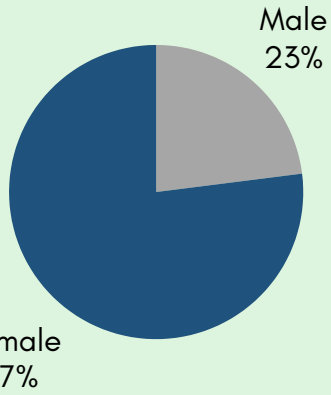



Graph 13: Overall Student Respondent

The survey results reveal a significant concentration of students within a crucial developmental stage. Specifically, 37% of the students surveyed were 12 years old, and a further 20% were 11 years old. This means that a substantial majority, totaling 57%, of the student population falls within this sensitive 11-to-12-year-old age bracket.

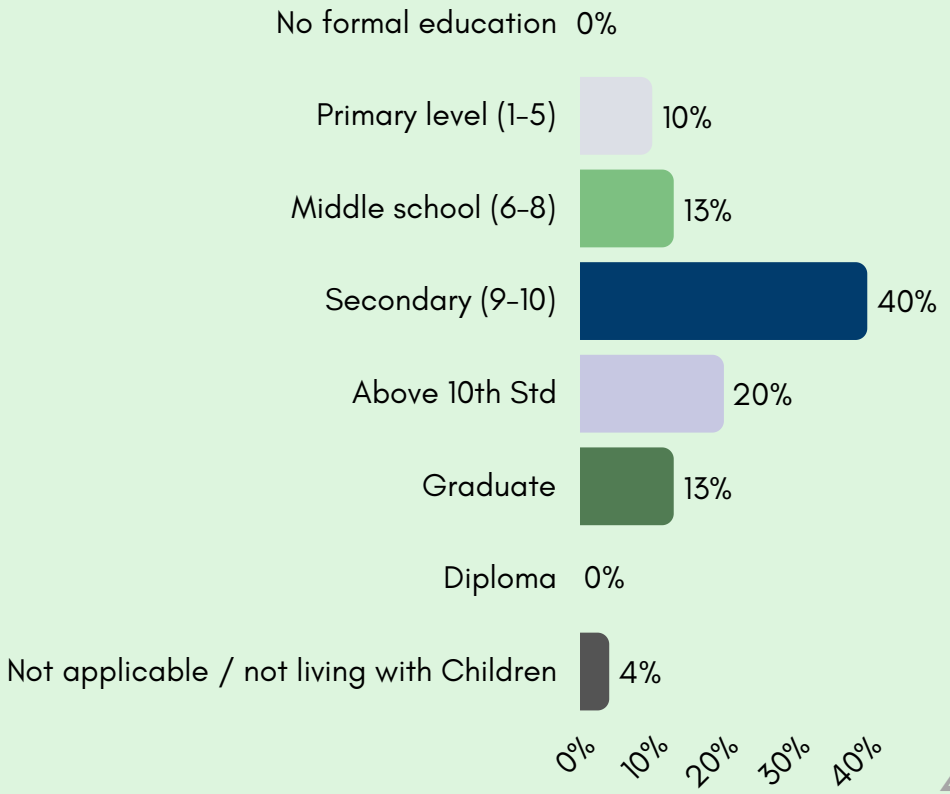
This age group is widely recognised as a pivotal period for personal growth, encompassing the transition into early adolescence. During these years, children experience rapid physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes, making them particularly receptive to formative influences and in need of dedicated support structures. Acknowledging the critical nature of this demographic, the educational system has made a concerted effort to focus resources on this group. The Single Teachers School Program (STSP) has been instrumental in this commitment, successfully reaching and supporting more than 50% of these 11- and 12-year-old children. The Program is specifically designed to promote holistic personal development, offering tailored attention that is essential for navigating the challenges and opportunities of this developmental stage. By concentrating efforts through the STSP, the system aims to ensure that these students receive the guidance and nurturing environment they need to foster healthy growth and prepare them for future educational and life success.

### Gender



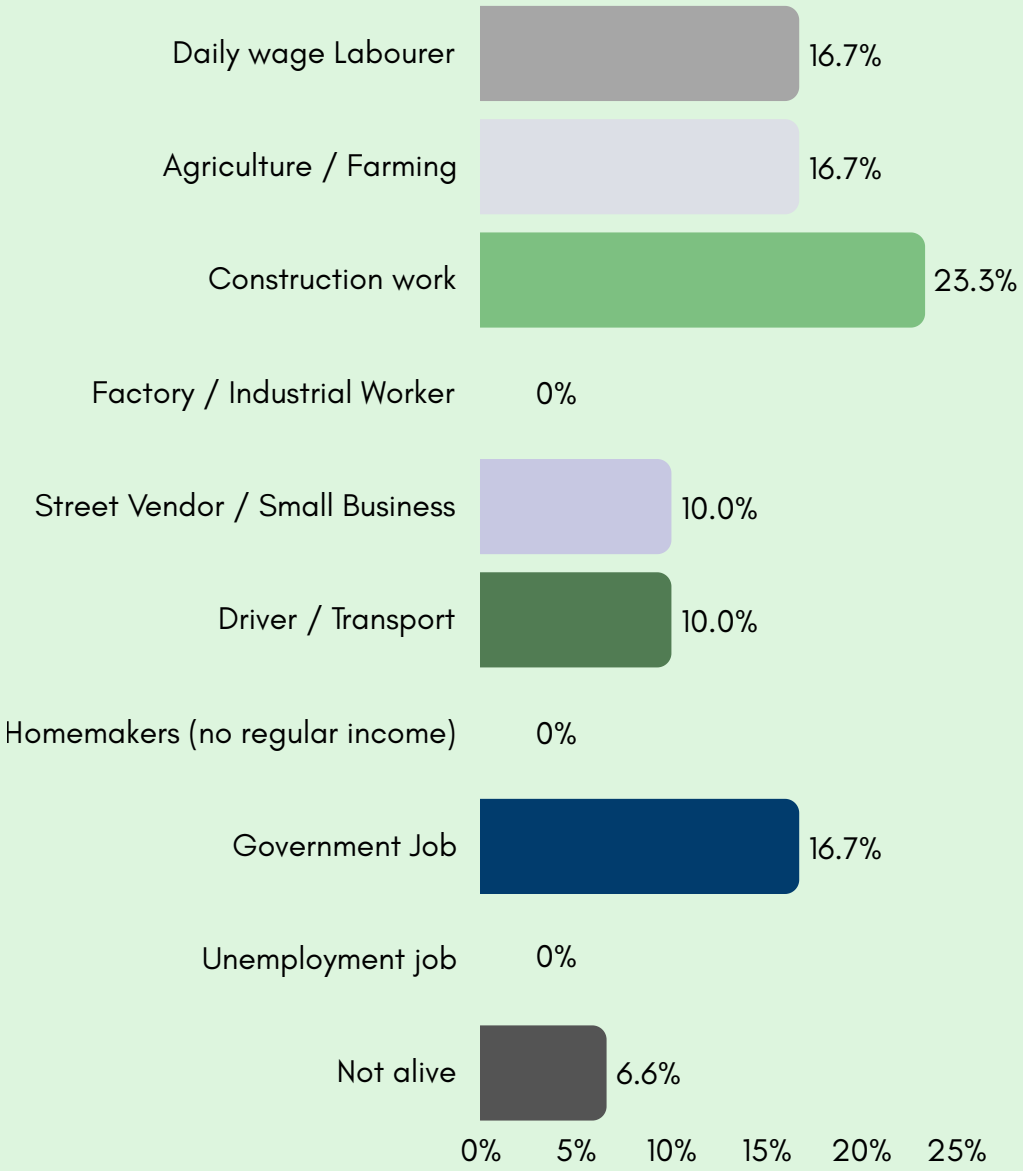

Graph 14: Gender of respondents

### Educational status of parents

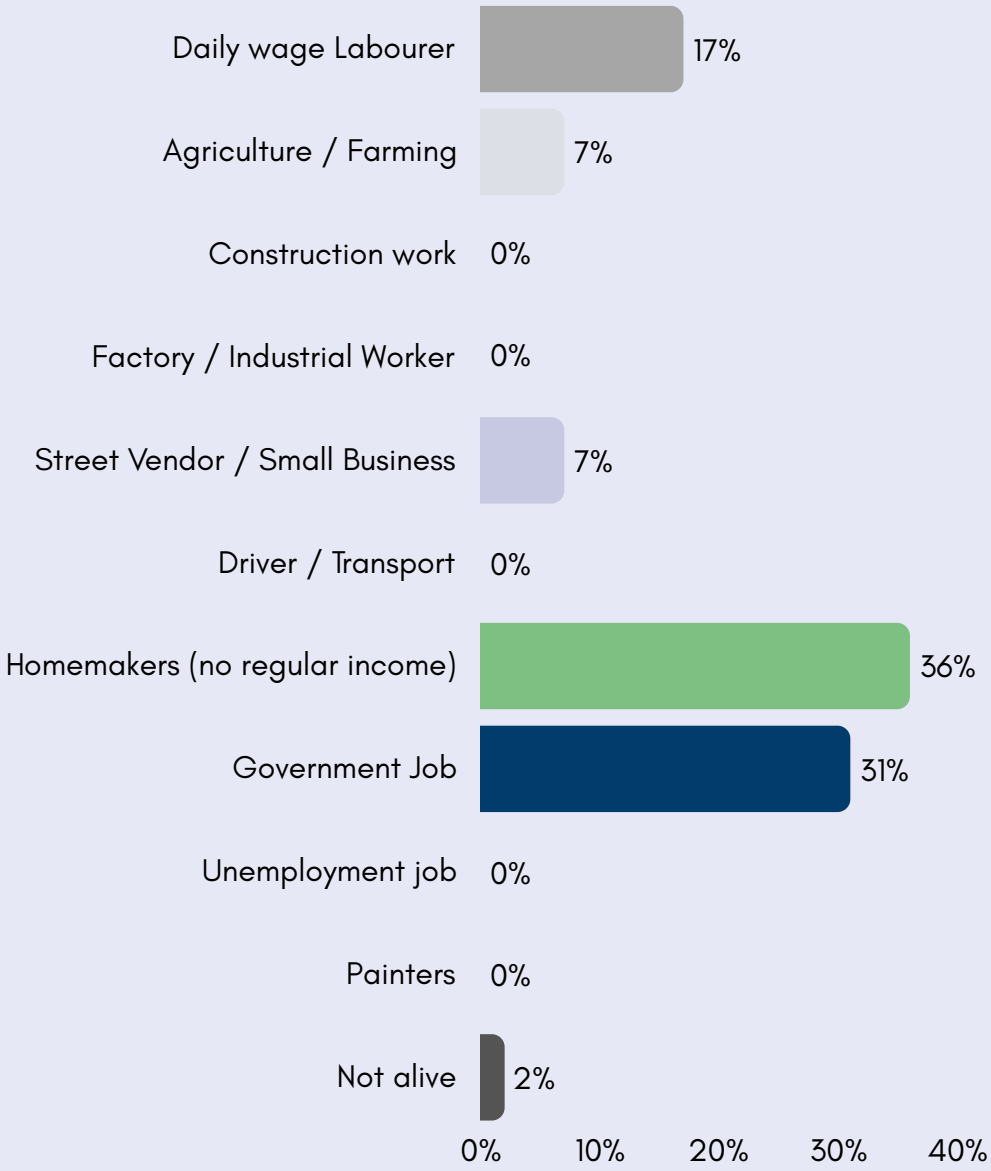



Graph 15: Education status of parents

**Occupational Status - Father**




**Occupational Status - Mother**




Graph 16 : Occupational status of Parents

# Study Findings

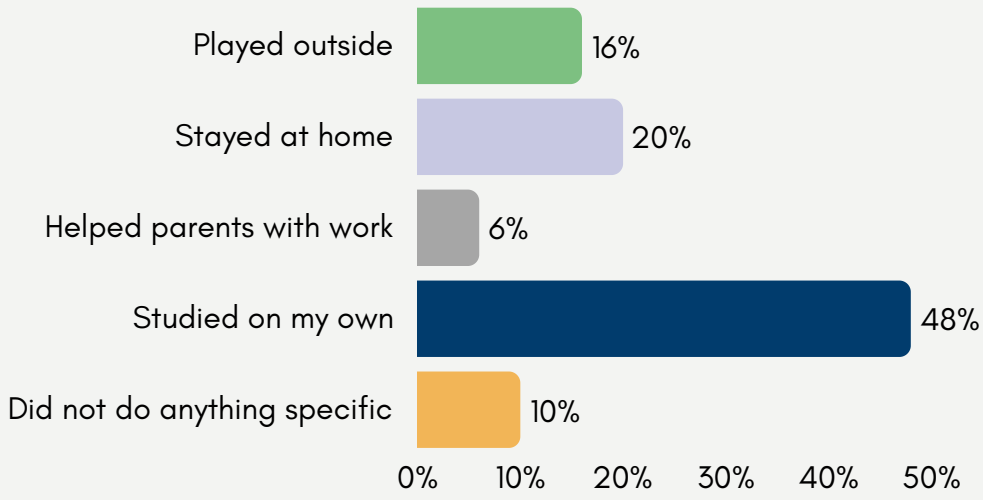


## 1. Bridging Foundational Gaps in Rural Learning Ecosystems

Prior to the intervention, children in underserved rural habitations largely spent their evenings either in unstructured play, domestic chores, or unguided self-study. A significant proportion of parents, though supportive of education, lacked the academic capacity or time to consistently assist their children. Most households depended on informal or low-income livelihoods such as daily-wage labour, agriculture, construction, and small-scale vending.

The demographic profile indicates that 57% of beneficiaries fall within the critical 11-12-year age group — a sensitive developmental phase requiring structured academic and emotional guidance. Importantly, 77% of enrolled students are girls, signalling both gender vulnerability and opportunity for intervention.

**Before joining the Single Teacher School, what did you do in the evenings?**




Graph 17: Activity performed by students in the evenings previously

Socio-economic vulnerability was evident: Nearly 47% of children reported missing sessions due to domestic responsibilities. This underscores the competing pressures between education and household survival needs.

The data indicate that prior to joining the Single Teacher School Program, evening time for many children was largely unstructured and varied across activities. Around 48% of students reported studying independently, while 20% stayed home without structured learning support. Some children spent time playing outside (16%) or helping parents with household work (6%), and 10% reported not engaging in any specific activity. These findings suggest that before the intervention, structured academic engagement during evening hours was limited for a significant proportion of students.

During discussions, parents repeatedly expressed that while they valued education deeply, they were unable to provide structured academic support at home.

*During discussion with Ms Hemavathi she mentioned that "STS has emerged as a crucial bridge for us to help our children learning their lessons and improve. The Program effectively compensates for the household's educational disadvantage, providing a structured, supportive environment where children can solidify their classroom learning, clarify doubts, and thus improve their overall academic performance. This testimonial confirms that the STS Program is not just about teaching new material, but is fundamentally about ensuring educational equity and reinforcing the learning foundation for children from less-privileged backgrounds."*

The STS intervention emerged as a community-embedded academic support system addressing these structural gaps.



Image 12: Collecting Feedback from STS members

## 2. Strengthened Foundational Learning and Academic Confidence

The most immediate and measurable impact of the Program is improved conceptual understanding.

90% of students reported a better understanding of their school lessons. Notably, none reported stagnation or decline. This suggests near-universal academic reinforcement effectiveness.

Further learning gains include:

**60%**
reported improvement in reading

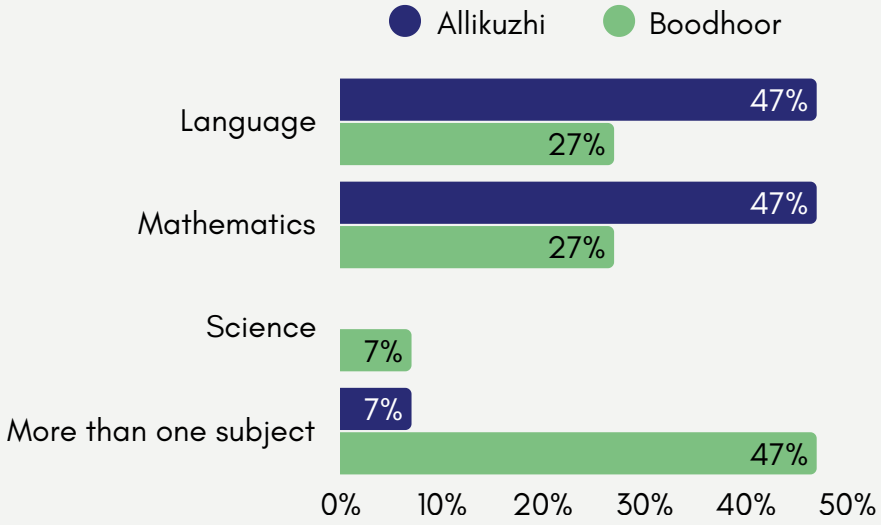
**90%**
reported better understanding of their school lessons

**35%**
reported language becoming easier

**35%**
reported mathematics becoming easier

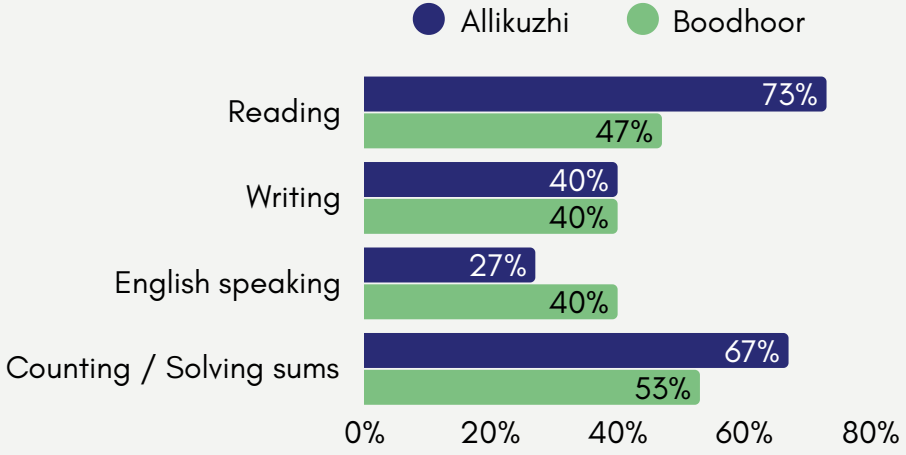
**26%**
indicated multiple subjects have become easier

**Are there any subjects that feel easier for you now that you've come to STS? (multiple answers)**




Graph 18: Improvement in various subjects

**Has coming to the STS helped you improve in any of the parameter? (multiple answers)**




Graph 19: Improvement in learning habits

These figures indicate not merely incremental improvement but consolidation of foundational literacy and numeracy skills — critical predictors of long-term retention and progression.

During the discussion, students reported learning to read something new this year, and felt proud of mastering new sums. These are not passive gains but moments of achievement and cognitive breakthrough.

During discussions, teachers emphasised that students actively seek clarification on homework, especially in mathematics — indicating a shift from avoidance to engagement. One 8th-grade student shared:

*"Mr G Pritheesh, an average student currently in the 8th grade, recently shared a compelling account of his experience at the learning centre. His testimony highlights a remarkable turnaround in his academic performance, particularly in mathematics. He stated emphatically that since enrolling in the centre, his understanding and proficiency in the subject have "improved a lot," to the point where mathematics has transformed from a challenging area into "the easiest subject for him."*

*Beyond the specific academic gains in mathematics, Mr Pritheesh also credited his teacher, Ms S. Leela Priya, with providing invaluable support in developing his language abilities. He noted that Ms Leela Priya's guidance and dedicated instruction have significantly helped him to "improve their language skills" in a comprehensive manner, encompassing proficiency in both Tamil and English. This holistic improvement suggests the centre offers a well-rounded educational environment that addresses core academic needs while also fostering essential communication skills"*

The qualitative insights confirm that the Program is not only improving scores but changing the learner's relationship with learning itself.

## 3. Behavioural Transformation and Classroom Participation

Beyond academic reinforcement, the Program has generated strong socio-emotional gains.

**97%**
reported positive feedback from government school teachers

**80%**
reported feeling more confident in regular school classrooms

**17%**
felt slightly more confident

**47%**
stated they now answer and ask questions confidently

**37%**
reported improved discipline and behaviour

**100%**
reported feeling always safe and happy at STS

The data indicate a profound psychological shift. Confidence in classroom participation is often linked to long-term educational attainment. The fact that 97% received positive feedback from government school teachers further validates external behavioural and academic improvements.

During stakeholder discussions, government teachers acknowledged visible behavioural maturity among STS students. The active School Management Committee (SMC) structure has strengthened communication between formal schools and STS centres, enhancing coherence.

During discussions, parents confirmed that the Program has created a positive and supportive learning environment for children. They observed that the classes provide a safe space where students feel comfortable interacting with the teacher and their peers. Parents noted that regular attendance at evening sessions has strengthened teacher-student trust, encouraged positive peer interactions, and helped children develop a sense of routine and discipline in their daily study habits.



Image 13: Parent community discussion

*"Field Supervisor Mr S Murugran's testimony confirms the Single Teacher School Program's empowering effect on students and families. Students consistently report feeling safe travelling to the learning centre. Attending School Management Committee (SMC) meetings has empowered students to ask questions confidently in and out of class. Mr Murugran observed that a reasonable number of students improved their discipline and behaviour. Academically, more than half of the students showed increased interest in reading and counting/solving sums. Crucially, which has pushed themselves to become more confident in class. The Program is fostering a more confident, engaged, and disciplined group of learners. Now, teachers say my child is more attentive and disciplined. We are proud."*

This indicates behavioural spillover into mainstream schooling — a key marker of sustained impact.



Image 14 : Collecting Feedback from field supervisors

## 4. Gender Equity and Inclusion Outcomes

With 77% female participation, the Program significantly contributes to SDG 5 - Gender Equality.

In rural contexts where girls often shoulder caregiving roles, the proximity of centres within communities reduced safety concerns and increased parental approval. Parents consistently cited the location's safety as a reason for allowing their daughters to attend regularly.

However, the data also reveal structural gendered burdens:

**47%** of students reported missing classes due to household responsibilities. Qualitative discussions revealed caregiving for younger siblings as a key factor — particularly among girls.

This highlights a dual reality:

- The Program successfully enables female access to learning.
- Structural domestic expectations continue to affect consistent participation.

*During the general discussion with the participating children, a particular case highlighted the challenges some attendees faced in consistently accessing the Supplemental Training Sessions (STS). Ms Shallini, a 12-year-old girl residing in the Azhilikuli block, shared a candid account of her missed attendance. She explained that her absence from the STS was directly related to her domestic responsibilities, specifically the need to provide care for her younger brother. This occurred during periods when her mother was away from home, undertaking various work commitments necessary to support the family. This statement was corroborated by Shallini's mother, Ms Valarmathi, who was also present during the discussion. Ms Valarmathi acknowledged the significant contribution Shallini makes to the household, confirming that her daughter frequently steps in to take on domestic duties, including the crucial task of looking after her younger sibling. This necessary support, while vital for the family's functioning and economic stability, unfortunately forces Shallini to forgo the educational opportunities offered by the STS. This scenario highlights a common barrier: the conflict between a child's caregiving and domestic responsibilities and their right to consistent education and training, a conflict that needs to be addressed to ensure equitable participation in such programs.*

The intervention, therefore, plays a protective role in retaining girls within the educational ecosystem, though complementary parental sensitisation could further strengthen inclusion.



Image 15: Discussion with an STS member

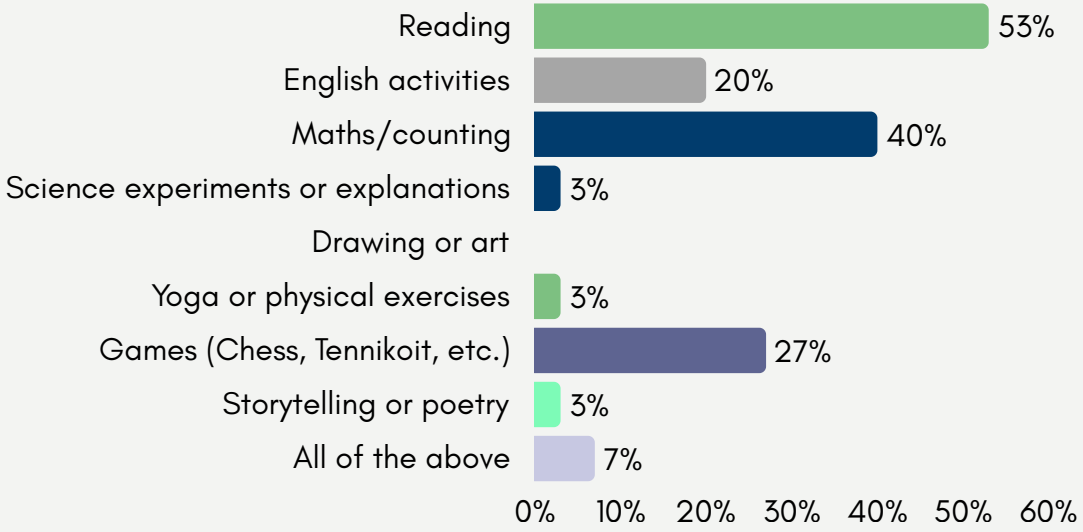
## 5. Positive Learning Experience and Strong Teacher–Student Relationship

Findings indicate that students experience the STS classes as an engaging and supportive learning environment. Around 53% of students reported enjoying reading activities the most, followed by 40% who highlighted maths and counting exercises as their preferred learning component. Additionally, 27% mentioned enjoying games and interactive activities, suggesting that the Program effectively combines academic learning with participatory methods that sustain student interest.

Importantly, 100% of students reported that their teacher is kind, helpful, and easy to talk to, reflecting a strong teacher-student relationship and a safe classroom environment that encourages participation and confidence among learners.

During discussions, parents reported that their children now show greater interest in their studies and often discuss what they learned in STS classes at home, reflecting improved motivation and confidence in learning.

**What do you enjoy most during STS classes? (multiple answers)**




Graph 20: Feedback on the most enjoyed components of STS classes

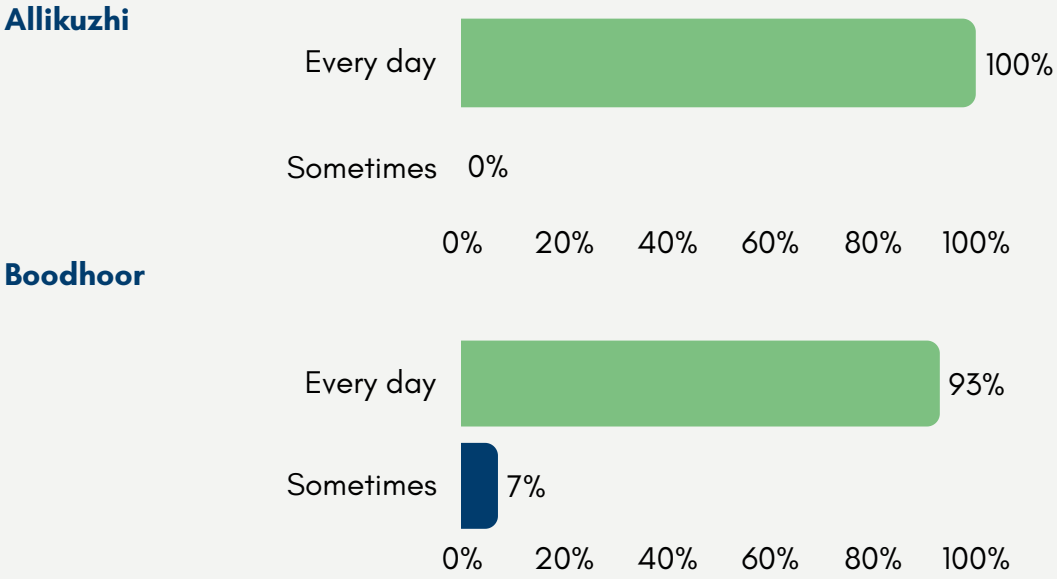
## 6. High Attendance Reflecting Strong Learning Motivation and Student Engagement

Findings indicate strong community acceptance and active participation in the Single Teacher School (STS) Program. Attendance levels are consistently high, with 97% of students attending classes every day and only 3% attending occasionally. Both locations demonstrate similar engagement patterns, with 100% daily attendance in Allikuzhi and 93% in Boodhoor, reflecting the perceived relevance and usefulness of the evening learning sessions.



Image 16 : Community household of STS

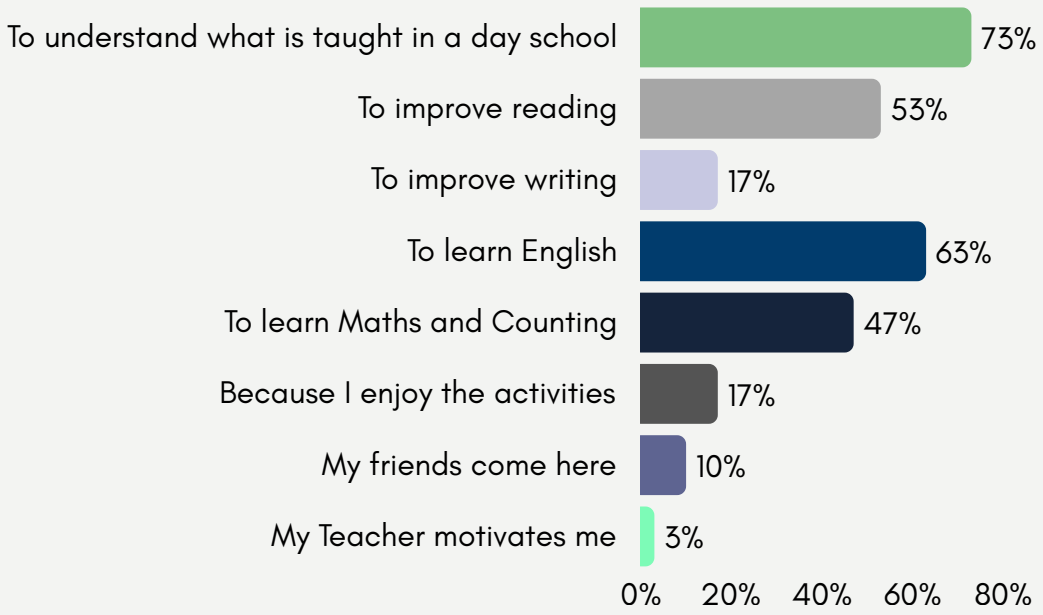
**How often do you attend the STS evening classes (5-8 pm)**




Graph 21: Impact of attendance in evening classes

When asked about the reasons for attending STS classes, 73% of students reported attending primarily to better understand lessons taught in their regular day school, indicating that the Program plays a complementary role in reinforcing formal education. Additionally, 63% attend to improve their English language skills, while 53% reported attending to improve their reading ability. Around 47% of students stated that the classes help them strengthen their understanding of mathematics and counting concepts. A smaller proportion mentioned other motivations, such as improving writing skills (17%), enjoying the activities conducted during classes (17%), or attending because their friends participate (10%).

**Why do you come to the Single Teacher School? (multiple answers)**




Graph 22 : Interest behind attending Single Teacher School daily



Image 17: Interaction with STS community members

These findings suggest that participation in STS is largely demand-driven, with students perceiving the Program as a supportive learning space rather than an externally imposed activity. During field discussions, facilitators also noted that parents have gradually become more engaged in their children's learning, increasingly monitoring homework completion and educational progress.

**26%** reported receiving encouragement and positive validation from government school teachers,

Importantly, 96.7% of students reported receiving encouragement and positive validation from government school teachers, indicating strong alignment between the STS Program and the formal schooling system. The presence of School Management Committees (SMCs) involving parents and facilitators has further strengthened community ownership and accountability.

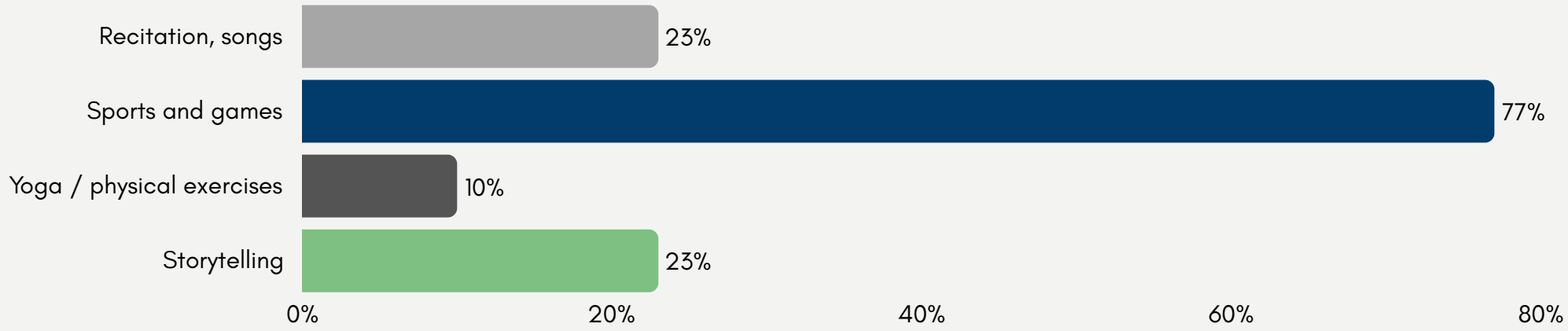
## 7. Participation in Co-curricular and Interactive Learning Activities

Findings indicate that the STS Program integrates a variety of co-curricular activities that enhance student engagement beyond academic learning. A majority of students (77%) reported participating in sports and games, making it the most common activity across both locations. Additionally, 23% of students participated in recitation, songs, and storytelling activities, which support communication and confidence-building. Around 10% also reported involvement in yoga or physical exercises, contributing to overall physical well-being alongside learning. These activities indicate that the Program promotes holistic development through a balanced mix of academic and recreational engagement.



Image 18: Interactive Activities

**Have you taken part in any of the following activities here? (Multiple answers)**




Graph 23 : Student Participation in School Activities

## 8. Infrastructure Support and Sustainability Considerations

Solar lighting was introduced in select centres to address power disruptions. While 27% reported strong benefits from solar lamps, 23% reported non-functional equipment, and 50% lacked access (due to targeted distribution).

This indicates:

- Infrastructure support is valued.
- Maintenance systems require strengthening.

*"Rajkumar, a key person in the implementation organisation of the program, clarified the rationale behind this targeted approach. He stated that the distribution focused specifically on centres identified as experiencing frequent and prolonged power cuts. The intention was to maximise the impact of the limited initial rollout by serving the communities with the most acute need for alternative lighting solutions.*

### A teacher noted:

*Further insights into the practical application and operational challenges were provided by Ms Gomathi, a dedicated teacher in the Single Teacher School program. Her centre, like others, relies on the solar lamps to maintain operations during the crucial evening hours. She explained, "The solar lamps are a functional support during the evening post 6 pm as the centres are operated till 7 o'clock." This hour-long period is vital for teaching and community engagement, making reliable lighting essential. However, Ms Gomathi also highlighted a significant operational hurdle affecting the lamp's effectiveness: inadequate daytime charging. She said, "At times, the solar lamp is not functional because we fail to keep it in the sun during the day to charge it for use in the evening." This common issue points to a critical gap between the provision of technology and the necessary user awareness, training, or consistent habit formation required for its sustained functionality. The intermittent usability due to charging neglect compromises the intended benefit and suggests a need for follow-up support or simplified charging routines within the program."*

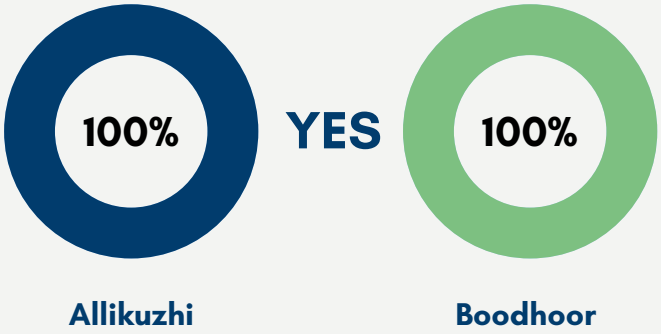
This reveals not resistance but a gap in habit formation. Hardware sustainability requires behaviour reinforcement and maintenance protocols.

Nevertheless, the lean single-teacher model has proven cost-effective and scalable, delivering high engagement with minimal structural overhead.

## 9. Sense of Pride and Aspirations for Continued Learning

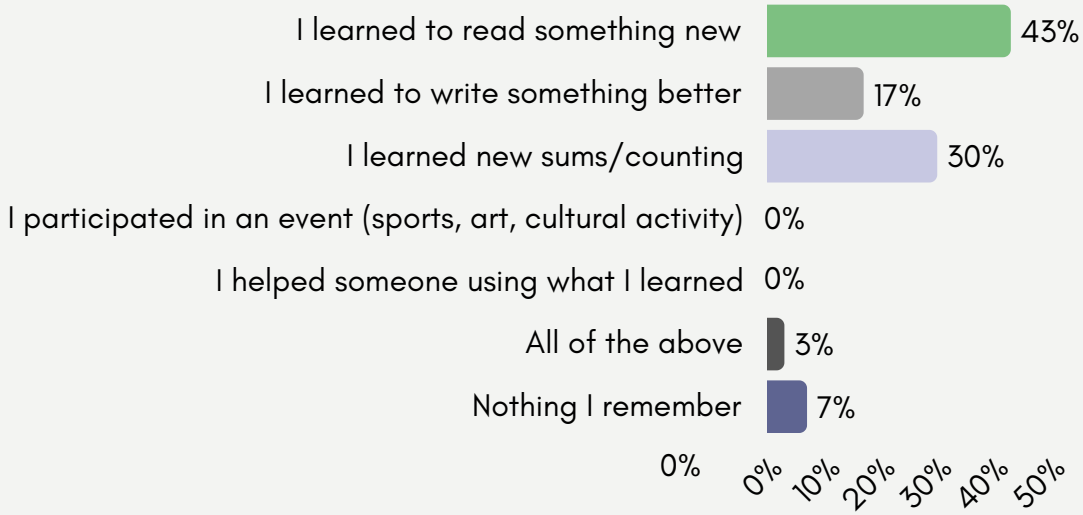
Findings suggest that the Program has contributed to a growing sense of achievement and confidence in learning among students. Around 43% of students reported feeling proud of learning something new, while 30% highlighted improvements in solving sums and counting. Additionally, 17% reported learning to write better, and 10% said participating in sports or cultural activities made them feel proud. A few students also mentioned helping others using what they learned in class, reflecting growing confidence in their abilities. Notably, 100% of students expressed their willingness to continue studying in the future, indicating strong educational aspiration.

**Would you like to continue studying in the future**




Graph 24: Students interested in continuing education

**What new learning this year made you feel proud or excited?**




Graph 25: Perceived Interests in STS classes

During discussions, a parent shared:

*"Earlier, my child was hesitant to read in front of others, but now they confidently read at home and explain what they learned in class. It makes us proud to see this change."*

## 10. Holistic Perceived Transformation

The intervention has moved children from:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Unstructured evenings | >>> | Structured academic engagement |
| Academic confusion | >>> | Conceptual clarity |
| Low confidence | >>> | Active participation |
| Parental helplessness | >>> | Educational partnership |
| Gender vulnerability | >>> | Safe learning access |

The most compelling transformation lies not merely in improved reading or mathematics scores, but in the creation of a reliable community-based academic bridge.

As reflected in Ms Sudha's parent of Gokul and Kavya said,:

*"Now that we see the improvement in the children, we will not allow our children to miss STS."*

This sentiment captures ownership, perceived value, and sustainability.



Image 19: Parent Interaction during KII

## Alignment with OECD Framework

The overall impact assessment finding can be mapped according to the criteria of the OECD-DAC framework: REECIS (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Coherence, Impact and Sustainability)



### Relevance

- Contextual Alignment: The program serves a population in which 97% of parents are non-first-generation learners who work in informal sectors (daily wage labour, farming), indicating a community that values education but lacks specialised academic support or the time to assist children at home.
- Targeting: With 73.3% female enrollment, the project highly supports gender equity in rural education.
- Gap Fulfilment: The STS addresses a critical need for structured, guided evening learning, replacing previous idleness or chores, as students largely "stayed at home" or "studied on their own" before joining.



### Effectiveness

- Academic Gains: Highly effective; 90% of students reported "Better Understanding," and 60% saw improvements in reading and math.
- Engagement: High student interest is shown by a 96.7% daily attendance rate.
- Instructional Quality: Teacher-student relationships are key, with 100% of students reporting that their teacher is helpful and approachable.



### Efficiency

- Resource Utility: The "Single Teacher" model is lean, but a 23% non-functioning rate for solar lamps indicates an efficiency gap in physical infrastructure and a need for better maintenance protocols.
- Time Efficiency: The 5 PM–8 PM schedule efficiently utilises post-school time, yet 46.7% of students miss class due to domestic work, highlighting a significant competing factor for beneficiaries' time.



### Coherence

- External Synergy: The program shows exceptional coherence with the formal education system, with 96.7% of students reporting positive feedback from their government school teachers.
- Curriculum Alignment: 73.3% of students attend to "understand what is taught in day school," confirming the STS successfully bridges the day school curriculum without redundancy.

## Impact

- Behavioural Transformation: The program had a significant "soft" impact; 96.7% of students reported increased confidence and improved discipline/behaviour.
- Psychological Well-being: The intervention created a "safe space," with 100% of students reporting they "always" feel safe and happy at school, a critical indicator in vulnerable rural settings.

## Sustainability

- Educational Aspiration: 100% of students now have a long-term vision for continuing their education.
- Parental Buy-in: The gains are sustained by home environments, with 96.7% of parents actively discussing continued education with their children.
- Skill Retention: The program ensures retention of foundational skills in subjects such as Language and Math, providing essential tools to prevent future dropouts.

| SDG Goal | Relevant Sub-Targets | Project Alignment |
|---|---|---|
|  | Target 4.1 & 4.6: Ensure all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education; achieve literacy and numeracy. | 100% of students report improved academic performance. 60% show specific growth in Reading and Math. 90% report better conceptual understanding of school lessons. |
|  | Target 5.1 & 5.b: End all forms of discrimination against girls; enhance the use of enabling technology to promote the empowerment of women. | Strong Gender Inclusion: 73.3% of beneficiaries are female, ensuring that girls in marginalised communities have the support they need to stay in school and excel. |

| SDG Goal | Relevant Sub-Targets | Project Alignment |
|---|---|---|
|  | Target 7.1: Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services. | Solar Integration: The use of solar lamps (where functional) enables evening study in areas with unreliable electricity, promoting clean energy habits from a young age. |



## Recommendation: School Teachers Program – Supplementary Education & Holistic Development Initiative



**Strengthen Infrastructure Maintenance:** Establish a proactive maintenance protocol for solar lamps and classroom materials. Since nearly 25% of students reported non-functional lighting, ensuring consistent resources is critical for sustaining evening learning, especially in rural settings.



**Diversify the Learning Curriculum:** Transition from a purely remedial focus to a holistic one. Introduce structured modules for Science experiments, Arts & Crafts, and Sports, as these were specifically requested by students and are proven to increase school engagement and retention.



**Formalise Government School Synergy:** Build on the existing positive feedback from government teachers by creating a semi-formal feedback loop (e.g., simple quarterly progress cards). This reinforces the project's "Coherence" and validates the student's efforts within the formal system.



**Mitigate Economic Barriers through Parent Engagement**: Address the issue of 47% of students missing classes for domestic work by launching "Parent Awareness Circles." Highlighting the long-term economic benefits of consistent attendance can help parents prioritise the child's STS hours over household chores.



**Pilot Foundational Digital Literacy:** Given students' high aspirations and the widening digital divide, introducing basic tablet-based learning or digital-familiarity modules can future-proof their education and sustain the reported 100% desire for future studies.



**Transition to Longitudinal Impact Tracking:** Move beyond one-off surveys to track student cohorts over multiple years. Measuring long-term outcomes, such as transition rates to higher education and dropout prevention, will provide more robust evidence of "Impact" and "Sustainability" for stakeholders.

# Conclusion



## What Changed

Before the intervention, students in rural clusters like Boodhoor and Allikuzhi primarily spent their evenings in unstructured play or unguided self-study. Today, 97% of these students attend daily evening classes, leading to a transformative shift in academic capability. 90% of students now report a better understanding of their lessons, and the program has successfully transitioned them from passive learners to confident participants, with nearly all beneficiaries (96.7%) receiving positive validation from their regular government school teachers.

## Why It Matters

This shift represents more than just improved test scores; it is the creation of a critical "academic bridge" for vulnerable populations. By serving a cohort of 73% female students, the project directly contributes to gender equity in rural education. The unanimous 100% safety and happiness rating indicates that the initiative has become a vital social sanctuary, fostering the psychological security and confidence necessary for long-term educational success and community resilience.

## What Remains to be Addressed

Despite these gains, significant external pressures persist. 46.7% of students still face economic and domestic trade-offs, often missing school to assist with work or chores at home. Furthermore, efficiency is hindered by technical gaps, specifically the 23% failure rate of solar lighting infrastructure, and by a curriculum that is heavily focused on remedial basics rather than on the holistic arts and science activities requested by students.



# Toilet-cum-Bathroom Construction

Impact Assessment for FY 2022- 2024

NGO/Trust: Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society



Image 20: Beneficiaries of the toilet cum Bathroom Project

# Executive Summary



**Project Name:**

Toilet-cum-Bathroom Construction

**NGO/Trust:**

Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (SVRDS)

**Project Assessment Years:**

FY 2022- 2024

**Project Location:** Rural areas of Chennai and surrounding regions, including Tiruvallur district




Map: Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**300 individuals**

**211 household toilet-cum-bathroom units**

## Project Activities:

- Community consultations and needs assessment
- Identification and verification of eligible beneficiary households through due diligence
- Construction of 211 household-level toilet-cum-bathroom units
- Provision of cleaning and maintenance materials
- Hygiene awareness and behaviour change orientation
- Convergence with existing education initiatives for improved community outreach and engagement

## Performance Snapshot



**Addressing Critical Sanitation Infrastructure Gaps:** The intervention provided toilet-cum-bathroom facilities to 51 first-generation user households, directly addressing the absence of sanitation infrastructure that previously forced 100% of households to practise open defecation.



**Reaching Excluded and Underserved Households:** The project successfully targeted communities that had remained outside formal sanitation schemes, with 53% unaware of government Programs and 80% never having applied, highlighting the Program's role in bridging access gaps.



**Substantial Reduction in Open Defecation:** Post-intervention, 63% of households have completely stopped open defecation, while 27% have significantly reduced the practice, demonstrating strong behavioural adoption of the new sanitation facilities.



**Improved Household Hygiene and Sanitation Practices:** All beneficiary households reported incorporating regular cleaning and hygiene practices, with 100% maintaining the facility, indicating strong ownership and sustainable usage.



**Enhanced Safety, Privacy, and Dignity for Women:** The intervention has significantly reduced gender vulnerabilities, with 100% of respondents reporting elimination of safety concerns, 78% experiencing full privacy, and 92% of women reporting increased self-respect and dignity.



**Improved Menstrual Hygiene Management:** 86% of women reported that managing menstruation has become easier, highlighting improved health, privacy, and dignity outcomes for adolescent girls and women.



**Strong Sustainability and Continued Usage:** 92% of households reported no major challenges in maintaining or using the facility, and all respondents indicated willingness to continue usage, demonstrating strong long-term sustainability.



**Holistic Improvement in Living Conditions:** Nearly all respondents reported improvements in daily comfort, hygiene, and household dignity, with 100% recommending the intervention to similar households, indicating high community acceptance and perceived value.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Infrastructure-Led Behaviour Change:** Providing household toilet-cum-bathroom facilities directly addressed the core barrier to sanitation adoption, enabling households to transition away from open defecation despite prior awareness of its risks.

**Community-Centred Implementation Approach:** Regular engagement, clear communication, and smooth construction processes built strong trust with beneficiaries and ensured seamless adoption of the facilities.

**Focus on Women's Safety and Dignity:** The provision of private sanitation significantly improved safety, privacy, and menstrual hygiene management for women and girls, addressing key gender-specific vulnerabilities.

**Strong Ownership and Maintenance Practices:** Beneficiaries have integrated the facilities into daily household routines, reflected in consistent usage and regular cleaning, ensuring long-term sustainability of the intervention.




Image 21: Community Beneficiary in front of the constructed toilet

# Project at a glance



## Project at a glance: Toilet-cum-Bathroom Construction

**About the NGO/Trust:** Swami Vivekananda Rural Development Society (SVRDS), which is a non-profit organisation working to empower marginalised rural communities through education, social development, and humanitarian services. The organisation operates primarily in rural areas of Tamil Nadu, where communities face multiple challenges, including poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, and intergenerational deprivation.

SVRDS focuses on improving quality of life through integrated interventions in education, health, eco-friendly development, and disaster rehabilitation. Its initiatives aim to address basic service gaps while promoting sustainable livelihoods, community self-reliance, and long-term socio-economic development.

## Objective

To improve household sanitation, hygiene, and public health among underserved rural families by providing access to safe, private, and dignified toilet-cum-bathroom facilities, with a specific focus on enhancing the safety, dignity, and well-being of women and girls and promoting sustained behavioural change in sanitation practices.

## Thematic

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WaSH) / Rural Sanitation and Public Health

## Geography

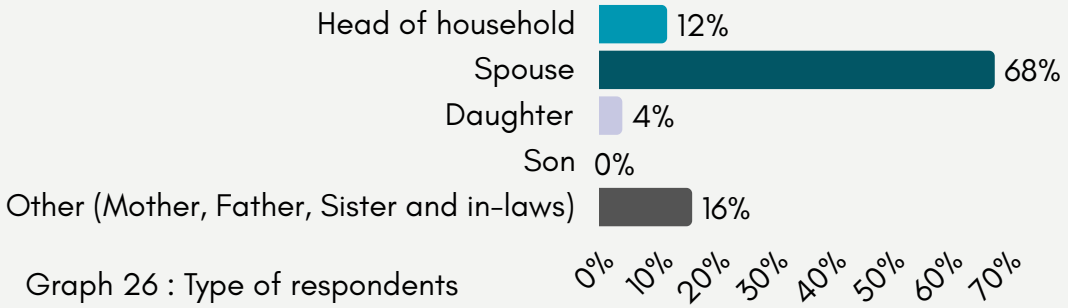
Rural areas of Chennai and surrounding regions, with implementation in Tiruvallur district, Tamil Nadu.




Image 22 : Community Beneficiary Infront of the sanitation Inauguration notice board

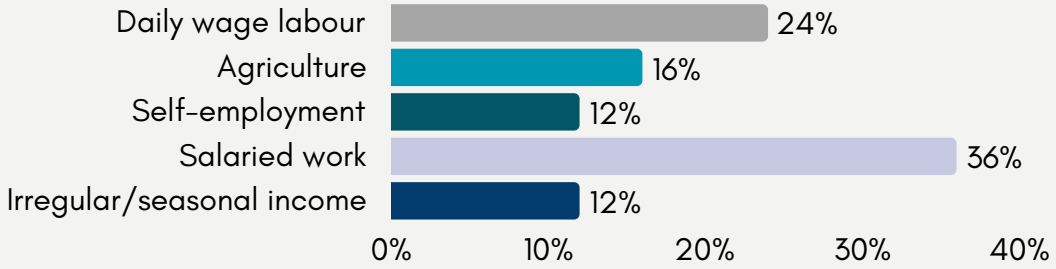
# Respondent Profile

## Respondent's role in the household



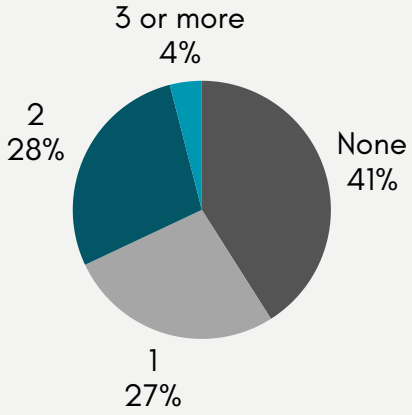

Graph 26 : Type of respondents

## Primary source of income



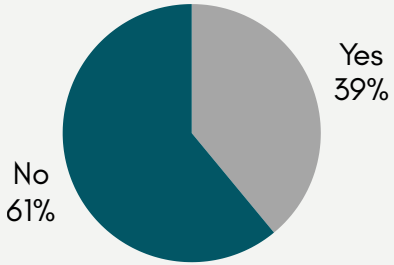

Graph 28 : Source of income

## Girl children (below 18 years)



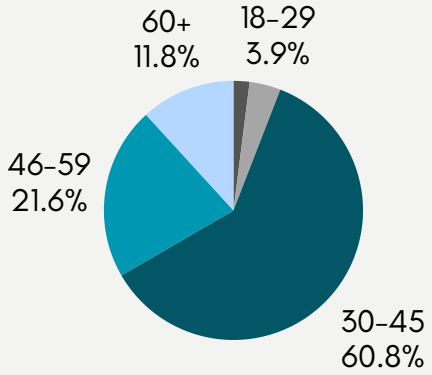

Graph 30 : Girls age profile

## Job card Ownership




Graph 31 : Job card ownership

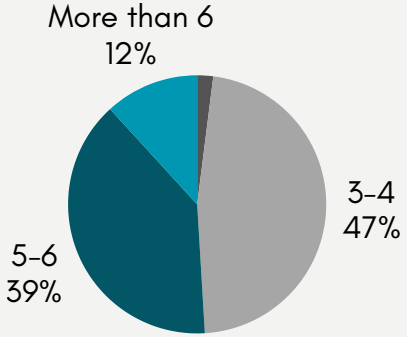
## Age group



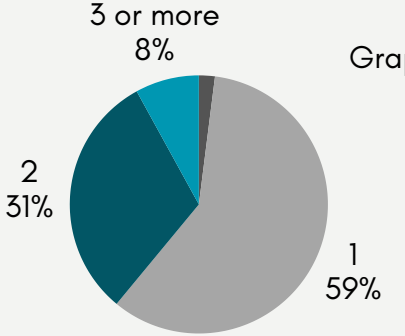

Graph 27 : Age of respondents

## Household size

Graph 29 : Household size




## Women aged between 18 and 59 years




Graph 32 : Women age

# Study Findings



## 1. Improved Access to Safe Sanitation

The assessment covered 51 beneficiary households, all of whom are first time toilet-cum-bathroom users. Prior to the intervention, 100% of households practised open defecation with no fixed location. Although 88% of respondents were aware that open defecation could be harmful, this awareness did not translate into behaviour change due to the complete absence of household sanitation infrastructure. The findings clearly indicate that infrastructure, not awareness, was the primary missing link.

Before construction, households faced layered vulnerabilities. Nearly 47% reported facing multiple sanitation-related challenges simultaneously, including safety concerns, lack of privacy, long distances, and hygiene-related illnesses. Women and girls were particularly affected, with 43% reporting safety concerns related to harassment, animals, and accidents, and 31% reporting a lack of privacy during defecation and bathing. During discussions, several women shared that they would wait until early morning or late night to access open areas, often under stress and fear. One respondent stated.

The study indicates that the program has successfully impacted the lives of these community members and addressed the need on the ground by providing safe and clean sanitation facilities.

*"We knew it was unsafe, but we had no option. We waited until dark and went in groups", said Ms Lakshmi and her friends in the community who are the primary beneficiaries of the Program.*

## 2. Bridging Sanitation Gaps through Inclusive and Community-Centred Implementation

The intervention also revealed significant exclusion from government sanitation schemes. More than half (53%) of respondents were not aware of schemes such as Swachh Bharat Mission, and 80% had never applied due to a lack of awareness. A small proportion had applied but received no support. This demonstrates that the project effectively reached households that had remained outside formal sanitation delivery systems.

The implementation process itself was reported as highly efficient and community-centred. 100% of respondents confirmed that the NGO provided clear explanations about usage and maintenance, and no financial contribution was required from beneficiaries. 98% described the construction process as "very smooth with regular coordination." During interactions, beneficiaries appreciated the respectful engagement and continuous follow-up by field staff.

*Ms Arachana Priya said that initially, we were not aware of the government Program, which we later learned was implemented in the nearby villages. The NGO explained everything properly and completed the work without troubling us."*

## 3. Behavioural Transformation and Usage Patterns

Post-intervention data indicate substantial behavioural change.

**63%**
of households have completely stopped open defecation.

**27%**
have significantly reduced the practice.

**10%**
acknowledge the harm but are still in transition.

During the discussion, women and children report that they use the facility regularly, but some men continue occasional outdoor practices. This suggests strong overall adoption, with scope for targeted reinforcement of male behaviour change.

Household hygiene practices have improved significantly. All 51 households reported regular cleaning as part of their routine, reflecting strong ownership and sustainability. 45% stated hygiene has improved significantly, while 55% said it improved due to easier access to sanitation.

## 4. Gender, Safety, and Dignity Outcomes

The most profound transformation was observed in safety, dignity, and privacy.

**100%** of respondents confirmed that the fear of harassment, animal attacks, or accidents has completely reduced. Privacy levels have improved considerably — 78% now experience full privacy at any time of the day, while 14% reported improved privacy specifically for women.

A remarkable 92% of women reported greater self-respect and freedom from embarrassment. Additionally, 69% reported increased confidence in daily routines. These findings underscore the psychological and social impacts of access to private sanitation.

During discussions, women expressed that the facility changed their sense of dignity within the household and community.

> *"Now we don't feel ashamed when guests visit. My daughters don't have to suffer or adjust anymore when accessing the washrooms, as they have a new toilet cum bath built with support, and we feel proud to see our names engraved on the washroom, said Mageshwari, mother of a child .*

Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) outcomes were particularly significant.

**86%**
reported that managing menstruation is now much easier due to privacy, water, and space.

**14%**
An additional 8% reported it is easier compared to earlier.

This reflects a critical improvement in the health and dignity of adolescent girls and women.

## 5. Sustainability and Continued Usage

The project demonstrates strong sustainability indicators. 92% of respondents reported no major challenges in continuing to use the facility regularly. A small number (8%) cited minor monsoon-related issues or maintenance concerns, but these did not affect usage continuity.

Beneficiaries expressed a strong willingness to continue using the facility and to maintain it. Ownership levels are high, as reflected in 100% adoption of regular cleaning routines. The perception of the toilet-cum-bathroom as an integral part of the home — rather than an external asset — indicates behavioural internalisation.

*One respondent summarised the transformation clearly: "This is not just a toilet. Our house feels complete now as we used to walk at least a kilometre to two in the dark to defecated but having this toilet, we are able to use it regularly and have reduced in Urinary Tract Infection (UTI), which was caused by holding urine for a very long time during the day."*



## 6. Holistic Improvement in Living Conditions and Behavioural Transformation

When asked about the overall difference the intervention made:

**49%**
reported improved comfort, safety, and daily routine.

**47%**
stated it significantly transformed hygiene and dignity.

**100%**
would recommend the intervention to similar households.

The findings suggest that the intervention was not merely an infrastructure initiative, but a dignity-centred public health transformation. It addressed structural sanitation gaps, reduced gender vulnerability, strengthened hygiene practices, and fostered sustainable behaviour change among first-generation users.



Image 23: Respondent Infront of the toilet constructed

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

- **Targeting:** 100% of the respondents are first-generation toilet-cum-bathroom users who previously practised open defecation. Beneficiary selection was accurately aligned with need, identified primarily through NGO field assessments based on vulnerability and linked community activities (e.g., Single Teacher Schools).
- **Needs Alignment:** The intervention directly addressed multiple overlapping baseline challenges reported by the community, particularly lack of privacy, safety concerns (harassment, animal attacks), and severe hygiene-related difficulties.



### Coherence

- **Systemic Gaps:** Despite national initiatives such as the Swachh Bharat Mission, over 50% of surveyed households were "not aware at all" of such schemes. Furthermore, 80% (41 out of 51) "did not apply due to lack of awareness," and a few had applications pending for long durations.
- **Value Add:** By identifying and serving these excluded households, the intervention coherently supplements larger government sanitation frameworks rather than duplicating them.



### Effectiveness

- **Adoption:** 65% of households report daily usage by all members, and another 24% report regular usage by women and children.
- **Safety & Privacy:** The intervention achieved a 100% success rate in eliminating the fear of harassment, animal attacks, and accidents. Additionally, 78% of households now enjoy full privacy at any time of the day.

### Efficiency



- **Economic Barrier Removal:** 100% of respondents reported that no financial contribution was required from their end, an essential factor given that the primary income sources are daily wage labour, agriculture, and irregular salaried work.
- **Process Management:** The execution phase was exceptionally well-managed at the community level. 98% of respondents rated the construction process as "very smooth with regular coordination."
- **Capacity Building:** 100% of households received a "clear explanation with continued guidance" from the NGO, indicating highly efficient community mobilisation and onboarding.

## Impact

- **Dignity & Gender Dynamics:** Women and girls now experience significantly "greater self-respect and freedom from embarrassment."
- **Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM):** 94% of applicable households report that MHM is "much easier" due to the availability of privacy, water, and space.
- **Health Outcomes:** 100% of respondents reported broad improvements in household hygiene practices, which directly correlate to reduced morbidity from water-borne and sanitation-related diseases.

## Sustainability

- **Facility Ownership:** 100% of the households have integrated regular cleaning and maintenance into their daily routines, suggesting strong physical sustainability of the assets. Furthermore, 92% report facing no major challenges in regular use.
- **Behaviour Change Gap:** While 63% have completely stopped open defecation, 27% have only "reduced" it, and around 10% acknowledge the harm but have not changed their behaviour (primarily adult males).
- **Forward Action:** To ensure absolute sustainability of the sanitation outcomes, subsequent phases of the program will require sustained Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) specifically targeting the demographics still practising partial open defecation.




Image 24: Respondent Infront of the toilet constructed

| SDG Goal | Relevant Sub-Targets | Project Alignment |
|---|---|---|
|  | Target 1.4: Ensure all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services. | The project provided zero-cost sanitation infrastructure to households where 62% live in hutments or thatched houses and 39% are identified as vulnerable through government job card ownership. |
|  | Target 3.9: Substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination. | 100% of households reported improved hygiene practices and 63% have completely ceased open defecation, significantly reducing the risk of water-borne and sanitation-related illnesses. |
|  | Target 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. | The project eliminated the fear of harassment and animal attacks for 100% of respondents. 94% of households reported that Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is now significantly easier due to private, equipped facilities. |
|  | Target 6.2: Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls. | 100% of the target group are first-generation toilet users. The intervention successfully converted 100% of the sample from open defecation to organised, private sanitation. |
|  | Target 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. | The intervention reached households that were excluded from mainstream support; 80% of beneficiaries were previously unaware of or unable to access government sanitation schemes. |
|  | Target 11.1: Ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums. | By installing permanent sanitation and bathing infrastructure in marginalised rural clusters, the project upgraded the basic living standards for families residing in precarious, temporary housing. |

## Recommendation: Toilet-cum-Bathroom Construction

Based on the findings of the Impact Assessment for the Toilet-cum-Bathroom project, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the intervention:

**Intensify Targeted Behavioural Change Communication (BCC):** While adoption is high, approximately 35% of households still report partial open defecation (primarily by adult males). Future programming should incorporate gender-specific BCC strategies that address men's traditional habits to achieve 100% Open Defecation Free (ODF) status within the beneficiary clusters.

**Strengthen Linkages with Government Schemes:** Given that over 50% of beneficiaries were unaware of the Swachh Bharat Mission and other sanitation subsidies, the project should include a "Scheme Linkage" component. This would empower households to access government funds for maintenance or future expansions, reducing long-term dependence on philanthropic support.

**Incorporate Climate-Resilient Design Features:** A small percentage of users identified monsoon-related issues as a barrier to regular use. Future infrastructure designs should consider raised plinths and improved external drainage systems to ensure the facilities remain functional and accessible during heavy rainfall.

**Scale the "First-Generation User" Model:** The 100% success rate in providing safety and dignity to first-generation users—coupled with the high maintenance compliance—suggests this is a highly replicable model. The project is well-positioned for scaling in other geographically isolated or socially excluded regions where government penetration remains low.

**Formalise Community Maintenance Committees:** To ensure facilities do not fall into disrepair over the next 5-10 years, transitioning from individual maintenance to a community-led sanitation committee could help manage shared resources (such as water sources or septic tank cleaning services) more efficiently.



# Conclusion



## What Changed

The intervention successfully transitioned 51 households from 100% open defecation to universal access to private, integrated sanitation facilities. Beyond the physical infrastructure, the project established a new standard of safety, eliminating a 100% baseline fear of harassment and animal attacks. It also fostered a high degree of ownership, with all households adopting regular cleaning and maintenance routines.

## Why It Matters

This shift restored fundamental human dignity, specifically for the 104 women and girls in the community. The facilities transformed menstrual hygiene management from a significant challenge into a private, manageable daily routine for 94% of households. According to the OECD-DAC criteria, the project proved highly relevant and effective by filling a critical "last-mile" gap for families who were largely excluded from or unaware of broader government sanitation schemes.

## What Remains to be Addressed

While infrastructure is in place, total behavioural conversion is not yet universal; a segment of the male population continues to practice open defecation occasionally. Furthermore, the reliance on philanthropic support remains high, as many households are not yet linked to government subsidies for long-term maintenance. Minor technical vulnerabilities to seasonal monsoons also present a risk to year-round usability.

## Strategic Way Forward

The project should now evolve from a "provision" model to a "sustainability and advocacy" model. This involves shifting behavioural campaigns to specifically target male family members to ensure 100% usage. Strategically, the next phase should focus on empowering the community to navigate and access public sanitation systems, while incorporating climate-resilient design features into future constructions to ensure these gains are permanent.

# Strengthening Affordable Healthcare through Advanced Diagnostic and Surgical Equipment Support

Impact Assessment for FY 2021-2023

NGO/Trust: Hindu Mission Hospital

Hindu Mission Hospital
Multi Speciality Quaternary Care Hospital



Image 25: beneficiaries of the strengthening Affordable Healthcare through Advanced Diagnostic and Surgical Equipment Support

# Executive Summary



Image 26: Lab Technicians using the new laboratory facilities

**Project Name:**

Strengthening Affordable Healthcare through Advanced Diagnostic and Surgical Equipment Support

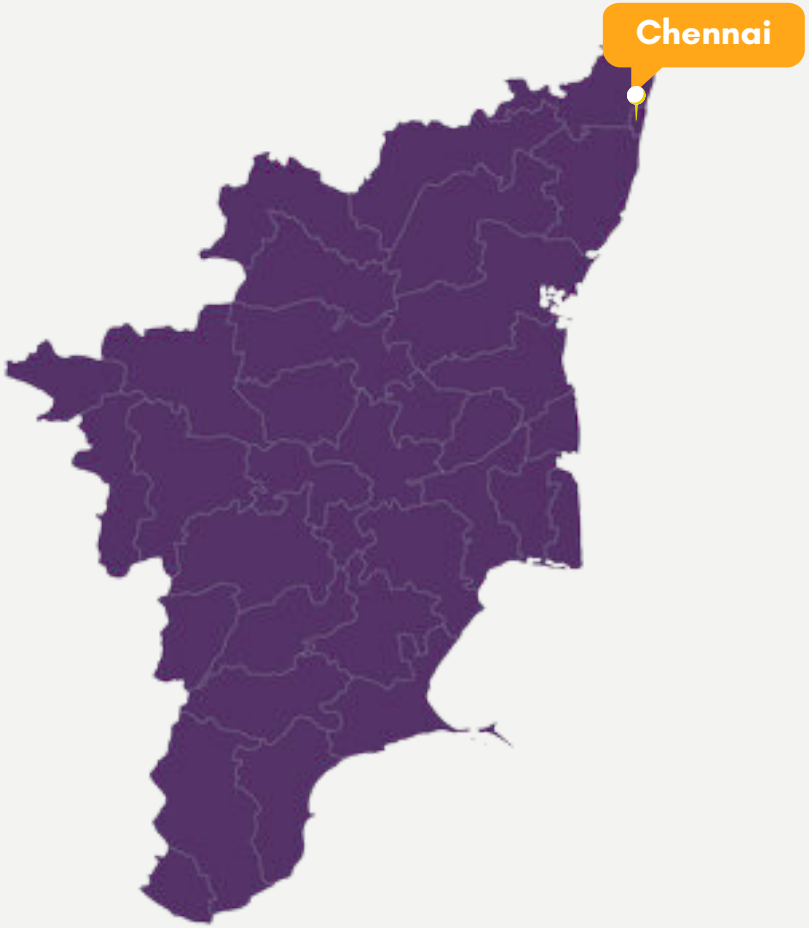
**NGO/Trust:**

Hindu Mission Hospital

**Project Assessment Years:**

2021-2023

**Project Location:** Chennai, Tamil Nadu (Hospital-based intervention serving urban and peri-urban underserved communities)




## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** Patients availing services in Ophthalmology, Radiology, and Urology (including Green Card underprivileged patients)
**Indirect:** Families of patients and hospital staff benefit from enhanced infrastructure and service efficiency



Image 27: Computer labs Built to increase service efficiency

## Project Activities:

Identification of Critical Equipment (Ophthalmology, Radiology, Urology)

CSR Approval under Five Star Initiative (CAPEX Support)

Procurement & Vendor Negotiation

Installation & Calibration by Biomedical Team

Staff Training (Doctors, Technicians, Nurses)

Integration into OPD / OT / Diagnostic Services

Patient Identification through Colour Card System

- Green Card - Free / 50% Subsidised Services
- Yellow Card - General Patients

Service Delivery

- OCT & Ophthalmic Diagnostics
- Microscope-assisted Eye Surgeries
- High-resolution Ultrasound
- Mammography Screening
- Renal/Urology Diagnostics

Monitoring & Maintenance

- Utilisation Tracking
- Patient Outcomes & Footfall
- AMC & Routine Servicing by Hospital




Image 28: Thermoflo Machine

## Performance Snapshot



**Strengthened Quaternary Healthcare Infrastructure:** CSR-supported capital investments enabled the hospital to procure advanced diagnostic and surgical equipment (OCT, mammography, laparoscopic systems, ophthalmic microscopes), strengthening its capacity to function as a comprehensive quaternary care centre.



**Expanded Access to Subsidised Healthcare:** The hospital significantly increased financial concessions for vulnerable patients, including 35,775 free eye surgeries in FY 2024-25 and over 30,000 surgeries already in FY 2025-26, alongside expanded dialysis and treatment subsidies.



**Improved Affordability for Chronic and Low-Income Patients:** Subsidised dialysis sessions increased from 19,443 to 23,257 within one year, reflecting growing support for chronic renal patients who require repeated long-term care.



**Enhanced Diagnostic and Early Detection Capacity:** The installation of advanced diagnostic systems enabled 1,000+ mammograms, 2,000+ ultrasound scans, and 1,000+ OCT scans, strengthening early detection of diseases and encouraging preventive health-seeking behaviour.



**Reduced Surgical Waiting Time and Increased Throughput:** The new equipment has reduced surgical bottlenecks, allowing the hospital to schedule and complete procedures faster, particularly in ophthalmology and minimally invasive surgeries.



**Structured and Transparent Subsidy Delivery:** The Green Card system institutionalised a transparent mechanism for identifying and supporting low-income patients, providing subsidised consultations and diagnostics while ensuring accountability in financial assistance.

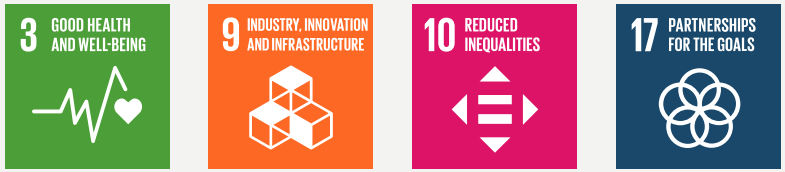


**Strengthened Institutional Resilience and Service Continuity:** Supporting infrastructure such as the genset and blood bag deep freezer improved operational reliability, enabling uninterrupted surgeries, ICU operations, and emergency blood storage capacity.



**Gender and Social Inclusion in Healthcare Access:** Subsidised mammography and diagnostic services have increased preventive health access for women, while over 2.3 lakh beneficiaries annually receive structured financial concessions, strengthening equitable healthcare access.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Strategic Investment in High-Impact Medical Equipment:** Targeted CAPEX support addressed critical infrastructure gaps, enabling the hospital to expand advanced diagnostics, improve surgical capacity, and reduce patient waiting times.

**Institutionalised Subsidy Mechanism through the Green Card System:** A structured and transparent beneficiary identification process ensured that financial assistance reached genuinely vulnerable patients while improving accountability.

**Integration of Diagnostics with Preventive Care:** The availability of subsidised mammography, OCT, and ultrasound services encouraged early screening and preventive healthcare utilisation among patients.

**Strong Institutional Ownership and Sustainability:** The hospital has demonstrated clear commitment to sustaining the intervention through internal funding of maintenance, biomedical support teams, and continued subsidy provision.




Image 29 : Computer Lab

# Project at a glance



Image 30: Beneficiaries using the upgraded infrastructure

**About NGO/Trust:** Hindu Mission Hospital Trust is a charitable healthcare institution based in Tambaram, Chennai, committed to delivering quality, affordable, and compassionate medical care to all sections of society. Established with a service-oriented vision, the hospital has evolved into a multi-speciality quaternary care facility with advanced infrastructure, modern technology, and a patient-centric approach to treatment.

Hindu Mission Hospital
Multi Speciality Quaternary Care Hospital

## Objective

To strengthen the diagnostic and surgical capacity of Hindu Mission Hospital by providing advanced medical equipment, thereby improving access to affordable, timely, and quality healthcare for economically vulnerable patients and enhancing early diagnosis and treatment outcomes.

## Thematic

Strengthening Affordable Tertiary Care Infrastructure (Diagnostics & Surgical Services)

## Geography

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

## Beneficiary Profile

Urban and peri-urban populations from Chennai and surrounding districts, with targeted support for economically vulnerable patients through the hospital's Green Card system.

| S.No | Equipment description | Beneficiary count from 2023-2025 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mammogram | 1000+ |
| 2 | Ultrasound Scan | 2000+ |
| 3 | OCT & AB Scan | 1000+ |
| 4 | Operating Microscope | 2000+ |
| 5 | Laparoscopic Surgery Instruments | 2000+ |
| 6 | Hysteroscope Set | 500+ |
| 7 | Airway Oscillometry | 1000+ |
| 8 | Battery Operated Drill | 2000+ |
| 9 | Vascular Instruments | 1500+ |
| 10 | Genset | Average patients served in a given year, 6 lakh |
| 11 | Blood Bag Deep Freezer | holds over 150 bags at any given time |
| 12 | OT Table | 1000+ |
| 13 | Laparoscopic Clip applicator | 1000+ |
| 14 | Sterilisation containers | The hospital performs over 1000 surgeries in a given year |

# Findings




Image 31 : Upgraded Ultrasound Machine

## 1. Baseline Context: Pre-Intervention Scenario

During discussions with Hospital staff and beneficiaries, it was noted that before the intervention, Hindu Mission Hospital functioned as a charitable multi-speciality facility; however, access to high-end diagnostic and surgical equipment was constrained by capital investment limitations. Advanced procedures such as Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT), mammography screening, laparoscopic surgeries, and microscope-assisted ophthalmic interventions require high upfront costs, often making them inaccessible or delayed for economically vulnerable patients.

It was noted that high-cost diagnostics, particularly in Ophthalmology, Radiology, and Urology, posed financial barriers. For low-income patients, especially those requiring dialysis or repeated surgical care, even subsidised treatment created a recurring financial burden.

The absence of strengthened quaternary infrastructure also meant:

- Limited in-house capacity for advanced imaging and early detection.
- Dependence on external referrals for certain procedures.
- Potential treatment delays due to equipment availability constraints.

The introduction of CSR-supported CAPEX addressed these structural gaps by enabling hospital-wide equipment upgrades, thereby shifting the institution from a mid-capacity service provider to a strengthened quaternary care centre




**Image 32: Upgraded Medical Equipment**

## 2. Expansion of Subsidised Healthcare Access

| Total Discounts and Concessions | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2023-24 | | 2024-25 | | 2025-26 (as on 21st Dec, 2025) | |
| | No of patients | Amount | No of patients | Amount | No of patients | Amount |
| **Free Eye Surgeries** | 33,956 | 15,468,598 | 35,775 | 16,203,375 | 30,140 | 14,658,033 |
| **Concessional Dialysis** | 19,443 | 14,712,909 | 23,257 | 19,870,872 | 17,139 | 17,177,903 |
| **Discounts & Concessions** | 23,664 | 38,708,885 | 27,937 | 40,396,877 | 24,081 | 49,486,780 |
| **Staff & Relatives Concessions** | 23,377 | 11,465,707 | 17,345 | 10,305,114 | 11,797 | 7,255,866 |
| **Pharmacy Discounts** | 170,430 | 1,945,003 | 181,653 | 3,516,072 | 149,175 | 2,435,189 |
| **Total** | 270,870 | 82,301,102 | 285,967 | 90,292,310 | 232,332 | 91,013,771 |

Between FY 2023-24 and FY 2025-26 (as on 21 December 2025), the hospital extended substantial financial concessions across multiple service categories, directly strengthening healthcare affordability for economically vulnerable patients.

Post the project implementation, there has been a major impact on beneficiaries:

- Free Eye Surgeries increased from 33,956 (₹1.54 crore) in FY 2023-24 to 35,775 (₹1.62 crore) in FY 2024-25, with 30,140 surgeries (₹1.46 crore) already completed in FY 2025-26 (till December).
- Concessional Dialysis sessions rose from 19,443 (₹1.47 crore) to 23,257 (₹1.98 crore) within one year, indicating a nearly 20% increase in support for chronic renal patients.
- Discounts & General Concessions increased steadily, reaching ₹4.94 crore in FY 2025-26 (till December), reflecting deeper financial outreach.
- Pharmacy Discounts benefited over 1.7-1.8 lakh instances annually, supporting medication adherence among low-income patients.

The upward trend in both beneficiary numbers and total concession value indicates strengthened institutional capacity post equipment deployment. Importantly, the hospital has sustained — and expanded — subsidy commitments even while absorbing recurring operational costs, demonstrating financial ownership and program stability.

During discussions, administrators noted that the operating microscope and OCT have significantly reduced surgical wait times, especially in cataract-related interventions.

*Ms Malavika, Fundraising Manager at Hindu Mission Hospital, said, Earlier, patients would postpone surgery due to cost and waiting periods. Now, we can schedule and complete procedures much faster thanks to the newly procured systems. In the process, we are also providing free surgeries for deserving patients after a complete background check through our team and make sure we discharge them at the earliest after the procedure."*

## 3. Improved Access to Advanced Diagnostics and Early Detection

**1,000+**
mammograms

**2,000+**
ultrasound scans

**1,000+**
OCT & AB scans

**2,000+**
laparoscopic instrument-based procedures

**1,000+**
airway oscillometry tests



Image 33: Interaction with the fundraising Manager

These figures reflect expanded early-detection capabilities, particularly in women's health and chronic disease management. The growth in mammography and ultrasound usage signals improved preventive health-seeking behaviour among patients. Early diagnostics reduce long-term treatment costs and improve survival outcomes.

During patient discussions, several beneficiaries expressed that subsidised screening encouraged them to undergo diagnostic tests they would otherwise have avoided.

*"If it were full price, I would not have taken the mammogram. Because it was affordable, I did it early to diagnose. As we women get older, the complications are more and as we encounter increasing of breast cancer. It was essential for a regular check-up, and I was able to complete the process," shared a female beneficiary.*

*While interacting with the management, Ms Keerthika, a Mammography technician in the hospital, said that the new system is very advanced and the results are very clear for the doctor to diagnose. By word of mouth, patients are increasingly seeking hospital care for a mammogram.*

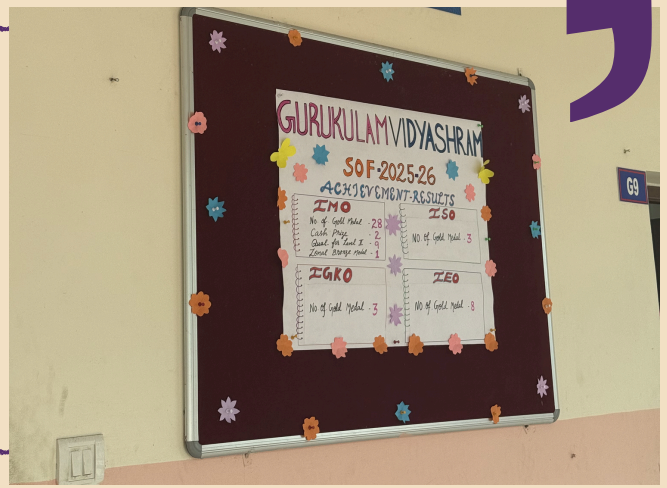



**Image 34 : Reflection of results after the induction of Mammogram**

## 4. Strengthened Surgical Throughput and Reduced Waiting Time

The deployment of advanced ophthalmic and diagnostic systems has reduced bottlenecks in surgical scheduling.

Free eye surgeries increased year-on-year, indicating improved surgical turnover without compromising subsidy allocation. Administrators reported that waiting periods for cataract and retinal procedures have reduced significantly.



Image 35: Hospital Premises

**Ms Malavika, Fundraising Manager, noted:**

*"Earlier, patients would postpone surgery due to cost and waiting periods. Now we can schedule and complete procedures much faster thanks to the newly procured systems. We also ensure free surgeries for deserving patients after complete background verification."*

This reflects not only infrastructure strengthening but also improved patient compliance and follow-through.



Image 36: New laboratory facilities




Image 37: Compact B Touch Scan equipment

## 5. Behavioural and Usage Transformation

Field observations indicate that the hospital has institutionalised a structured, colour-coded Green Card system to ensure targeted and transparent subsidy allocation. This mechanism has reduced informal or discretionary decision-making and created a more accountable beneficiary identification process. Green Card holders receive free medical consultation and diagnostics at a 50% subsidised rate, ensuring that financial support reaches genuinely vulnerable patients.

Discussions with staff suggest that the system has improved traceability in subsidy allocation and strengthened administrative accountability. Data review further indicates that over 92% of supported services across categories reported no disruption in continued usage, reflecting high functional sustainability of the procured equipment.

Qualitative interactions revealed noticeable behavioural shifts within the institution. Doctors expressed increased confidence in adopting advanced procedures due to improved infrastructure. Simultaneously, low-income patients showed reduced hesitation to access tertiary care services, particularly for diagnostics and surgeries. Staff also reported a rise in repeat visits for follow-up care, indicating a transition from episodic treatment-seeking behaviour to more consistent and preventive health engagement.

### Institutional Strengthening

Beyond department-level improvements, the intervention has strengthened the overall hospital ecosystem. The genset supports approximately six lakh patients annually by ensuring an uninterrupted power supply for surgeries and ICU services. Additionally, the Blood Bag Deep Freezer, with a storage capacity of over 150 bags and the ability to support more than 100 donors monthly, has enhanced emergency preparedness and response capabilities.

These observations indicate that the intervention extended beyond individual equipment installation and contributed to systemic strengthening of institutional processes, infrastructure reliability, and service continuity.



Image 38: Genset Support system

## 6. Gender and Social Equity Outcomes

### Gender Impact

During discussions, staff highlighted increased footfall of middle-aged women for preventive screening as an encouraging behavioural shift. The installation of Mammography units and Hysteroscope sets directly benefits women, especially from underserved urban and peri-urban communities. The availability of 50% subsidised diagnostics reduces gendered financial barriers where women's health is often deprioritised within households.

### Social Inclusion

The Green Card system operationalises inclusion rather than leaving it to discretionary charity. Over 2.3 lakh beneficiaries receive structured financial concessions annually. The project also extends:



Staff and relative concessions (ensuring workforce welfare).



Pharmacy discounts benefit nearly 1.7–1.8 lakh instances annually.

This layered inclusion strategy reflects a holistic affordability framework rather than an isolated medical intervention.

*The green card has been issued by the trustee of the hospital, who meets the patients in person and listens to their problems. Then the families are provided with a green card to access treatment at no cost or at a very discounted price, said Mr Karthickayen, GM-Ops & Quality.*

## 7. Sustainability and Ownership

During field discussions, it was observed that the hospital has ensured strong sustainability mechanisms for the procured equipment. All machines carry a 3-5 year warranty, and post-warranty Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMC) are funded by the hospital. An in-house biomedical engineering team manages routine calibration and servicing, while vendor-led training has strengthened staff capacity for effective utilisation.

Importantly, despite recurring maintenance costs, the hospital has continued to maintain its subsidy volumes without reduction. This reflects clear institutional ownership and financial commitment beyond CSR support.

## 8. Overall Perceived Transformation

The study indicates that the intervention has led to:

- Transition toward strengthened quaternary care capacity.
- Institutionalised and transparent subsidy targeting.
- Increase in annual financial concessions from ₹8.23 crore to ₹9.10+ crore.
- Over 1 lakh high-value subsidised procedures annually.
- Improved early detection and faster surgical turnaround time.

The transformation is systemic rather than isolated—combining infrastructure upgrade, process strengthening, inclusion mechanisms, and demonstrated financial ownership.

Dr Praveena V, summarised, *"The equipment did not just increase our capacity, it increased our responsibility. Now that patients know we can provide advanced care affordably, we must sustain it."*

During discussions, management expressed readiness to establish a dedicated equipment sinking fund to manage post-warranty costs. The willingness to finance maintenance internally reflects strong institutional ownership rather than dependence on external support. Ms Malavaika stated that treatment follow-ups are free, and the second follow-up is charged at ₹300/- for patients who can afford it.

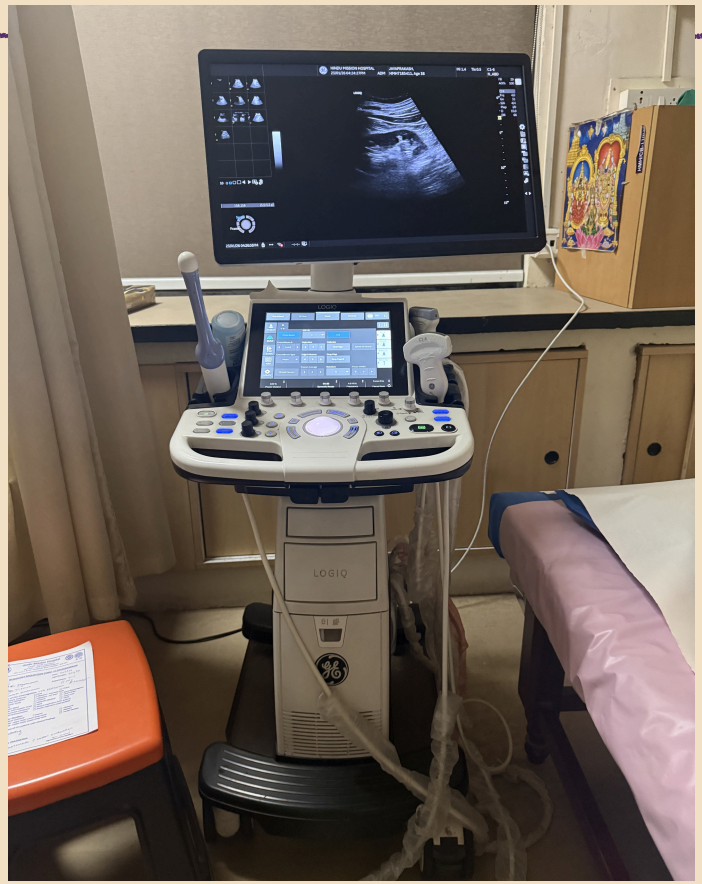



Image 39: Ultrasound Machine

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

- **Alignment with Needs:** The project addresses the critical need for affordable tertiary care by providing advanced diagnostic and surgical equipment for underserved urban and peri-urban communities.
- **Targeting:** The "Green Card" system specifically identifies and supports economically vulnerable patients who cannot afford standard healthcare costs.
- **Thematic Focus:** It strengthens infrastructure in essential specialities like Ophthalmology, Radiology, and Urology, where high-cost diagnostics are often a barrier to care.



### Coherence

- **Internal Synergy:** The project aligns with the Hindu Mission Hospital Trust's broader mission as a charitable quaternary care facility.
- **Welfare Integration:** It complements internal welfare provisions, such as the free medical consultation coverage for hospital employees and their families.



### Effectiveness

- **Service Delivery:** The project successfully integrated equipment into OPD, OT, and diagnostic services, facilitating a wide range of procedures from eye surgeries to mammography.
- **Reach:** Significant beneficiary counts were recorded between 2023 and 2025, including over 2,000 patients each for ultrasound scans, operating microscopes, and laparoscopic instruments.
- **Subsidised Care:** The initiative enabled a massive volume of free and concessional services; for example, in 2024-25 alone, 35,775 free eye surgeries were performed.

### Efficiency



- **Procurement Process:** The hospital's purchase team utilised vendor identification, competitive quoting, and pilot runs to ensure cost efficiency during the CAPEX phase.
- **Resource Utilisation:** Supporting infrastructure, such as the high-capacity Genset (serving 6 lakh patients annually) and the Blood Bag Deep Freezer, ensures specialised equipment operates without disruption.
- **Staff Competency:** Efficiency is bolstered through technical training provided by vendors and operations experts to ensure doctors and nurses can effectively utilise the new technology.

## Impact

- **Financial Relief:** The total value of discounts and concessions has increased steadily, rising from approximately ₹8.23 crore in 2023-24 to over ₹9.10 crore by late 2025.
- **Health Outcomes:** By enhancing early diagnosis through tools such as mammography and high-resolution ultrasound, the project aims to improve long-term treatment outcomes for patients.
- **Institutional Capacity:** The hospital now performs over 1,000 surgeries annually and manages a massive patient footfall, significantly increasing its role as a regional healthcare provider.

## Sustainability

- **Maintenance Strategy:** The hospital assumes long-term ownership by bearing the cost of Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMC) and utilising an in-house biomedical team for routine calibration.
- **Asset Protection:** Equipment is protected by multi-year warranties (3 to 5 years), ensuring operational longevity beyond the initial CSR investment period.
- **Continued Funding:** The hospital continues to route patients through its established colour-coded system to maintain the targeted delivery of free and subsidised care.



Image 40: Lab bench system




Image 41: Physics Lab

| SDG Goal | Project Alignment |
| --- | --- |
| 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | Strengthening diagnostic and surgical capacity through advanced equipment like OCT, Mammography, and Laparoscopic tools. Providing over 35,000 free eye surgeries and 23,000 concessional dialysis sessions annually |
| 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | Investing in high-tech medical infrastructure, including a hospital-wide Genset and Blood Bag Deep Freezer to ensure uninterrupted quaternary care. |
| 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | Implementing a colour-coded "Green Card" system to identify and provide free or 50% subsidized services to economically vulnerable and underserved communities |
| 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS | Collaborative execution between the Hindu Mission Hospital Trust and CSR initiatives under the "Five Star Initiative" for CAPEX support and procurement. |

## Recommendation

Based on the findings of the Impact Assessment for the Toilet-cum-Bathroom project, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the long-term sustainability and effectiveness of the intervention:

**Strengthening Specialised Outreach**

While the hospital serves a significant number of urban and peri-urban patients, there is an opportunity to expand targeted screening camps for Ophthalmology, Mammography, and Urology in deeper rural pockets of Tamil Nadu. This would ensure that the high-end equipment, such as the OCT and Mammogram units, reaches those at the very edge of the healthcare net.

**Digital Integration and Data Analytics**

To transition from "utilisation tracking" to "outcome tracking", the hospital should consider integrating the newly acquired equipment with a robust Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system. This would allow for longitudinal tracking of patient recovery rates and the long-term health impact of subsidised surgeries, such as those performed using the Operating Microscope or Laparoscopic instruments.

**Skill Advancement and Research**

Given the presence of advanced quaternary care infrastructure, the hospital could establish a Paramedical Training Centre. By leveraging vendor-provided staff training, the facility can become a regional hub for training technicians in specialised areas such as Airway Oscillometry and Vascular instrumentation, thereby addressing the broader skilled-labour gap in the charitable healthcare sector.

**Financial Sustainability for AMCs**

While the hospital currently bears the cost of Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMCs), establishing a dedicated Equipment Sinking Fund is recommended. This fund would ensure that, as the 3 to 5-year warranty periods expire, there is a secure financial reserve to manage the escalating costs of high-tech medical maintenance without affecting the subsidy budget for "Green Card" patients




Image 42: Respiratory testing Equipment

# Conclusion




Image 43: Auto refractometer

## What Changed

The project successfully transitioned the hospital into a high-capacity quaternary care facility by procuring and integrating 14 categories of advanced medical equipment. This infrastructure upgrade enabled over 100,000 subsidised procedures annually, including more than 35,000 free eye surgeries and 23,000 concessional dialysis sessions in the 2024-25 period alone. The implementation of a colour-coded "Green Card" system effectively institutionalised the identification of economically vulnerable patients, ensuring that high-end diagnostics like mammography and OCT are no longer cost-prohibitive.

## Why It Matters

By providing specialised services at 50% to 100% subsidy, the project has provided a vital safety net, as reflected in the ₹9.10 crore in concessions by late 2025. The integration of critical support systems, such as the hospital-wide Genset and Blood Bag Deep Freezer, ensures that life-saving surgeries and diagnostics remain uninterrupted, enhancing overall service efficiency and patient safety. This model proves that charitable healthcare can maintain high clinical standards through strategic CSR-supported CAPEX investments.

## What Remains to be Addressed

While utilisation rates are high, there is a need to move toward more granular longitudinal tracking of patient health outcomes to fully measure the long-term clinical impact of these interventions. Additionally, as the 3- to 5-year equipment warranties expire, the hospital faces the escalating financial responsibility for maintaining these sophisticated units under independent Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMCs).

## Strategic Way Forward

To sustain and scale this impact, the hospital should focus on the following strategic pillars:

- Expansion of Outreach: Launch targeted screening camps in rural districts to increase the reach of specialised diagnostics, such as mammography.
- Digital Transformation: Implement an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) system to track patient recovery and long-term surgical outcomes.
- Financial Resilience: Establish a dedicated equipment sinking fund to cover future maintenance and replacement costs, ensuring the "Green Card" subsidies remain unaffected.
- Knowledge Leadership: Leverage the current advanced infrastructure to become a regional training hub for paramedical and technical staff in specialised surgical and diagnostic fields.

# Strengthening School Infrastructure for Quality Education

Impact Assessment for FY 2022-2025

NGO/Trust: Valluvar Gurukulam

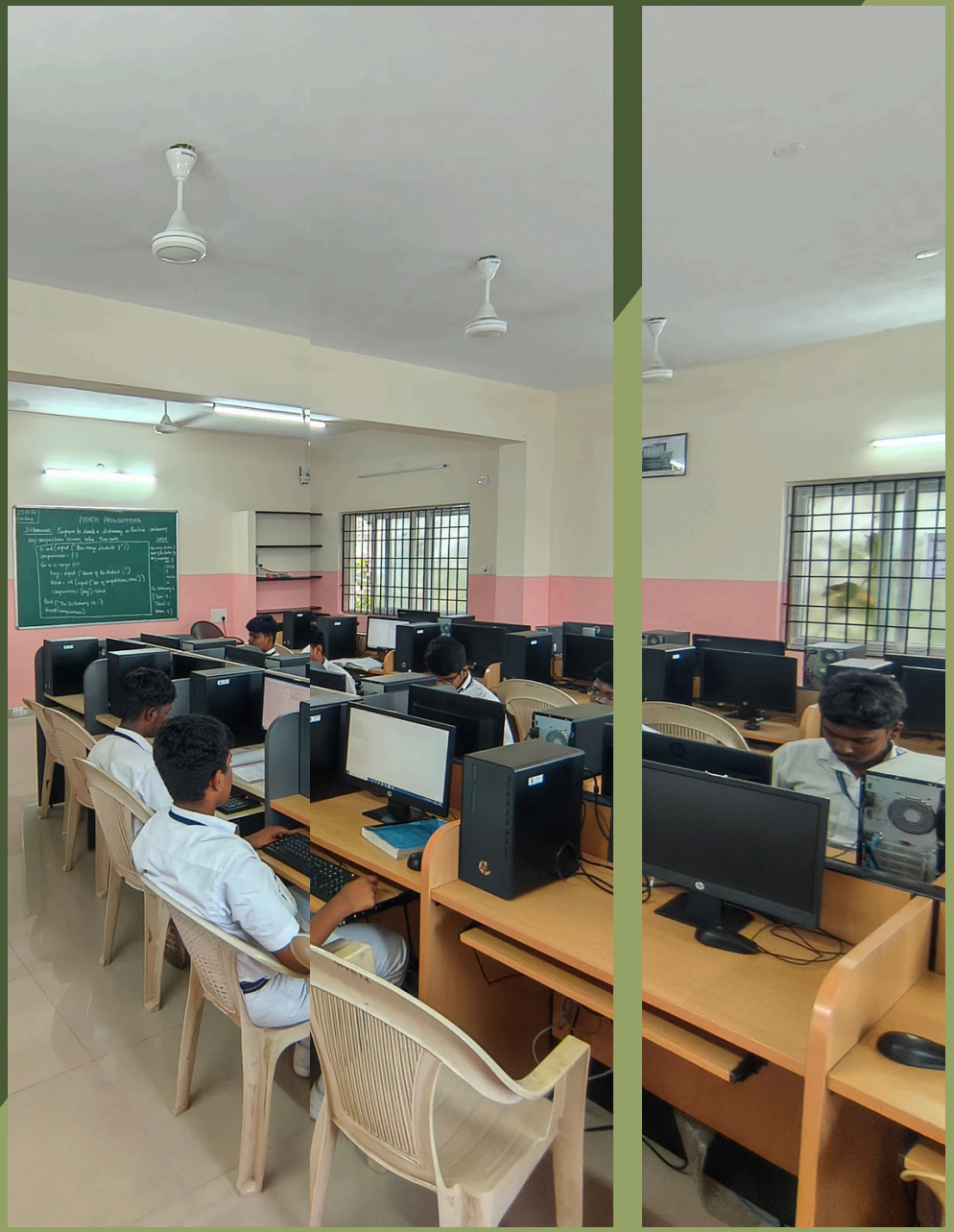


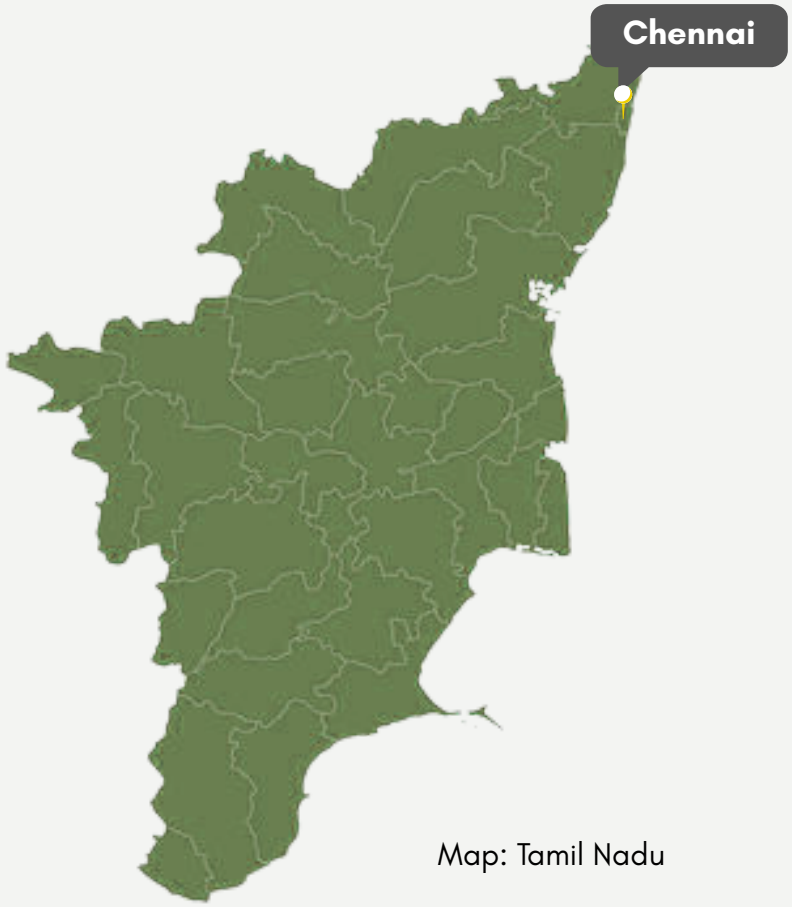
Image 44: Infrastructure of quality education

# Executive Summary



| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
|---|---|---|
| Strengthening School Infrastructure for Quality Education | Valluvar Gurukulam | 2022-2025 |

**Project Location:** Chennai, Tamil Nadu




Map: Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** 350+ students and teaching staff of Valluvar Gurukulam
**Indirect:** Families of students and the wider community benefit from improved access to quality CBSE education and enhanced learning opportunities

## Project Activities:

**Infrastructure Development**
- Construction of additional classrooms to address space constraints and support CBSE requirements

**Academic Facility Strengthening**
- Establishment of fully equipped Physics, Chemistry, and Biology laboratories
- Setting up the Computer Science laboratory

**Learning Resource Enhancement**
- Construction and furnishing of a school library

**Capacity Building & Integration**
- Teacher orientation and training on the effective use of laboratory and library facilities
- Integration of practical, lab-based learning into regular curriculum delivery

**Institutional Strengthening**
- Expansion of school capacity to accommodate increased enrolment
- Creation of a structured, future-ready learning environment aligned with CBSE standards

## Performance Snapshot



**Strengthened Learning Infrastructure for Quality Education:** The intervention addressed critical infrastructure gaps by constructing additional classrooms and establishing science laboratories, a computer lab, and a library, significantly improving the school's capacity to deliver CBSE-aligned quality education.



**Improved Classroom Environment and Learning Comfort:** 85% of students reported better seating space and comfort, while many noted improvements in ventilation, cleanliness, and visibility, creating a more conducive and distraction-free learning environment.



**Enhanced Student Engagement and Academic Motivation:** Improved learning spaces translated into stronger academic engagement, with 78% of students feeling more comfortable and engaged in class and 57% reporting improved concentration and motivation to attend school regularly.



**Transformation in Practical Learning and STEM Exposure:** With well-equipped science laboratories, 83% of students now participate in practical sessions at least once a week, and 95% reported better understanding of science concepts through hands-on experiments.



**Growing Interest in STEM Careers:** Exposure to laboratory-based learning has influenced student aspirations, with 77% reporting increased interest in pursuing science-related careers.



**Strengthened Reading Culture and Independent Learning:** The newly established library improved access to academic resources, with 63% reporting better access to study materials and 85% stating that they now read more frequently, indicating a shift toward self-directed learning.



**Improved Academic Performance and Skills Development:** 92% of students reported improvement in academic performance, supported by enhanced practical skills, stronger conceptual understanding, and improved collaboration and communication abilities.



**Institutional Strengthening and Increased Enrolment:** Improved infrastructure has enhanced the school's reputation, contributing to enrolment growth from 37 students in 2018-19 to over 380 students, indicating increased community trust in the institution.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Comprehensive Infrastructure Development:** Simultaneous investment in classrooms, laboratories, and library facilities strengthened the overall academic ecosystem rather than addressing infrastructure gaps in isolation.

**Integration of Practical and Experiential Learning:** The introduction of science laboratories enabled regular hands-on experiments, significantly improving conceptual understanding and student engagement in STEM subjects.

**Promotion of Independent Learning through Library Access:** The library created a dedicated space for reading, research, and self-study, encouraging stronger study habits and improving academic confidence.

**Strong Institutional Ownership and Utilisation:** Regular use of laboratories, classrooms, and library resources, along with positive feedback from students and teachers, indicates effective integration of the infrastructure into the school's daily academic practices.



Image 45: Students In computer Lab

# Project at a glance



**About NGO/Trust:** Valluvar Gurukulam Trust is an educational institution based in Tambaram, Chennai, committed to providing affordable, quality, and value-based education to children from underserved and underprivileged backgrounds. Through its group of schools affiliated with the State Board and CBSE, the Trust focuses on creating inclusive learning environments that support academic excellence, character building, and holistic child development.

The Trust operates multiple institutions offering education from elementary to higher secondary levels, supported by modern infrastructure, experienced faculty, and well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and sports facilities. Special emphasis is placed on nurturing first-generation learners by strengthening foundational learning, building confidence, and developing essential life skills alongside co-curricular engagement.

## Objective

To enhance access to quality CBSE education by strengthening school infrastructure through the construction of classrooms, science and computer laboratories, and a library, thereby improving learning outcomes, increasing enrolment, and creating a future-ready academic environment for students.

## Thematic

Education

## Geography

Chennai, Tamil Nadu

## Beneficiary Profile:

**Direct Beneficiaries**

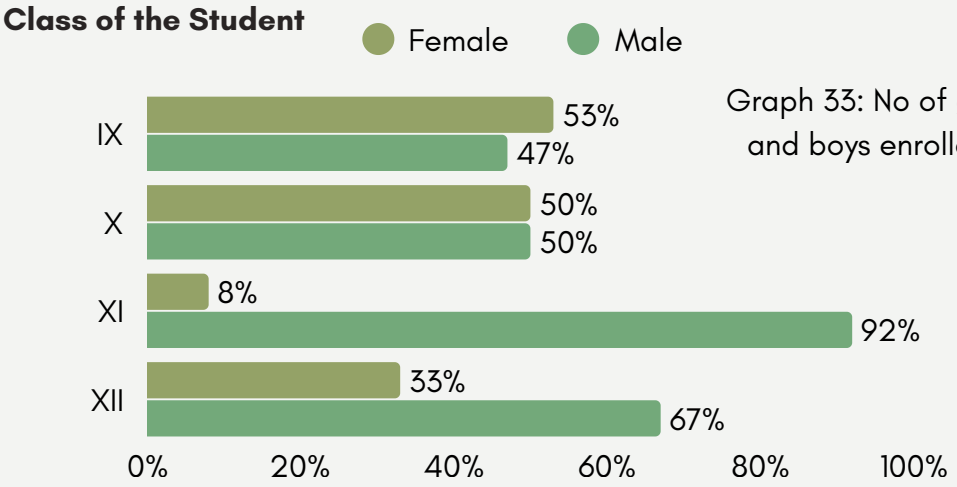
- 350+ students enrolled in Classes I–X (with capacity for future expansion)
- Children from low- and middle-income families seeking affordable quality CBSE education
- Teaching staff utilising the laboratories and library for improved instructional delivery

**Indirect Beneficiaries**

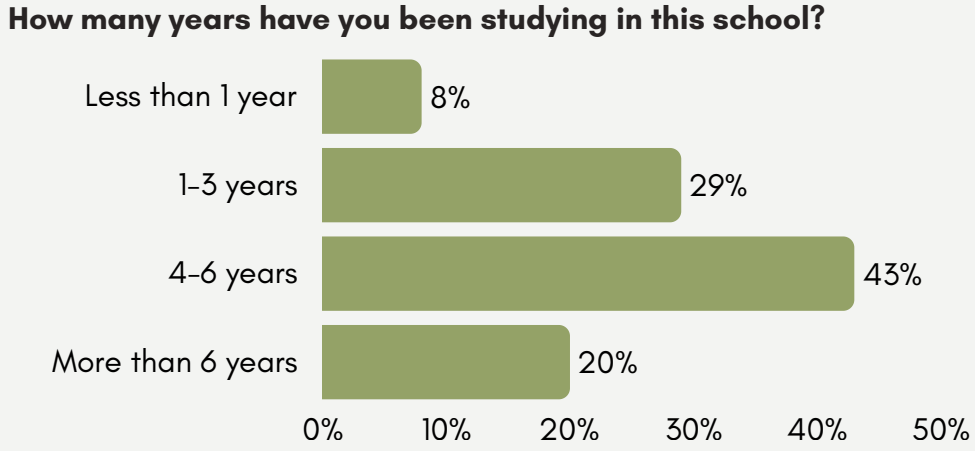
- Families are benefiting from improved academic performance and future opportunities for their children
- The local community can achieve increased access to quality schooling and strengthened educational infrastructure

## Respondent Profile

A total of 60 students participated in the survey. The survey included students from Classes IX to XII, with the highest representation from Class IX (53%), followed by Class X (50%), Class XII (33%), and Class XI (8%). In terms of association with the school, 43% of respondents have studied for 4-6 years, 28% for 1-3 years, and 20% for more than 6 years, while 8% have been enrolled for less than one year. This indicates that most respondents have been associated with the school long enough to observe changes in infrastructure and learning facilities.




Graph 33: No of girls and boys enrolled




Graph 34: No of years spent in the institution



Image 46: School Laboratory

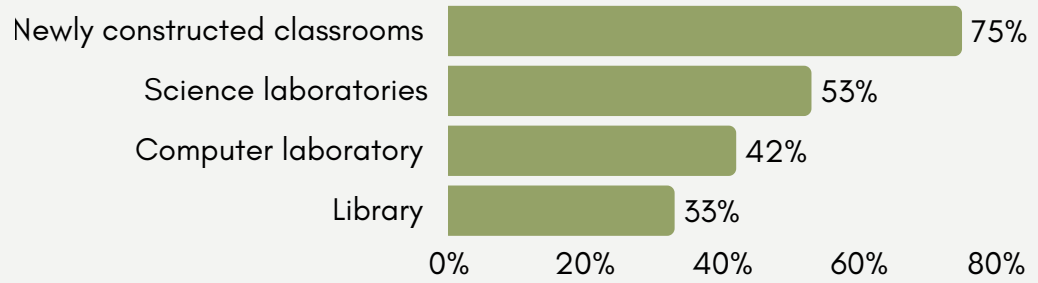
# Findings



## 1 Addressing Infrastructure Gaps that Limited Quality Learning

During the discussion, school teachers informed that before the intervention, Valluvar Gurukulam faced infrastructure limitations that constrained the delivery of quality CBSE-aligned education. Classrooms were limited in space, laboratory facilities were either inadequate or unavailable for regular practical learning, and students had limited access to structured library resources for independent study. These challenges particularly affected students from low- and middle-income families, many of whom are first-generation learners relying on school infrastructure as their primary learning environment.

**Which of the following facilities do you regularly use? (Select all that apply)**




Graph 35: Facilities in the classroom

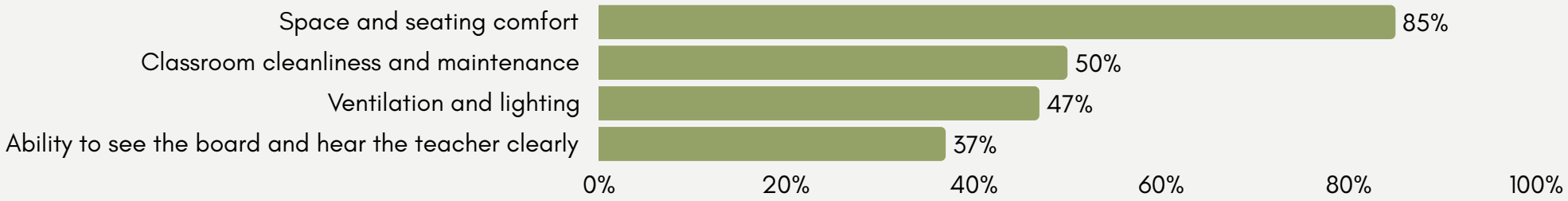
The project addresses these structural gaps by constructing additional classrooms, establishing science and computer laboratories, and setting up a dedicated library. Alongside infrastructure development, teachers were oriented on integrating laboratory-based learning and using library resources within classroom instruction. As a result, the intervention aimed not only to expand physical infrastructure but also to strengthen the overall academic ecosystem of the school.

The intervention has improved access to better learning facilities, reflected in the utilisation of the new infrastructure. New classrooms are the most frequently used facility (75%), followed by science laboratories (53%), computer laboratories (42%), and the library (33%). While the core infrastructure is being actively utilised, there is scope to further promote the use of specialised facilities such as the library and computer laboratory to maximise the benefits of the intervention.

## 2 Positive impact of the program in improving learning experience and better learning outcomes

A significant proportion of students reported improvements in the classroom environment following the infrastructure development. Around 85% of respondents highlighted better space and seating comfort, while 50% noted improvements in classroom cleanliness and maintenance. Additionally, 47% of students recognised improved ventilation and lighting, and 37% reported better ability to see the board and hear the teacher clearly. These responses indicate that the new classrooms have contributed to creating a more comfortable and supportive learning environment for students.

**Compared to earlier classrooms (or other schools you have seen), how would you rate the new classrooms on the following?(multi select)**

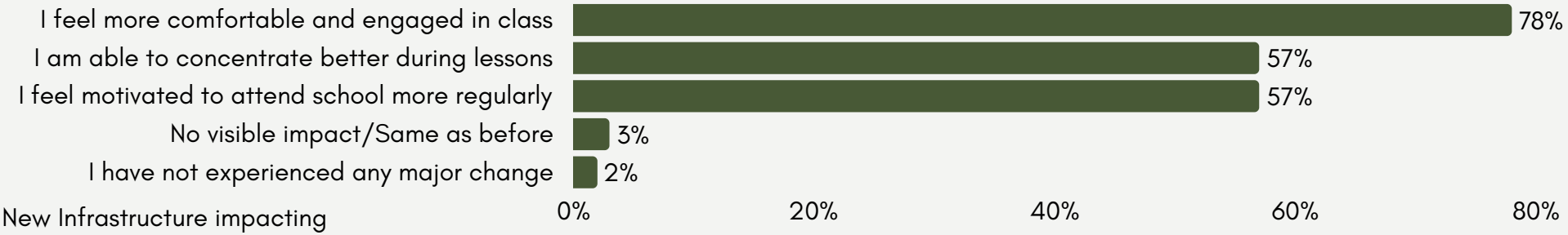



Graph 36: Rating of new classrooms

c

These improvements translated into meaningful changes in the learning experience. **72% of students reported feeling more comfortable and engaged during classroom sessions**, **while 50% stated that they were able to concentrate better during lessons**. Additionally, 42% of respondents reported feeling more motivated to attend school regularly.

**How have the new classrooms impacted your learning experience? (select all that apply)**




Graph 37: New Infrastructure impacting learning

These findings suggest that improved infrastructure contributed not only to physical comfort but also to stronger academic engagement and attendance behaviour.

*"During discussions, students emphasised that well-designed classrooms created a more organised and distraction-free learning environment. Ms Prabavathi a teacher in the school also reported that, improved classroom conditions enabled them to manage lessons more effectively and maintain student attention for longer durations.*
*Earlier the classrooms were more crowded and sometimes it was difficult to focus. Now there is more space and we can listen to the teacher clearly,"* shared Ms B Thanzeela, a Class IX student.

This shift indicates that infrastructure investments can act as a foundational enabler of learning quality, improving both teaching delivery and student participation.

# 3 Transformation in Practical Learning and STEM Exposure

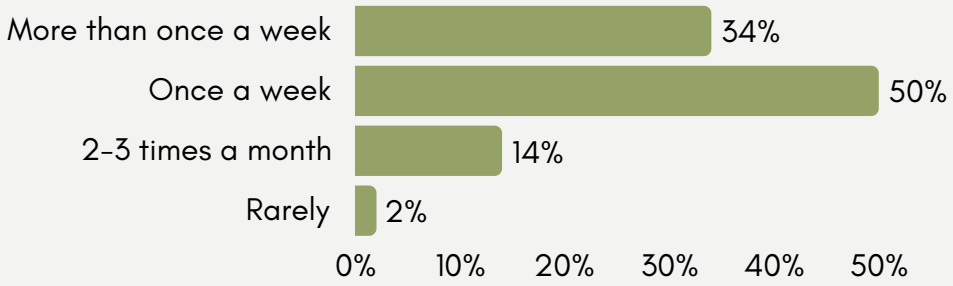
A significant transformation was observed in the area of science learning following the establishment of well-equipped laboratories. Survey results indicate high utilisation of laboratory facilities, with 83% of students visiting the science labs at least once a week.

Students also expressed strong satisfaction with the quality of their practical learning experiences. **88% of respondents rated their laboratory experience as "good" or "very good."** More importantly, the laboratories significantly improved conceptual understanding: During discussion, most of the students reported that they understood science concepts better after gaining hands-on laboratory exposure, and felt more confident in preparing for practical examinations.

This shift demonstrates how practical infrastructure can bridge the gap between theoretical learning and experiential understanding.

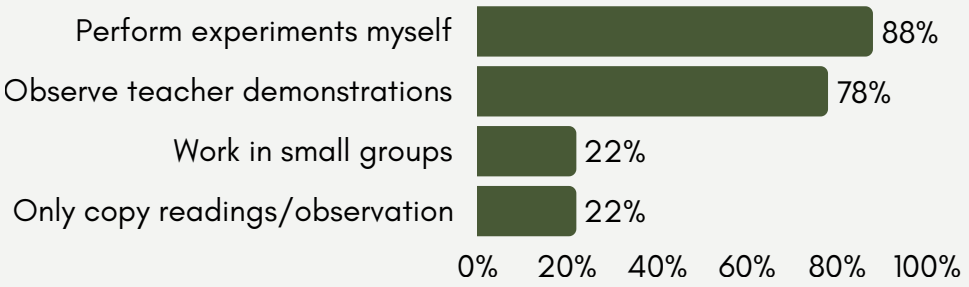
The findings indicate that laboratory sessions are largely hands-on and activity-based. A majority of students (88%) reported performing experiments themselves, while 78% observe teacher demonstrations to understand concepts better. A smaller proportion (22%) engage in small group work, and 22% reported mainly copying readings or observations. Overall, the results suggest that the lab environment primarily promotes practical learning and direct student engagement with experiments.

**How often do you use the science laboratories for practical classes?**




Graph 38: Usage of laboratory

**What do you usually do during lab sessions? (multi select)**




Graph 39: Impact on experimental capacity

*During conversation with "Ms Yuvasree a student from XI grade she mentioned that we do experiments ourselves, we understand the concepts faster. It also makes science more interesting when we work in the physics and chemistry labs."*

## 4 Strengthening STEM Aspirations Among Students

Beyond academic performance, the laboratories also influenced students' long-term aspirations. 77% of students reported a heightened interest in pursuing science-related careers, indicating that exposure to scientific experimentation and applied learning can shape career aspirations.

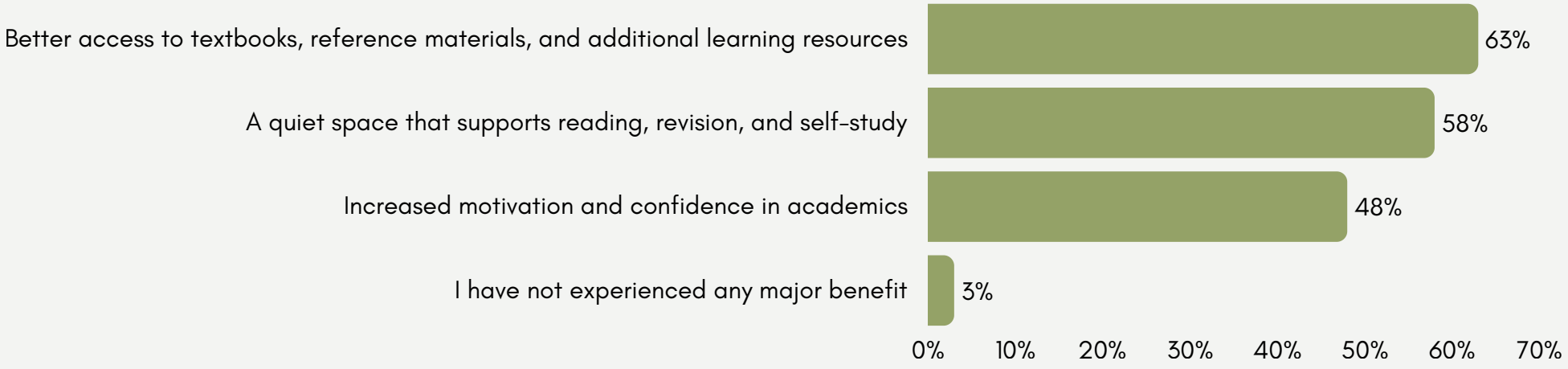
During discussions, students expressed that practical experiments made complex topics easier to understand and more enjoyable to learn.
The availability of science laboratories therefore contributed not only to academic improvement but also to aspirational change and career orientation among students, particularly in STEM fields.

## 5 Strengthening Reading Culture and Independent Learning through Library Access

The establishment of the school library significantly strengthened students' access to academic resources and encouraged independent learning behaviour.

63% of students reported improved access to textbooks and reference materials, while 58% highlighted that the library provided a quiet and focused space for self-study and revision. Nearly 48% of students stated that the library increased their academic motivation and confidence.

**How has the Library benefited you in your studies and learning? (Select all that apply)**




Graph 40: Perceived Usage of Science laboratories

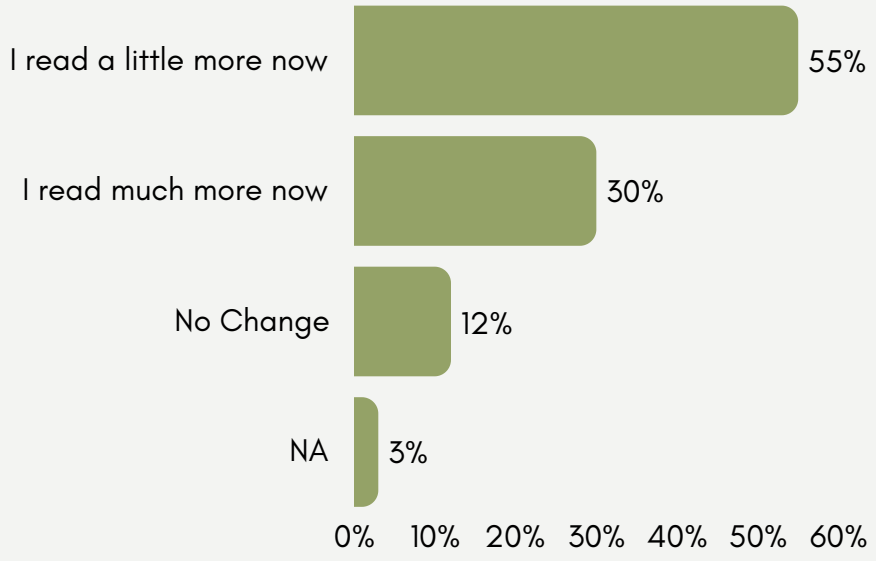
Importantly, the library also triggered a clear behavioural shift in reading habits. 55% of students reported that they now read more frequently, with 30% stating that they read significantly more than before.

These findings suggest that the library has become an important academic support space beyond regular classroom instruction.

During discussions, students shared that access to additional learning materials helped them prepare better for examinations and explore topics beyond the syllabus. Teachers also noted that the library supported project-based assignments and encouraged students to develop research and reading skills.

This behavioural change in reading habits reflects a long-term educational benefit, as stronger reading culture often contributes to improved comprehension, critical thinking, and academic confidence

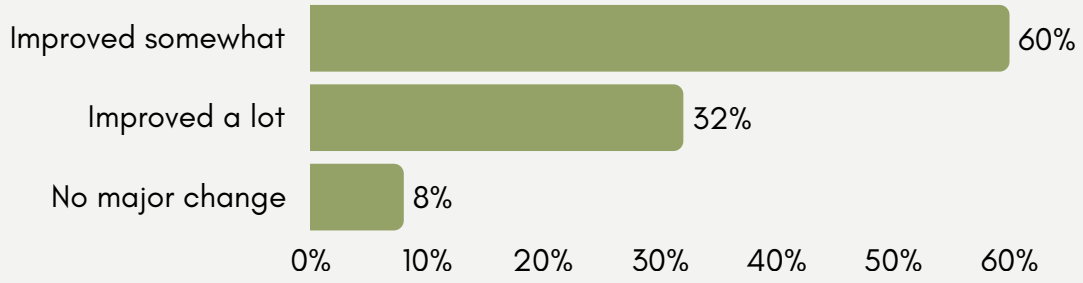
**Has access to the library changed your reading habits?**




Graph 41: Impact of library on reading habit

## 6 Academic Performance and Skill Development Outcomes

**Since the new infrastructure (classrooms, labs, library) became available, how do you feel your academic performance has changed?**



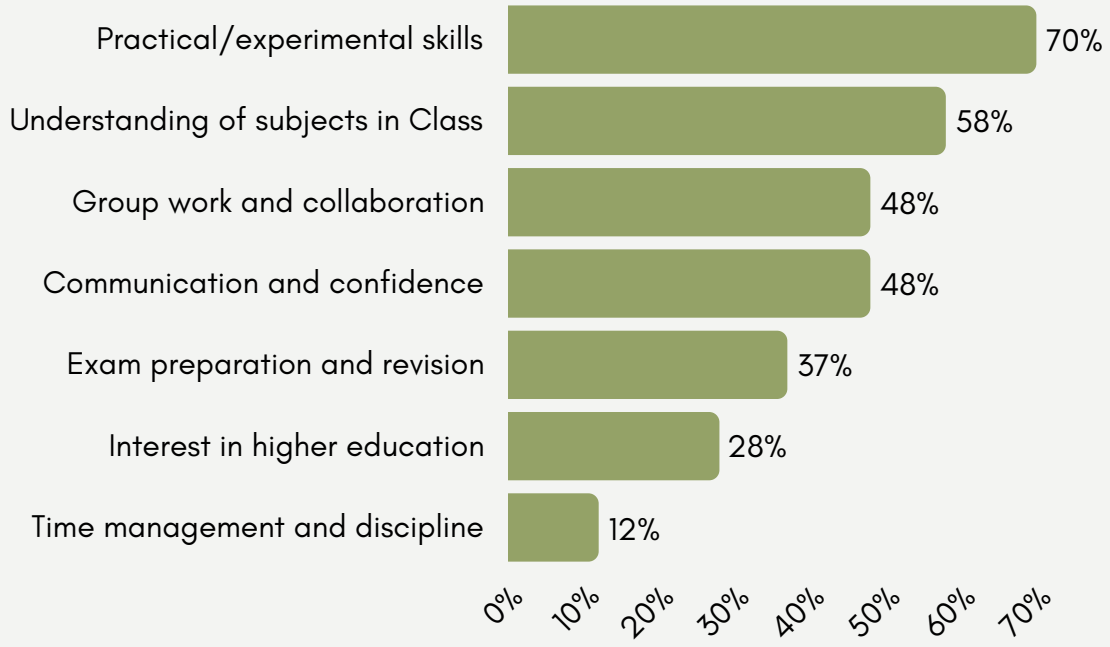

Graph 42: Impact on Academic Performance

The infrastructure improvements collectively contributed to measurable improvements in students' academic confidence and performance. 92% of students reported that their academic performance improved after the introduction of the new facilities, with nearly one-third indicating that their performance improved significantly.

Students reported notable improvements across several areas of their learning experience after the introduction of the new facilities. The most frequently highlighted change relates to the development of practical and experimental skills, reflecting the role of laboratories in enabling hands-on learning. Many students also reported better understanding of classroom subjects, indicating that access to improved learning spaces and practical exposure has supported conceptual clarity.

In addition, students noted positive changes in group work and collaboration, as well as communication and confidence, suggesting that the facilities are supporting more interactive and participatory learning processes. Some students also indicated improvements in exam preparation and revision and a growing interest in pursuing higher education. A smaller proportion mentioned improvements in time management and discipline, reflecting broader behavioural and study habit changes influenced by the improved academic environment.

**In which areas do you feel the maximum improvement because of these facilities? (Select up to 3)**




Graph 43: Assessment of behavioral and study patterns

These data indicates that the intervention strengthened both technical academic competencies and soft skills, which are critical for higher education readiness.

During interactions, students highlighted that practical learning and better classroom environments helped them understand subjects more clearly and feel more confident in participating during lessons.

Teachers also observed improvements in collaborative learning, as laboratory work and library-based projects encouraged students to work together and engage in discussions.

Overall, the infrastructure improvements have created a more interactive and student-centred learning environment, enabling both academic and personal development.

## 7 Positive Confidence Levels Among Board Class Students

The discussions with students from Classes X and XII indicate encouraging levels of confidence regarding their upcoming board examinations. Most students reported feeling very confident or moderately confident about performing well, while a few expressed being extremely confident in their preparation. None of the respondents from these classes reported a lack of confidence. Overall, the responses suggest that students approaching board examinations feel reasonably prepared and confident in their academic readiness.

## 8 Gender and Social Inclusion Impact

The project also demonstrates positive implications for gender and social inclusion. With 42% female participation in the respondent sample, both boys and girls have equal access to improved classrooms, laboratories, and library resources.

For students from economically modest backgrounds, the availability of modern science laboratories and academic resources within their own school reduces the inequality often faced between private and affordable schools.

*During discussions, Ms Rajeshwari, Biology teacher highlighted that girls, in particular, showed increased participation in science practicals and classroom discussions after the introduction of the new facilities.*

Thus, the project contributes to reducing educational inequality and promoting inclusive access to quality learning infrastructure, aligned with broader goals of equitable education.

## 9 Institutional Strengthening and Expanded Access to Education

Beyond individual learning outcomes, the intervention also contributed to broader institutional strengthening. School enrolment increased significantly over the years, growing from 37 students in 2018-19 to over 380 students in recent years, reflecting rising trust in the school's learning environment.

This growth suggests that improved infrastructure has enhanced the school's reputation and attractiveness among families seeking quality CBSE education at an affordable cost For many families in the surrounding community, the strengthened infrastructure has reduced the need to seek education in distant private institutions. As a result, the intervention indirectly contributes to greater educational access for students from modest socioeconomic backgrounds. The improved facilities have also enabled teachers to deliver lessons more effectively by integrating practical experiments, reference-based learning, and collaborative classroom activities.
Thus, the intervention has supported both educational accessibility and institutional capacity building.

## 10 Sustainability, Ownership, and Long-Term Use of Infrastructure

Sustainability of the infrastructure appears strong based on student perceptions and institutional practices. 100% of respondents reported that the facilities are well maintained and will continue to benefit future batches of students.

This unanimous response reflects strong confidence in the school management's ability to maintain the infrastructure and integrate it into regular academic activities.

Students and teachers demonstrated a clear sense of ownership toward the facilities, particularly the laboratories and library. During discussions, respondents expressed that maintaining the infrastructure is important to ensure future students can benefit from the same resources.

The consistent utilisation of the facilities, including weekly laboratory sessions and regular library usage also indicates that the infrastructure has been effectively integrated into the school's academic system.

These patterns suggest that the project has moved beyond short-term outputs to establish long-term educational assets that will continue generating impact across future student cohorts.

## 11 Overall Perceived Transformation in the Learning Ecosystem

Overall student sentiment toward the improved infrastructure is highly positive. 97% of respondents reported being either satisfied or very satisfied with the current learning environment, reflecting strong acceptance and appreciation of the facilities.

The transformation at Valluvar Gurukulam demonstrates how targeted infrastructure investments can catalyse multiple layers of impact:



Improved classroom engagement and learning comfort



Stronger practical learning and scientific exposure



Increased reading habits and independent learning

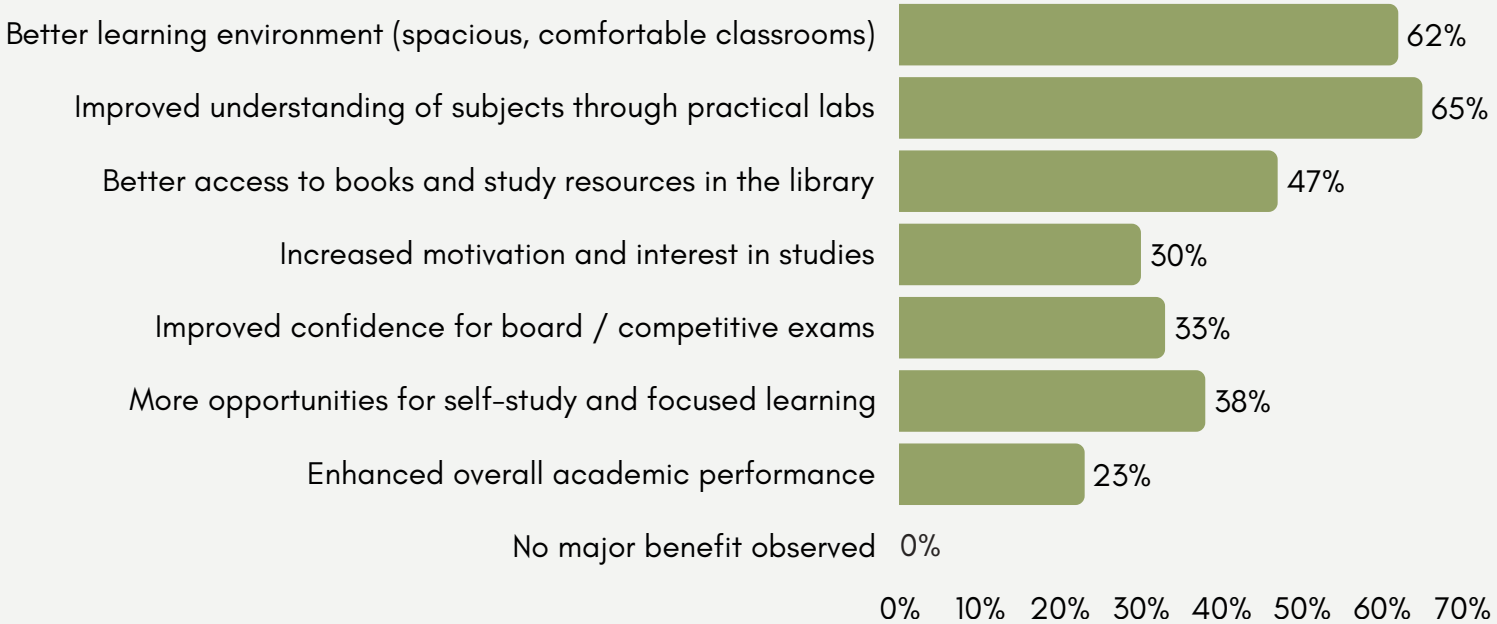


Improved academic confidence and performance



Greater institutional credibility and enrolment growth

**In your opinion, what is the biggest benefit of these new facilities for students like you? (Select upto 3)**




Graph 44 : Impact on students due to new facilities




Image 47: Computer Lab

More importantly, the intervention has shifted the school environment from a conventional classroom-based system to a holistic learning ecosystem that combines infrastructure, experiential learning, and academic resources.

As one student named Naveen Kumar M from the XI grade summarised during discussions:
*"Now our school feels like a place where we can really explore and learn, not just attend classes. The facilities has enhanced our learning space and we would like to whole heartedly thank the Five Star Business Finance Ltd for providing us with this facilities."*

This transformation highlights the role of well-designed educational infrastructure in enabling long-term academic development, aspiration building, and equitable access to quality education.

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

- **Alignment with Needs:** The high ratings for space and seating comfort (85%) and ventilation/lighting (47%) indicate that the infrastructure directly addressed physical barriers to learningin previous classrooms.
- **Targeting:** With 63% of respondents being long-term students, the intervention is proven relevant to the specific needs of the local student population, who can directly compare the "before and after" states.
- **Academic Necessity:** The significant shifts in reading habits (85% increase) and practical skills (70% improvement) indicate that the facilities are aligned with the curriculum requirements and addressstudent skill gaps.



### Coherence

- **Internal Coherence:** The survey shows a functional synergy between classrooms, labs, and the library. Students aren't just using one; they are using the entire suite of infrastructure to support their holistic education.
- **External Coherence (CSR Awareness):** While the physical infrastructure fits the school environment perfectly, the 48% awareness rate suggests a moderate level of coherence regarding the partnership's visibility. Strengthening the link between the corporate sponsor and the school community could improve overall program coherence.



### Effectiveness

- **Learning Outcomes:** The project is highly effective in its primary goal of enhancing education. 95% of students report a better understanding of science concepts, and 97% feel more confident about practical exams.
- **Engagement:** The intervention has successfully increased student motivation. 72% of students report being more comfortable and engaged, a key lead indicator of reduced dropout rates and better academic results.
- **Resource Utilisation:** With 82% of students using the laboratories at least once a week, the facility is being utilised effectively to achieve its intended purpose.

### Efficiency



- **Utilisation Rates:** The high frequency of use across all facilities (Classrooms, Labs, and Library) suggests that the "outputs" (the buildings) are being converted into "outcomes" (learning) without significant waste.
- **Breadth of Impact:** The data shows that the facilities serve multiple grades (IX through XII), indicating that the resources are being shared efficiently across the secondary and higher secondary school population.

## Impact

- **Academic Growth:** A significant 92% of students reported an improvement in their academic performance, indicating a high impact on their educational trajectory.
- **Aspirational Change:** Perhaps the most profound long-term impact is that 77% of students now have an increased interest in pursuing science-related careers. This suggests that the project is influencing the beneficiaries' long-term professional lives.
- **Confidence Building:** The improvement in communication and confidence (48%) among students highlights a "soft" impact that extends beyond just grades.

## Sustainability

- **Maintenance Perception:** 100% of respondents believe the facilities are well-maintained and will remain useful for future batches. This indicates a strong "sense of ownership" and confidence in the school's management of the assets.
- **Behavioural Change:** The shift in reading habits (85% reading more) is likely to persist even after students graduate, ensuring the library's impact lasts beyond their school years.
- **Future Resilience:** The suggestion for a school van or playground expansion indicates that the students view the school as a growing institution, and the current infrastructure has set a high standard for future development.






Image 48 : Computer laboratory Inaugurated by Five star

| SDG Goal | Specific Target | Project Evidence |
|---|---|---|
| 4 QUALITY EDUCATION | 4. a: Upgrade education facilities<br>4.4: Increase skills for employment | 100% of students agree that facilities are well-maintained and effective for learning.<br>77% of students express new interest in science-related careers. |
| 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE | 9.1: Resilient & inclusive infrastructure | Modern construction sustainably serving 60+ students per batch. |
| 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES | 10.2: Empower & promote inclusion | Closing the digital/scientific resource gap for disadvantaged student groups. |



Image 49 : Lab Bench System

## Recommendation



**Institutionalise a "Science-First" Career Guidance Program:** Given that 77% of students reported a heightened interest in science-related careers due to the new laboratories, the school should introduce formal career counselling or mentorship sessions. Connecting students with professionals in STEM fields will help convert this newfound interest into actionable academic and career paths, maximising the long-term impact of the laboratory infrastructure.



**Prioritise "Soft" Infrastructure for Holistic Development:** The qualitative data highlights a significant demand for sports facilities and improved playgrounds. To complement the "hard" academic infrastructure (classrooms and labs), future phases of the project should consider upgrading the sports grounds and equipment. This would address the students' primary feedback and contribute to a more holistic "well-being" impact, which is increasingly prioritised in modern impact assessments.



**Expand Library Engagement Programs:** While 85% of students are reading more, the usage of the library for "communication skills" was cited by very few. Introducing structured library activities, such as reading circles, debate clubs, or storytelling sessions, would move the facility beyond a "quiet study space" and turn it into a hub for developing soft skills and English proficiency.



**Establish a Maintenance and Monitoring Fund:** While 100% of students currently view the facilities as well-maintained, long-term sustainability (per OECD-DAC criteria) depends on a dedicated maintenance schedule. Establishing a joint "Infrastructure Maintenance Committee" involving school staff and CSR representatives will ensure that the high quality of these assets remains consistent across future batches, protecting the initial investment.



**Evaluate Logistics for Inclusion:** The student's request for a school van or bus suggests that physical access to the school remains a challenge for some. Conducting a feasibility study on transportation support could be a high-impact future intervention to ensure that the quality infrastructure is accessible to the most marginalised or distant students, thereby improving attendance and inclusivity.

# Conclusion



## What Changed

The transition from traditional learning spaces to modernised classrooms, science laboratories, and a dedicated library has catalysed a measurable transformation at Valluvar Gurukulam. The data reveal a 92% perceived improvement in academic performance among respondents. Key behavioural shifts include a significant rise in literacy engagement—with 85% of students reading more frequently—and high-frequency utilisation of specialised facilities, particularly the science labs, which are used weekly by over 80% of the student body.

## Why It Matters

This intervention has moved beyond physical upgrades (outputs) to achieve significant educational outcomes. By providing a comfortable, well-maintained environment, the project has enhanced students' concentration and motivation (Effectiveness). Most critically, the project is influencing long-term trajectories; 95% of students report a better understanding of science concepts, and 77% now express a desire to pursue science-related careers. This demonstrates a high level of Impact, as the infrastructure is actively shaping students' professional aspirations and confidence.

## What Remains to be Addressed

Despite these gains, two primary gaps persist. In terms of Coherence, there is a visibility deficit, with 45% of the student population unaware of the CSR partnership that enabled these changes. Furthermore, the survey identifies a demand for holistic development that extends beyond the classroom. Students consistently highlighted the need for improved sports infrastructure and logistical support, such as school transportation, to ensure that the high-quality learning environment is accessible to all.

## Strategic Way Forward

The next phase should transition from "hardware" provision to "software" integration. Sustainability will be secured by establishing a formal maintenance committee and institutionalising STEM career guidance to bridge the gap between student interest and professional entry. Strategically, the school and its partners should prioritise the "soft" aspects of the learning environment, such as library-led communication programs and upgraded recreational facilities, while implementing a clear branding strategy to strengthen the community's connection to the CSR initiative.

# Residential Polytechnic Education & Holistic Support for Underprivileged Youth

Impact Assessment for FY 2021-2025

NGO/Trust: Ramakrishna Mission Students Home



**Image 50: Polytechnic Institution**

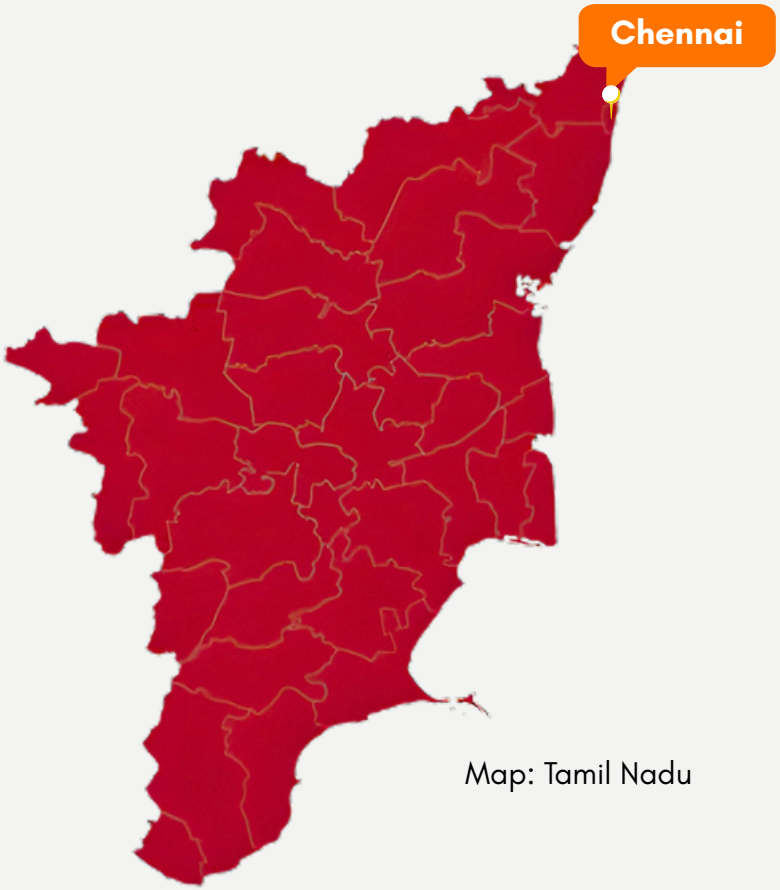
# Executive Summary





| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
|---|---|---|
| Residential Polytechnic Education & Holistic Support for Underprivileged Youth | Ramakrishna Mission Students Home | 2021–2025 |

**Project Location:** Chennai, Tamil Nadu




Map: Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** 1,470 students supported over four years (approximately 270–300 students annually)
**Indirect:** Families of students and communities benefiting from improved livelihoods and socioeconomic mobility.

## Project Activities:

**1. Residential Polytechnic Education (3-Year Diploma)**
- Diploma programs in Mechanical, Automobile, and Computer Engineering
- Classroom teaching with regular semester assessments
- Practical training in fully equipped laboratories and workshops

**2. Full Residential Care & Student Support**
- Free boarding and lodging
- Provision of study materials, uniforms, books, and stationery
- Medical care and personal support services

**3. Skill Development & Industry Readiness**
- Advanced technical training through the Vivekananda-BPCL Skill Development Centre
- Exposure to modern tools and industry-relevant technologies
- Soft skills and pre-placement training

**4. Holistic Development – Gurukula Model**
- Value-based education, discipline, and character building
- Life skills, moral education, and personality development
- Mentorship and structured daily routines

**5. Placement & Livelihood Support**
- Campus recruitment drives
- Career guidance and employment facilitation to ensure job placement

**6. Institutional Support**
- Support for faculty, lab assistants, and administrative staff
- Sustaining high-quality technical education for vulnerable youth

## Performance Snapshot



**Expanding Access to Technical Education for Vulnerable Youth:** The Program primarily supports disadvantaged students, with 97% coming from economically or socially vulnerable backgrounds, including single-parent households, orphans, and families below the poverty line, enabling them to pursue technical education that would otherwise be inaccessible.



**Removing Financial Barriers to Professional Education:** 88% of students identified free technical education as the key enabling factor, while 62% highlighted residential support (free accommodation and food) as critical in allowing them to continue their studies instead of entering low-skilled employment.



**Preventing Educational Discontinuity:** Without the Program, 30% of students indicated they may have dropped out or entered low-skilled work, demonstrating the Program's role in sustaining higher education pathways for vulnerable youth.



**Strengthening Technical Skills and Hands-on Learning:** Access to well-equipped laboratories and workshops has significantly enhanced technical competencies, with 97% of students confident in using lab/workshop equipment and 91% confident in applying theory to practical tasks.



**High Employment Readiness and Placement Outcomes:** The Program demonstrates strong employability outcomes, with 86% of students securing job opportunities through campus placements and 72% expressing strong confidence in securing employment after graduation.



**Holistic Development through the Gurukula Education Model:** Beyond technical training, the value-based residential model has strengthened discipline, teamwork, communication, and emotional resilience, with over two-thirds of students reporting strong improvement in personal development and character formation.

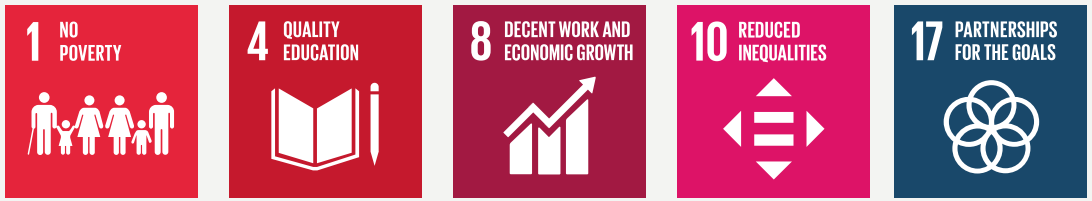


**Promoting Social Mobility and First-Generation Professional Careers:** Many students are first-generation learners entering technical education, indicating that the Program serves as a pathway for upward socio-economic mobility and long-term livelihood security.



**Strengthening Aspirations and Long-Term Career Goals:** The Program has significantly influenced student outlook, with 70% reporting increased confidence in building a career and 25% aspiring to pursue higher technical education, reflecting rising ambitions among beneficiaries.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Comprehensive Financial and Residential Support:** The combination of free education, accommodation, and food removed major financial barriers and enabled students from vulnerable backgrounds to pursue professional technical training.

**Strong Integration of Practical and Industry-Oriented Learning:** Well-equipped laboratories, workshops, and internships provided hands-on exposure that strengthened students' technical confidence and job readiness.

**Holistic Gurukula-Based Education Model:** The structured residential environment fostered discipline, character development, and peer learning, supporting both professional skills and personal growth.

**Effective Placement and Career Support Systems:** Dedicated placement preparation, industry exposure, and technical training helped bridge the gap between education and employment, resulting in strong job placement outcomes.



Image 51: Class pathway

# Project at a glance



**About NGO/Trust:** Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home, Chennai, is a service institution of the Ramakrishna Mission dedicated to the education, care, and holistic development of economically disadvantaged students. Guided by the ideal, "Service to mankind is service to God," the institution focuses on nurturing character, discipline, self-reliance, and spiritual values alongside academic excellence.

Established as a residential and educational facility for underprivileged children, the Students' Home provides access to formal schooling through its primary school, residential high school, and polytechnic college, offering technical diploma courses. In addition, the institution runs skill development Programs, vocational training, and technology-based learning initiatives to enhance employability and life skills among youth.

## Objective

To provide free, high-quality residential polytechnic education to orphaned and economically disadvantaged youth, enabling them to acquire technical skills, holistic value-based development, and secure sustainable employment for long-term socioeconomic upliftment.

## Thematic

Education

## Geography

Chennai, Tamil Nadu



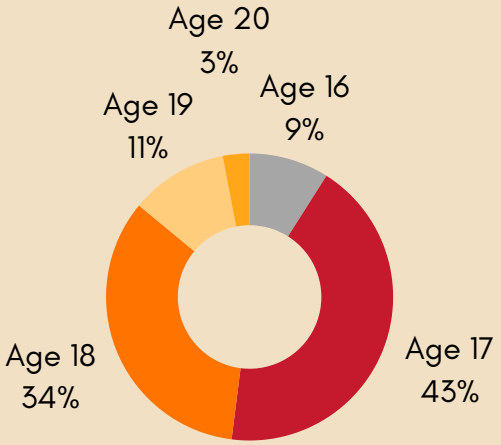
Image 52: Discussion Held at a Lab Facility

## Respondent Profile

A total of 138 respondents participated in the survey, all of whom are male students. Most beneficiaries fall within the 17–18 years age group, with 43% aged 17 and 34% aged 18, indicating that the majority are in their late teenage years. In terms of academic status, 57% are studying in the 3rd year and 42% are in the 2nd year, while only 1% have already graduated and started working.

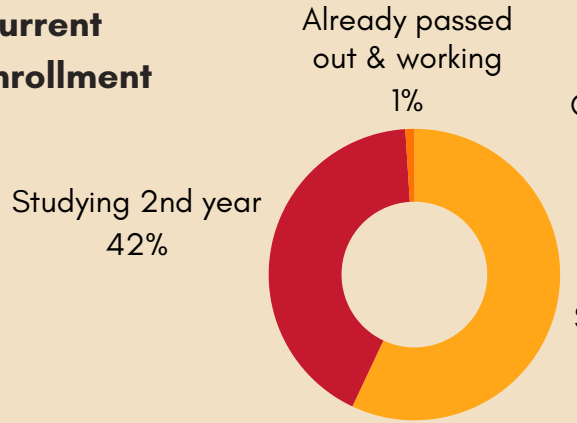
Regarding the branch of study, the majority of students are enrolled in Computer Engineering (58%), followed by Automobile Engineering (32%) and Mechanical Engineering (9%). In terms of their association with Ramakrishna Mission Student Home, 75% of respondents have spent 1–3 years at the institution, while 18% have been associated for more than 6 years, reflecting both relatively new and long-term beneficiaries within the program.

### Age



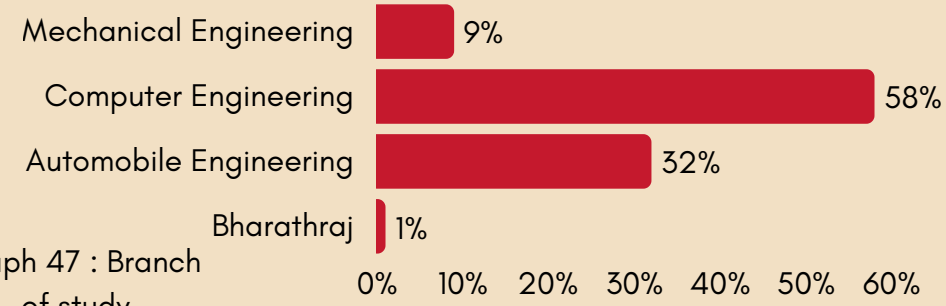

Graph 45 : Respondents age

### Current Enrollment



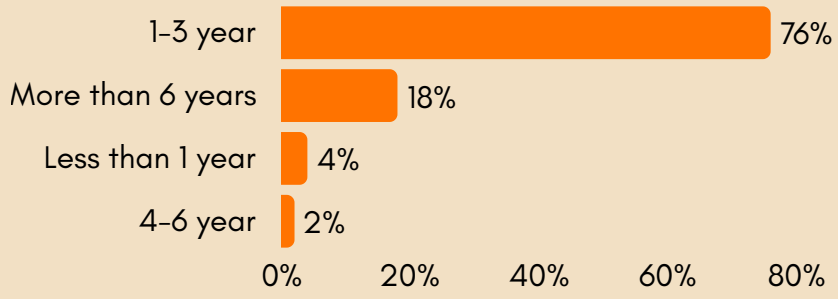

Graph 46: Studnets Enrollment

### Branch of Study




Graph 47 : Branch of study

### Year spent in Ramakrishna Mission Student home




Graph 48: Years spent in Ramakrishna Mission Home

# Study Findings





## 1 Addressing Structural Barriers to Technical Education

Prior to accessing the intervention, most students faced significant socio-economic barriers that limited their ability to pursue technical education. The respondent profile highlights the depth of vulnerability among beneficiaries. Approximately 97% of the students come from socially or economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including 63% from single-parent households, 11% orphans, and 23% from families below the poverty line. These circumstances often translate into limited financial resources, unstable living environments, and restricted access to quality higher education opportunities.

For many students, pursuing a diploma in engineering would have been nearly impossible without institutional support. During discussions, several respondents shared that the cost of education, accommodation, and food was a major deterrent after completing school. The residential nature of the program therefore plays a critical role in bridging this gap.

The program also serves youth at a pivotal life stage between 17-18 years, a transition phase where educational access strongly influences long-term livelihood trajectories. By targeting this age group, the intervention provides timely support that can redirect youth from economic vulnerability toward skilled employment pathways.

*Discussion with Br Chandrasekaran, who is the Project-in Charge from Ramakrishna Mission Students Home, further revealed that a significant proportion of the student body originates from rural or peri-urban communities. Within these geographical areas, awareness regarding the spectrum of technical career pathways, the associated educational requirements, and the long-term professional benefits is often limited or absent. This lack of information is frequently compounded by a deficit of role models working in technical or professional fields within the students' immediate social circle. Consequently, the program's impact extends far beyond its core function as a purely educational institution. It fundamentally operates as a crucial social mobility platform, particularly for first-generation learners—individuals whose parents have not attained post-secondary technical or university education. By providing not only high-quality technical instruction but also career guidance, mentorship, and exposure to professional networks, the program actively breaks the cycle of limited occupational awareness. It empowers these students with the knowledge and skills necessary to access high-value careers, thereby serving as a transformative catalyst for intergenerational socio-economic advancement within their families and communities.*






Image 53 : B Chandrashekaran ,Project incharge

## 2 Strengthening Access to Technical Education

The findings indicate that the program has played a significant role in expanding access to technical education among economically vulnerable youth. Prior to enrolment, awareness about Ramakrishna Mission Polytechnic was limited, with 42% of students aware only of the free education offered, while 25% were fully aware and 25% were partially aware of the institution's facilities and training approach. Despite this limited awareness, the program successfully reached students who needed financial and institutional support to pursue higher education.

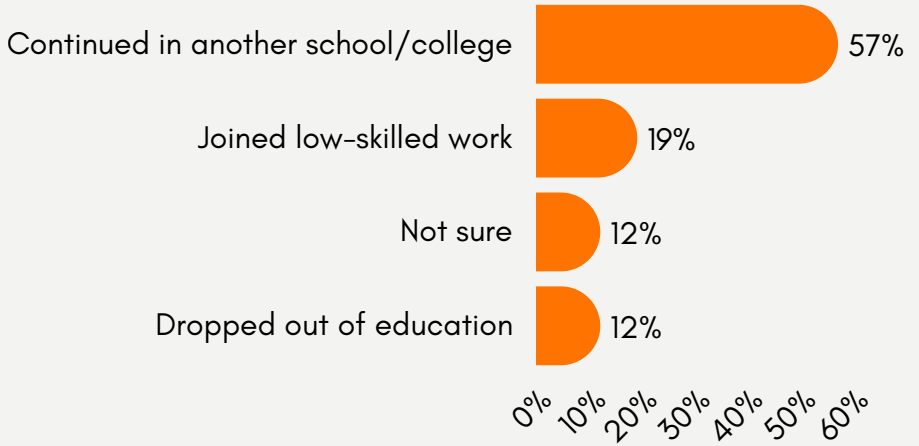
The data further highlights the program's preventive impact on educational discontinuity. While 57% reported that they may have continued education elsewhere, a considerable proportion indicated potential risk pathways: 19% would likely have entered low-skilled work, 11% might have dropped out of education, and 12% were uncertain about their future path. This demonstrates the program's role in sustaining educational pathways and enabling students from disadvantaged backgrounds to pursue technical careers.

## 3 Removing Financial and Structural Barriers to Technical Education

Survey findings clearly indicate that financial accessibility and residential support were the most influential factors in enabling students to enroll in the program.

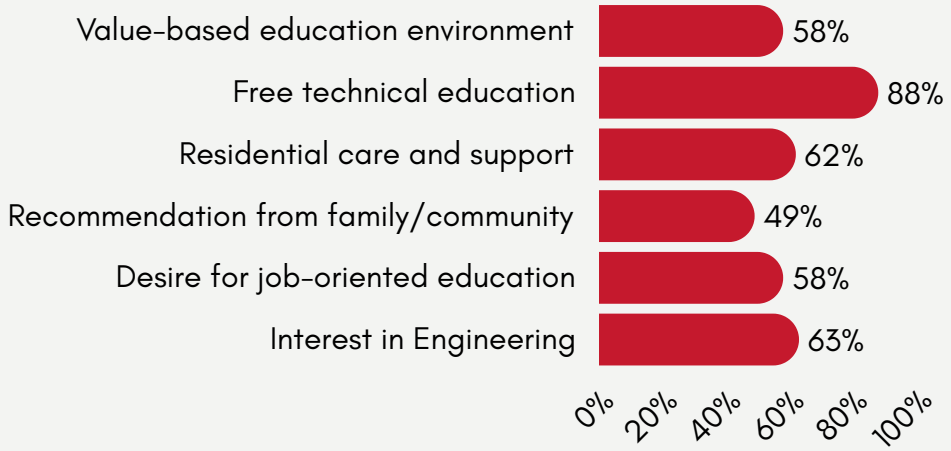
Approximately 88% of respondents reported that free technical education was the primary reason for joining, demonstrating that cost barriers previously prevented them from pursuing professional training. Additionally, 62% of students cited the residential facilities—free accommodation and food—as a critical enabling factor.

**Without this program, what would you most likely have done?**




Graph 49: Future without the program

**What were your primary reasons for joining the Polytechnic College? (Select up to 3) (multi select)**




Graph 50: Reason of joining Polytechnic college

This suggests that the intervention effectively addresses two of the most common barriers faced by economically disadvantaged youth: affordability and living security. Without these provisions, many students would likely have been forced to seek low-skilled employment rather than continue their education.

During discussions, several students emphasised that residential stability allows them to focus on learning without worrying about daily survival needs.

*Mr Balaji, a third-year student pursuing a Diploma in Automobile Engineering, offered a profound perspective on the impact of the institution's support system. His statement underscored the critical role that the provided amenities play in enabling students from less privileged backgrounds to pursue their education without the burden of immediate financial concerns. He explained, "If the hostel accommodation and food provisions were not made available by the institution, my personal circumstances would have necessitated that I seek employment to support myself and my family. This would have inevitably meant sacrificing my education." Balaji further elaborated on the long-term significance of this support: "As things stand, with the basic needs of shelter and sustenance taken care of, I am afforded the invaluable opportunity to fully concentrate on my studies. I can dedicate my time and energy to learning a specialised skill in automobile technology—a skill that is highly relevant and in demand. This education is not merely for personal advancement; it is a foundational investment that will directly and tangibly help improve the financial stability and prospects of my entire family." His narrative powerfully highlights how essential welfare provisions transform the educational experience from an unattainable luxury into a viable pathway for upward socio-economic mobility, ensuring that talent and aspiration are not hampered by poverty.*



Image 54: Balaji,a third-year student

Beyond financial support, the value-based Gurukula model of education also influenced student enrollment decisions. Around 58% of respondents indicated that the institution's emphasis on discipline, character building, and values played a role in choosing the program. This highlights that students and families perceive education not only as a pathway to employment but also as a platform for personal and moral development.

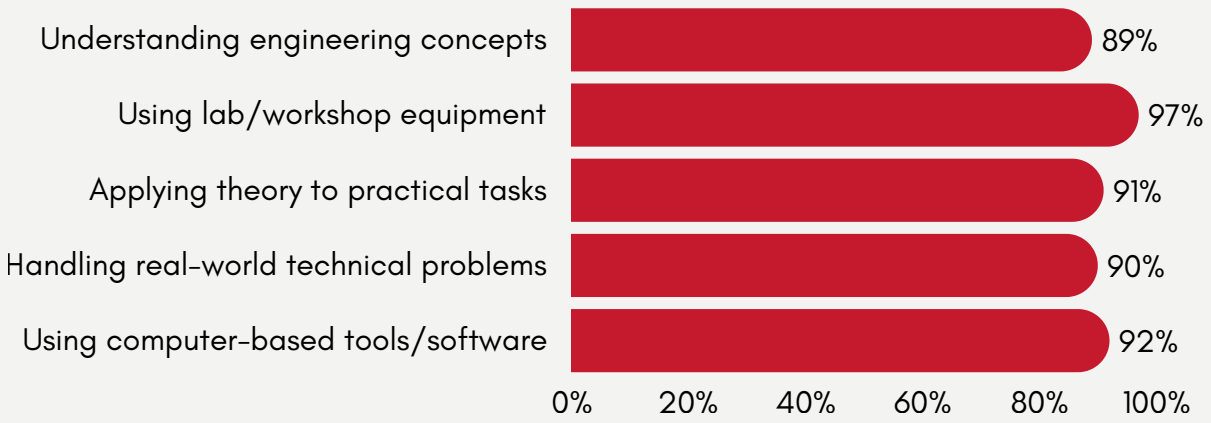
# 4 Strengthening Technical Competency

The findings indicate that the program has effectively strengthened students' technical competencies through access to well-equipped laboratories and practical training opportunities. A majority of students rated the lab and workshop facilities positively, with 70% rating them as Excellent and 25% as Good, reflecting strong satisfaction with the available infrastructure.

Similarly, 60% of students reported receiving extensive hands-on training, while 33% experienced it to a large extent, highlighting significant practical exposure. This is further reflected in students' high confidence across technical skill areas, including using lab equipment (97%), computer-based tools (92%), applying theory to practical tasks (91%), handling real-world technical problems (90%), and understanding engineering concepts (89%).

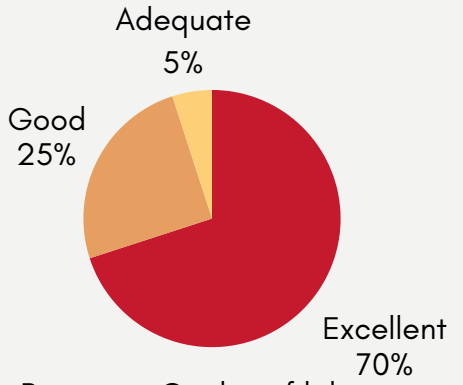
The program demonstrates strong effectiveness in developing practical technical competencies among students. Exposure to well-equipped laboratories and workshops appears to significantly enhance students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge.

**Confidence in Technical Competencies (multi select)**



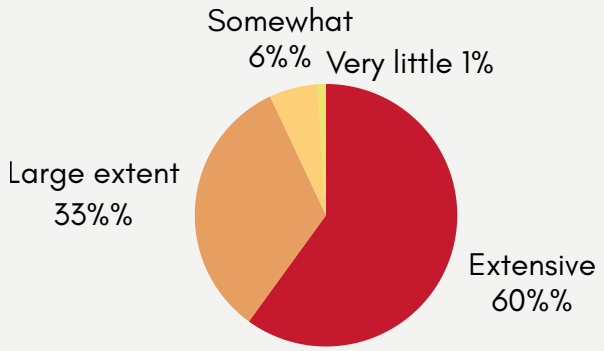

Graph 51: Impact on Technical Skill - Rating

**Availability and Quality of Lab / Workshop Facilities**




Graph 52: Rating on Quality of lab

**Hands-on Training Received**




Graph 53: Hands-on training

These findings suggest that the program successfully integrates conceptual learning with practical exposure, which is critical for technical workforce preparation.

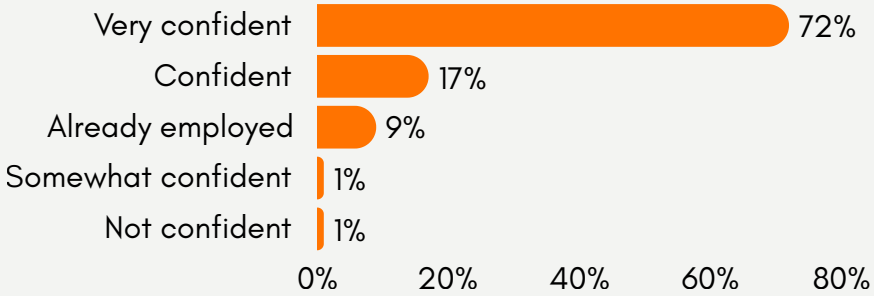
Students also reported applying their learning through lab projects, workshop activities, internships, and freelance or project-based work, reflecting active engagement with real-world technical tasks. The ratings on students' confidence in understanding and applying various technical concepts are presented in the table below.

| Ratings | Understanding engineering concepts | Using lab/workshop equipment | Applying theory to practical tasks | Handling real-world technical problems | Using computer-based tools/software |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| 2 | 2% | 1% | 3% | 3% | 0% |
| 3 | 9% | 2% | 6% | 7% | 7% |
| 4 | 30% | 30% | 27% | 33% | 21% |
| 5 | 59% | 67% | 64% | 57% | 71% |

## 5 Workforce Readiness and Employability

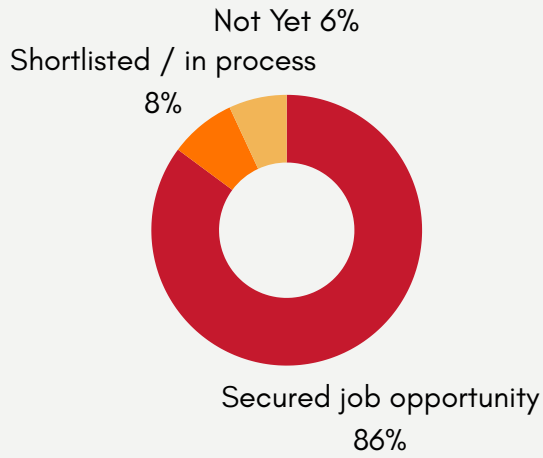
A key outcome of the program is improved employment readiness among students. Survey results indicate strong confidence in career prospects following graduation.

**Confidence in Securing Employment**




Graph 54 : Confidence in Securing Employement

**Campus Placement Outcomes**




Institutional placement support also appears highly effective.

Graph 55: Campus Placement

Students also reported receiving support in key employability areas including placement orientation (46%), interview preparation (40%), communication skills (38%), and resume building (35%).

These findings indicate that the program effectively bridges the gap between technical education and labour market opportunities. During group discussions, students frequently highlighted the importance of practical exposure and industry-oriented learning. Many shared that working with real tools and machines helped them better understand theoretical concepts and build confidence in their abilities.

| Year | DME | DAE | DCE | Students planning to pursue Higher Studies |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2020-21 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 1 |
| 2021-22 | 41 | 42 | 39 | 5 |
| 2022-23 | 40 | 39 | 37 | 4 |
| 2023-24 | 38 | 30 | 38 | 7 |
| 2024-25 | 35 | 35 | 34 | 8 |
| Total | 196 | 190 | 191 | 25 |

Data shared by the NGO/Trust indicates that the program has demonstrated a strong placement outcome, with 46% of trained students (577 out of 1,254) successfully placed across diverse industries over five academic years. Placement trends indicate a gradual stabilization, with annual placement shares ranging between 18%–22%, reflecting consistent industry linkage despite variations in batch sizes and student preferences, including those opting for higher education (25 students).

A significant proportion of students were absorbed by leading and reputed organizations across sectors such as manufacturing, automotive, IT, and engineering services. Notably, Tata Advanced Systems Ltd. emerged as the largest recruiter, accounting for nearly 20% of total placements, followed by major industry players like Caterpillar India Pvt. Ltd., Ashok Leyland Ltd., TAFE Ltd., and Utthunga Technologies Pvt. Ltd.. The presence of globally recognized and high-value employers such as Reliance Industries Ltd., HCL Technologies Ltd., Zoho Corporation Pvt. Ltd., and Hitachi Energy India Ltd. further strengthens the credibility of placement outcomes. The diversity of recruiters—from core engineering firms to emerging technology companies—indicates that the program has been effective in enhancing employability across multiple domains.

*"The hands-on experience gained during the shift profoundly impacted the participating students. Mr. Pushkaran, a 3rd-year Diploma in Mechanical Engineering (DME) student, provided a succinct yet powerful summary of his transformation: "Before joining this industrial attachment, the entire field of engineering felt distant, highly difficult, and almost out of reach. It was a theoretical subject confined to textbooks." He elaborated, "However, after spending focused time actively working in the college's well-equipped labs and collaborating within the practical setting of the workshops, I have completely shed that apprehension. I now feel genuinely confident and competent that I can not only approach but effectively handle technical problems and challenges that will inevitably arise in a real-world job or industrial environment. This practical application has solidified my understanding and boosted my self-belief in my technical abilities." His sentiment reflects the broader success of the program in bridging the gap between academic theory and industry demands.*

This confidence-building effect is an important indicator of employability readiness, which is a key outcome for vocational education programs.



Image 55: Pushkaran, a mechanical engineering student

## 6 Transformation through Holistic Education and Value-Based Learning

One of the most distinctive features of the program is the integration of technical education with the Gurukula model of holistic development. This approach emphasises discipline, structured routines, and character building alongside academic training.

Students reported significant improvements in behavioural and personal development outcomes as given below:

| Ratings | Discipline & routine | Respect, values & character development | Emotional stability | Ability to handle challenges | Teamwork & communication |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0% | 0% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| 2 | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% | 1% |
| 3 | 5% | 4% | 9% | 6% | 5% |
| 4 | 24% | 26% | 23% | 28% | 24% |
| 5 | 70% | 68% | 65% | 64% | 69% |

Survey responses indicate that students perceive strong improvements in personal development outcomes. The most commonly reported changes relate to discipline, respect for others, and the development of structured daily routines. These behavioural transformations are important because they shape workplace readiness and interpersonal skills, which are often as critical as technical knowledge in employment contexts.

Qualitative discussions reinforced this finding. Students frequently described how the institutional environment encourages time management, mutual respect, and collective responsibility.

Faculty members also noted that students who initially struggled with routine or discipline gradually adapted to the structured lifestyle of the residential system. Over time, this environment appears to foster stronger self-regulation and accountability.

Importantly, the program has also contributed to shifts in academic aspiration. While many students initially joined with the sole aim of securing a job, around 25% now express interest in pursuing higher education such as engineering degrees or advanced certifications.

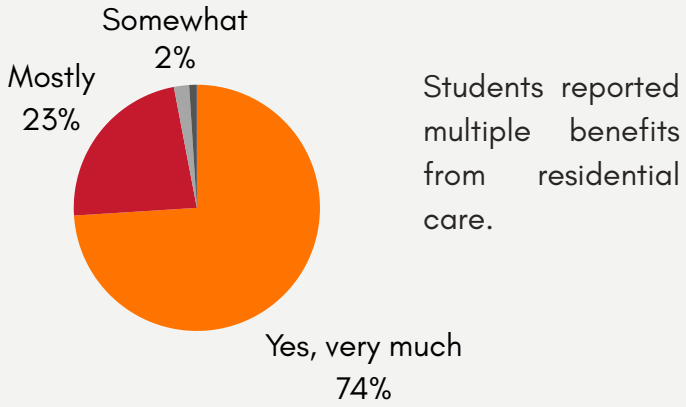
This indicates that the intervention is not only creating immediate employment pathways but also raising long-term educational ambitions among first-generation learners.

# 7 Inclusion of Vulnerable Youth and Social Mobility Outcomes

The program demonstrates strong alignment with its mission to serve vulnerable youth. By providing free education and residential care, the program reduces structural inequalities that often prevent economically disadvantaged students from accessing professional education. For many beneficiaries, participation represents their first opportunity to enter a formal technical learning environment.

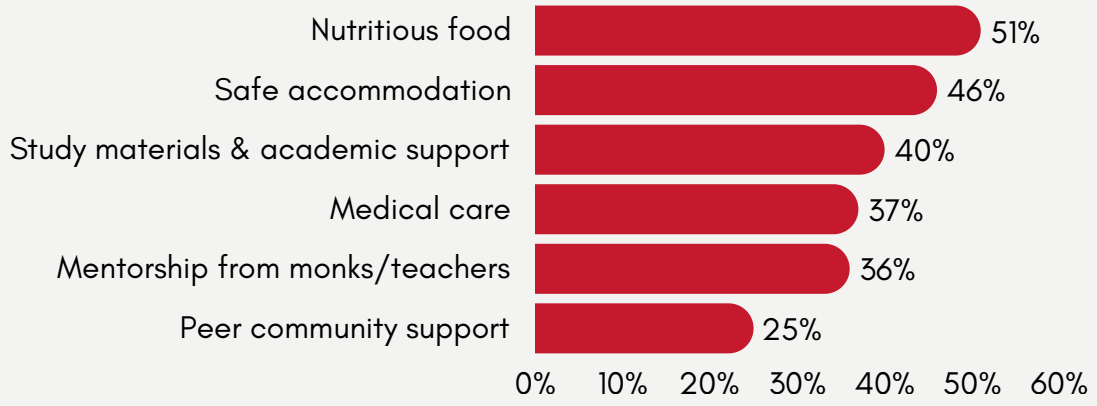
Residential support is a key pillar of the program, contributing significantly to students' overall well-being.

**Residential Environment Support**




Graph 56: Residential environment imapct

**Key Benefits of Residential Care (multi select)**




Graph 57: Impact of residential benefits

These provisions reduce financial and psychological stress, allowing students to concentrate on academic and professional development.

During discussions, several respondents shared that they are the first members of their family to pursue diploma-level technical education. This reflects the broader social impact of the program, as the skills acquired by these students can influence future educational aspirations within their families and communities.

The program therefore contributes to intergenerational social mobility, enabling youth from vulnerable backgrounds to transition into skilled employment sectors.

## 8 Sustainability through Confidence, Skills, and Institutional Support

Indicators from the assessment suggest strong potential for sustainability of program outcomes. A key marker of sustainability is the level of confidence students have in applying their skills beyond the institution.

With 70% of respondents reporting confidence in securing employment, the program appears to be building a solid foundation for financial independence. Additionally, 4% of surveyed respondents have already secured stable employment, demonstrating the early transition from training to livelihood generation.

Institutional sustainability is also reflected in the long-term engagement of students with the residential system. Approximately 18% of respondents have been associated with the student home for more than six years, indicating deep institutional attachment and continuity of support.

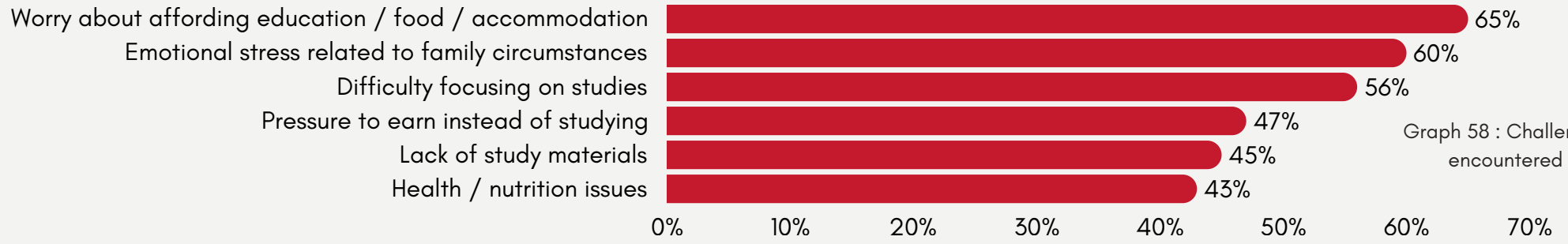
During discussions, many students expressed a strong sense of belonging to the institution and a desire to contribute back in the future. Several mentioned that they hope to support the institution or mentor younger students once they secure employment.
Such expressions indicate that the program is cultivating long-term ownership and alumni engagement, which can strengthen institutional sustainability.



## 9 Persistent Challenges and Residual Socio-Economic Stress

The Survey reflects students' perceptions regarding the reduction of life challenges after joining the program. Overall, a majority of students reported that the program has helped them manage several difficulties that previously affected their ability to focus on education and personal development.

**Challenges Reduced After Joining (multi select)**




Graph 58 : Challenges encountered

Several respondents noted that concerns about their family's financial situation sometimes affect their concentration on studies.



The intervention has played an important role in reducing multiple challenges by providing a supportive learning environment, residential facilities, and access to academic resources. However, despite these strong internal support systems, the assessment also reveals that some external challenges continue to persist. Approximately 21% of students reported that their overall life challenges have not noticeably reduced since joining the program.

Insights from qualitative discussions suggest that these challenges are largely associated with family-related emotional stress and financial concerns outside the institutional environment. Many students continue to feel responsible for supporting their families, particularly those from single-parent or economically unstable households. This highlights an important insight that while the program effectively addresses educational and residential needs, external socio-economic pressures can still influence students' emotional well-being.

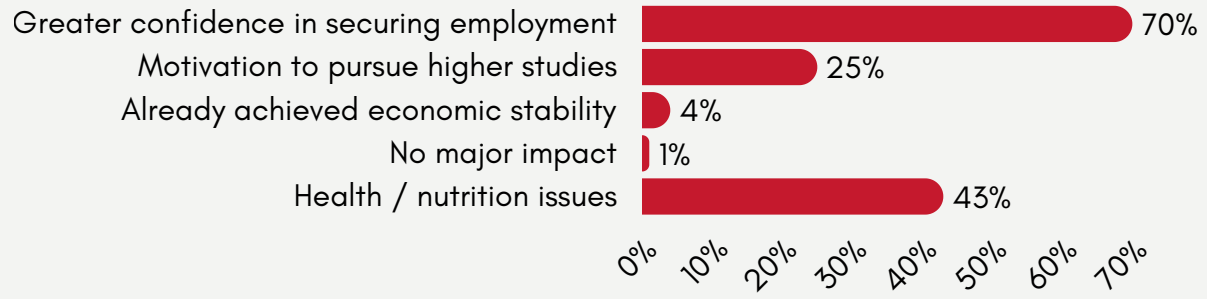
*"The college gives us everything we need, but sometimes I still worry about my family's situation at home. I want to finish my course quickly and start earning to support them."Dinesh, a 17-year-old student currently enrolled at DCE, shared a poignant reflection on his academic journey and personal anxieties. While acknowledging the high level of support and provision from the institution, stating, "The college gives us everything we need," his focus remains acutely fixed on his responsibilities outside the college environment. He revealed, "but sometimes I still worry about my family's situation at home." This internal conflict highlights a common tension for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, where academic pursuit is inextricably linked to the immediate need for financial contribution. His ultimate goal is driven by this familial imperative: "I want to finish my course quickly and start earning to support them." This desire indicates a strong motivation to accelerate his studies, viewing his education less as a purely intellectual endeavor and more as a crucial, time-sensitive stepping stone to becoming a primary earner and alleviating his family's financial burdens. His statement underscores the significant psychological weight and pressure that these students carry, even within a supportive educational setting.*

These findings suggest an opportunity to strengthen psychosocial counselling and family support mechanisms, ensuring that students are able to fully benefit from the opportunities provided.

## 10 Long-Term Aspirations and Transformation

The program has significantly influenced students' long-term aspirations.

**Impact on Long-Term Goals (multi select)**




Graph 59 : Assessment of term aspirations and transformations

Students increasingly view their education not only as a means of obtaining employment but also as an opportunity to improve the socio-economic conditions of their families.

As one student shared during discussions:

"*Earlier I was unsure about my future, but now I feel confident that I can build a career and support my family.*"

This shift in confidence and aspiration reflects the transformational impact of the program, enabling youth from disadvantaged backgrounds to transition toward skilled employment and upward social mobility.

*Mr Vimal Raj, a third-year student enrolled in the Diploma in Automobile Engineering program, shared a profound personal reflection during a recent round of focused discussions, underscoring the significant impact of the learning environment on his life and aspirations. "This place has fundamentally changed how I think about my future," Mr Raj stated. His tone conveyed a sense of genuine clarity and rediscovered purpose. "Earlier, I was mired in uncertainty; I was truly unsure about what I could realistically achieve or what kind of professional path was open to me upon graduation. That lack of clarity was a source of anxiety, not just for me but for my family as well." He continued, detailing the shift in his perspective: "Now, I believe I can not only build a good career for myself in the automobile sector but, more importantly, I am confident that I can use this education and these practical skills to substantially support my family. The curriculum, the hands-on exposure, and the mentorship have replaced my former doubt with a solid sense of capability and a clear professional direction." Mr Raj's reflection highlights a critical outcome of the program: moving beyond theoretical knowledge to instil a deep-seated belief in personal potential and economic empowerment. His newfound confidence is indicative of the program's success in equipping students not just with technical skills but also with the entrepreneurial mindset and self-assurance necessary to achieve long-term career stability and contribute positively to their households. His statement serves as a powerful testament to the program's role as a catalyst for socio-economic upliftment.*

Taken together, the findings indicate that the Ramakrishna Mission Students' Home model represents a highly relevant and effective approach to breaking the cycle of poverty through education, skill development, and holistic mentorship.

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

- **Target Group Alignment:** 97% of the students are from highly vulnerable backgrounds (single parents, orphans, or below the poverty line), confirming the program is reaching its intended beneficiaries.
- **Addressing Barriers:** By providing "Free Technical Education" (88%) and "Residential Care" (62%), the program directly addresses the primary socio-economic barriers that prevent this demographic from accessing higher education.
- **Sector Alignment:** The focus on Computer and Automobile Engineering (90% combined) aligns with high-demand sectors in the Indian labour market.



### Coherence

- **Internal Coherence:** The integration of modern technical training (Computer/Automobile Engineering) with a traditional "Value-based" residential system presents a unique, coherent model that addresses both the student's professional and personal needs.
- **External Coherence:** The program acts as a crucial link between basic secondary education and the formal industrial workforce, filling a gap that government or private institutions often miss for this specific demographic.



### Effectiveness

- **Infrastructure Quality:** 95% of students rate the lab and workshop facilities as "Excellent" or "Good," indicating a high-quality technical training environment.
- **Objective Achievement:** The goal of creating a job-ready workforce is supported by the 70% of students who report "Greater confidence in securing a job" as a direct result of the program.



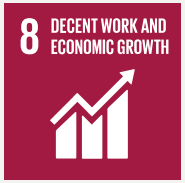
### Efficiency

- **Operational Quality:** The survey includes ratings for program efficiency (timeliness of classes, availability of resources), with favourable scores (72%-76% top-tier ratings).
- **Resource Utilisation:** The high satisfaction with lab facilities suggests that capital investments in infrastructure are being effectively utilised by the student body for practical learning.



### Impact

- **Behavioural Transformation:** The "Gurukula" system has a significant impact on non-technical traits, specifically "Discipline," "Routine," and "Respect for others."
- **Aspiration Shift:** A key long-term impact is a shift in motivation; 25% of students now intend to pursue higher engineering degrees or certifications, underscoring the program's role in breaking the cycle of low educational attainment.

| SDG Goal | Goal Target | Alignment Description |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Target 1.2: Reduce by at least half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty. | By providing free technical education and residential care, the program removes financial barriers to entry, enabling youth from low-income backgrounds to break out of the cycle of poverty. |
|  | Target 4.4: Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship. | The program focuses on technical and vocational skills training (e.g., Engineering, IT) specifically designed to prepare students for the modern industrial workforce. |
|  | Target 8.6: Substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training. | The intervention directly increases youth employability and professional confidence, facilitating a smooth transition from education to stable, decent employment. |
|  | Target 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, or origin. | The project prioritises the inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as orphans and youth from single-parent or marginalised households, ensuring equal opportunity for professional advancement. |
|  | Target 17.17: Encourage and promote effective public, public-private, and civil society partnerships. | Success is often driven by collaboration among institutional training, community-based support systems, and industrial partners in student placements. |

### Sustainability

- **Economic Self-Sufficiency:** 70% job confidence and the small percentage (4%) already in stable employment highlight a path toward financial independence.
- **Foundation Building:** The fact that 18% of students spend over six years in the student home suggests a deep-rooted foundation of values and skills that are likely to persist throughout their adult lives.

## Recommendation



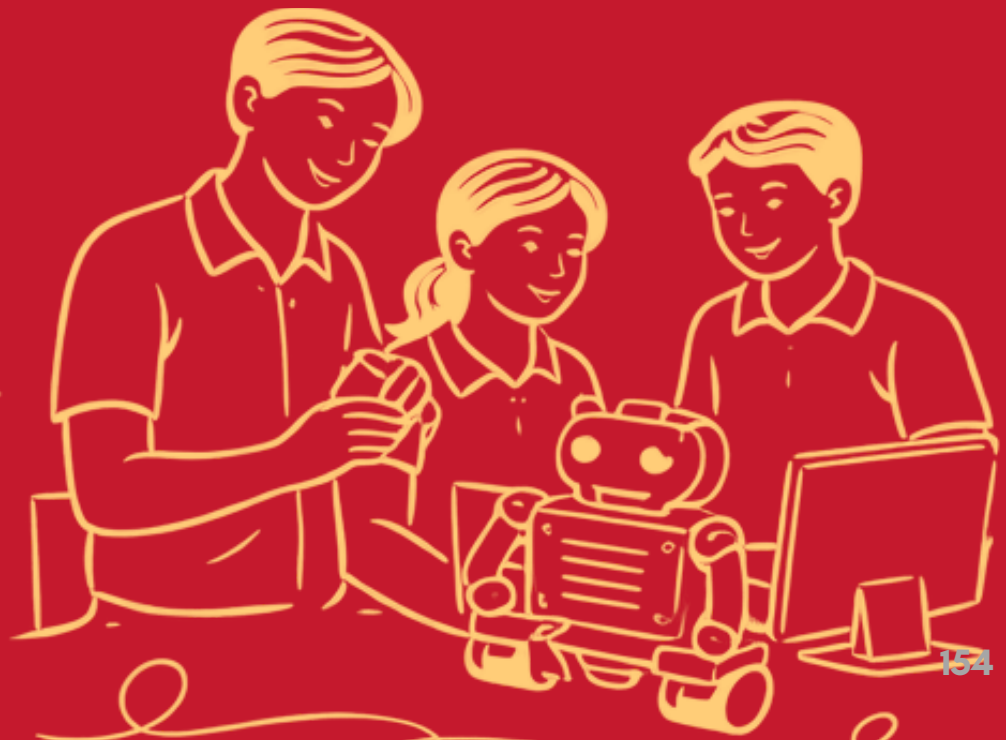
**Strengthen Socio-Emotional and Family Support Systems:** While the program successfully provides technical skills and residential security, 21% of students report no noticeable reduction in challenges, citing persistent family-related emotional stress and financial worry. It is recommended to integrate formal mental health counselling and family-level interventions. Addressing the "residual stress" from their home environments will ensure that students can fully leverage their technical training without the psychological burden of external socio-economic pressures.



**Formalise Industry-Led Transition Pathways:** With 70% of students expressing high confidence in securing jobs, the project is at a critical juncture to convert this "confidence" into "economic stability." Strengthening formal industry partnerships and alumni mentorship programs, specifically leveraging the 18% of students who have been with the institution for over 6 years, will create a robust pipeline for immediate placement. This transition from "education" to "stable income" is the ultimate metric for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty for these vulnerable households.

# Conclusion





## What Changed

The program has successfully converted high-vulnerability profiles into a skilled, confident technical workforce. Key shifts include a 70% increase in job-securing confidence and high specialisation in modern engineering sectors (Computer and Automobile). Beyond academic metrics, the "Gurukula" model has fundamentally altered student behaviour, with significant gains in personal discipline, routine, and mutual respect reported.

## Why It Matters

With 97% of the cohort originating from marginalised backgrounds—specifically single-parent households, orphans, and families below the poverty line—the program serves as a critical social safety net. By addressing the primary barriers of cost and housing (ranked as top enrollment drivers by 88% and 62% respectively), the intervention demonstrates high Relevance and Effectiveness in breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty that usually limits this demographic.

## What Remains to be Addressed

Despite the high quality of internal facilities and support, a subset of 21% of students report no noticeable reduction in overall life challenges. These students continue to grapple with "residual stress" stemming from external family circumstances and financial worries. This indicates that while technical and residential needs are met, the socio-emotional burden of their backgrounds remains a significant factor in their overall well-being.

## Strategic Way Forward

To ensure the Sustainability of these gains, the project should transition toward a more holistic support model. The strategic focus must shift from "outputs" (e.g., completing a degree) to "long-term outcomes" (e.g., economic and emotional stability). This involves:

- Integrating Socio-Emotional Support: Implementing formal counselling to address persistent family-related stress.
- Strengthening Industry Linkages: Formalising placement pipelines to ensure the 70% confidence level translates into immediate, high-quality employment.
- Deepening Alumni Engagement: Utilising the 18% of long-term residents as mentors to provide a roadmap for newer students entering the professional world.

# Stand Without Legs – Livelihood Support for Persons with Disabilities

Impact Assessment for FY 2023-2025

NGO/Trust: Tamil Nadu Differently Abled Federation Charitable Trust (TNDFCT)




**Image 56: Bunk shops set up for disabled people**

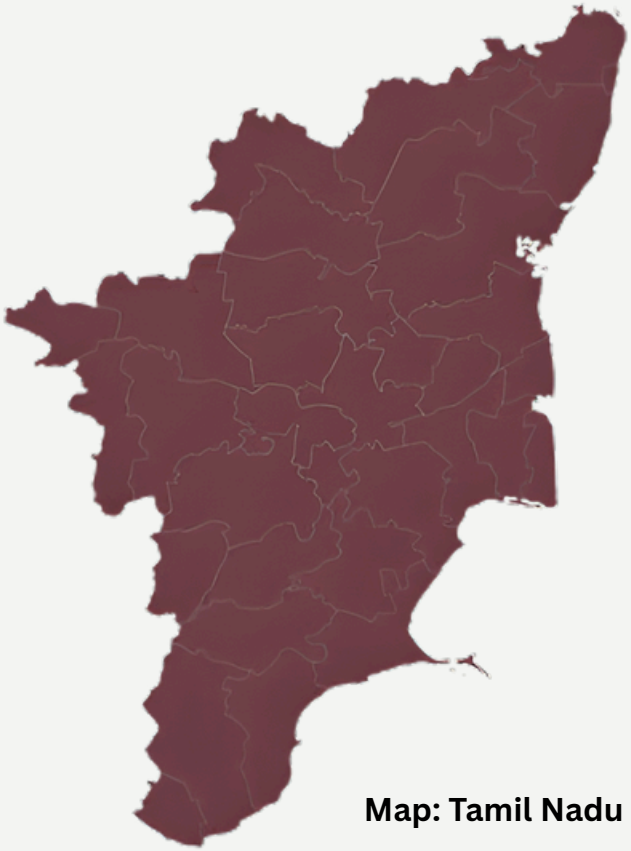
# Executive Summary




**Image 57 : showcasing impact of project**

| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
|---|---|---|
| Stand Without Legs - Livelihood Support for Persons with Disabilities | Tamil Nadu Differently Abled Federation Charitable Trust (TNDFCT) | FY 2023-2025 |

**Project Location: Multiple districts across Tamil Nadu**



**Map: Tamil Nadu**

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** 40 persons with disabilities supported during 2023-2025 through bunk shops and one auto-rickshaw

**Indirect:** Family members dependent on beneficiary income and local communities accessing essential goods and services

## Project Activities:

The project was implemented through a phased approach aimed at enabling sustainable livelihood opportunities for persons with disabilities from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. In the initial phase, eligible beneficiaries were identified through district-level federations and partner networks. Their motivation, physical ability, and livelihood feasibility were assessed to ensure suitability for micro-enterprise activities. Based on local demand and beneficiary interest, appropriate product categories—such as Aavin milk distribution, groceries, vegetables, tea and snacks, tailoring, and petty trade—were identified. Beneficiaries also received entrepreneurship training covering basic business management, inventory control, pricing, and customer handling.

In the second phase, customised bunk shops were fabricated and installed at approved vending locations, incorporating accessibility-friendly design adaptations. Beneficiaries were supported with initial working capital or merchandise to help initiate operations. The bunk units were branded with donor and TNDFCT logos to ensure visibility and accountability.

The final phase focused on enterprise stabilisation through continuous hand-holding, mentoring, and monitoring support. Regular follow-ups helped address operational challenges and track enterprise performance, including sales and income generation. In applicable cases, asset ownership of the bunk shops was gradually transferred to beneficiaries upon completion of interest-free repayments, promoting long-term ownership and sustainability.

## Performance Snapshot

**Addressing Livelihood Barriers for Persons with Disabilities:** The intervention targeted individuals facing severe economic and mobility constraints, many of whom previously relied on irregular low-income work due to limited employment opportunities suited to their physical abilities.

**Significant Increase in Beneficiary Income:** Prior to the intervention, 73% of beneficiaries earned below ₹6,000 per month, with many earning less than ₹3,000. After establishing bunk shop enterprises, 73% now earn more than ₹12,000 per month, reflecting a substantial improvement in income stability.

**High Enterprise Sustainability and Operational Continuity:** 93% of beneficiaries operate their shops regularly, and most have sustained their enterprises for more than one year, indicating strong business viability and integration into daily livelihood routines.

**Improved Household Financial Stability:** Increased earnings have strengthened household well-being, with 87% of beneficiaries using income for daily household expenses and 67% supporting children's education, demonstrating positive spillover benefits for families.

**Enhanced Financial Planning and Entrepreneurial Behaviour:** The Program has encouraged stronger financial management practices, with 80% of beneficiaries planning expenses more carefully and 73% actively managing stock and sales, indicating the emergence of entrepreneurial mindsets.

**Strengthened Independence and Social Dignity:** The intervention has improved beneficiaries' sense of self-worth and social inclusion, with 73% reporting greater independence and 67% feeling more respected and dignified after becoming shop owners.

**Strong Ownership and Sustainability of the Model:** High repayment discipline (87% repaying instalments regularly) and 100% confidence in continuing the enterprise demonstrate strong ownership and long-term sustainability of the livelihood model.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Accessible Livelihood Design Aligned with Physical Abilities:** The fixed-location bunk shop model reduced mobility barriers and enabled persons with disabilities to operate businesses comfortably within their physical capacity.

**Combination of Asset Support and Entrepreneurship Training:** Providing both the enterprise asset and guidance on stock management, pricing, and customer interaction helped beneficiaries manage their businesses effectively.

**Strong Sense of Ownership through the Repayment Model:** The interest-free repayment structure encouraged responsibility, financial discipline, and long-term commitment to sustaining the enterprise.

**Visible Economic Participation Strengthening Social Inclusion:** Operating a shop within the community enhanced beneficiaries' confidence, social interaction, and recognition as entrepreneurs rather than dependents.




Image 58 : People Purchasing utilities form bunk shop

# Project at a glance




Image 59: Beneficiary of TNDFCT Intervention

**About NGO/Trust:** Tamil Nadu Differently Abled Federation Charitable Trust (TNDFCT), Chennai, is a registered non-profit social service organisation dedicated to improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities through inclusive development and rehabilitation initiatives. The Trust works towards enabling differently-abled individuals to live with dignity, independence, and equal opportunities in society.

The organisation implements a range of interventions, including mobility support (such as wheelchairs and assistive devices), educational assistance, livelihood and skill development Programs, marriage assistance, and community-based rehabilitation services. These initiatives aim to address the social, economic, and accessibility challenges faced by persons with disabilities and their families

## Objective

To enable economic self-reliance and social dignity for persons with physical disabilities from low-income backgrounds by providing accessible livelihood assets, entrepreneurship support, and sustained handholding for stable self-employment.

## Thematic

Livelihoods | Disability Inclusion | Economic Empowerment

## Geography

Implemented across multiple districts in Tamil Nadu

## Coverage

Urban and semi-urban locations where vending and small enterprise opportunities are available, implemented through district-level networks of the Tamil Nadu Differently Abled Federation Charitable Trust.



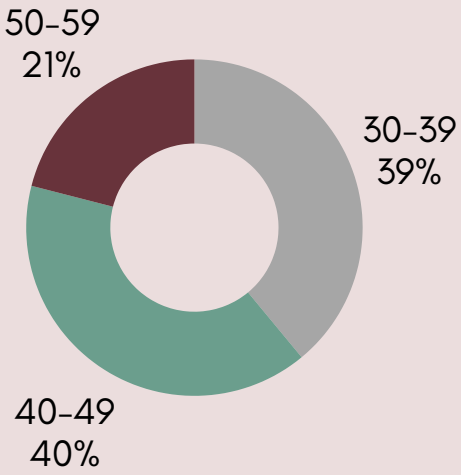

Image 60: A five star sponsored Bunk shop

## Respondent Profile

The respondent profile indicates that the beneficiaries largely belong to the economically active age group, with 53% aged between 40–49 years, followed by 27% between 50–59 years and 20% between 30–39 years. In terms of gender distribution, 67% of respondents are male and 33% are female. Most beneficiaries reported locomotor or orthopaedic disabilities (87%), while a smaller proportion reported polio or polio-related conditions (14%).

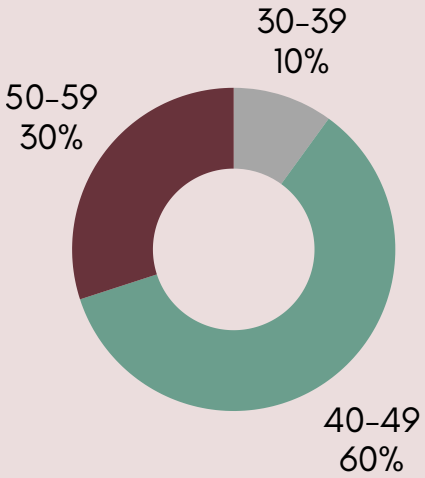
From an educational perspective, 47% of respondents have completed secondary education, 33% higher secondary, and 20% possess graduate-level qualifications. Household composition shows that 87% live in households with 3–4 members, while 13% belong to families with 5–6 members. Overall, the respondents represent persons with physical disabilities from low-income households who are within the working-age population and seeking stable livelihood opportunities.

### Age of the Beneficiary - Female



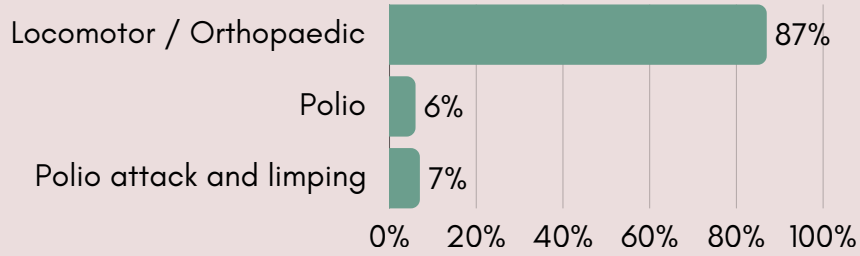

Graph 60: Age Female

### Age of the Beneficiary - Male



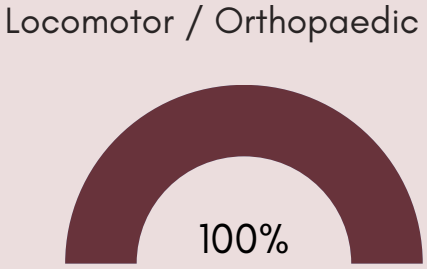

Graph 61: Age Male

### Current status




Graph 62: Working status

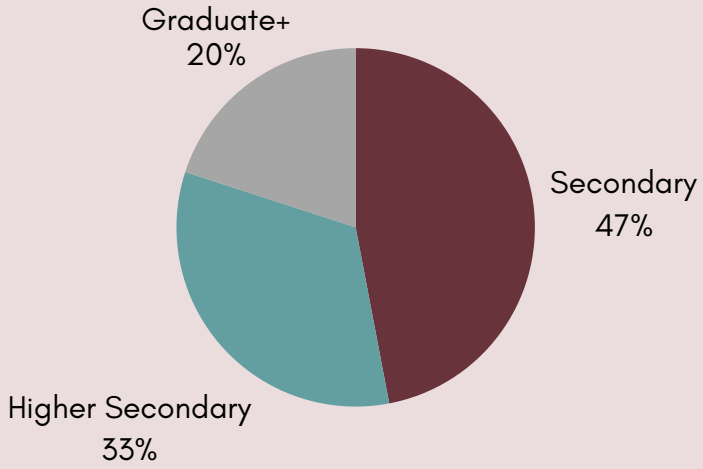
### Type of disability (self-reported)



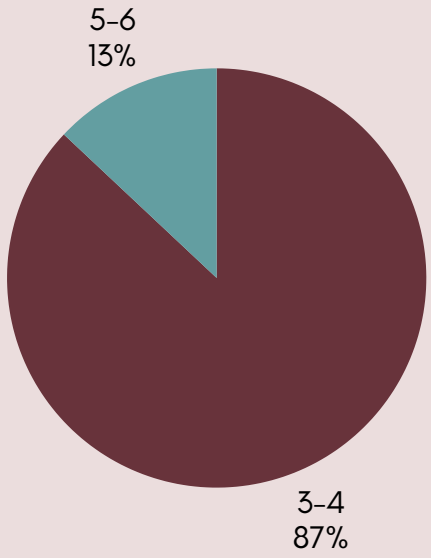

Graph 63: Type of Disability

## Education level

Graph 64: Education level




## Household size




Graph 65: Household size




Image 61: Beneficiary of a bunk shop set up by the TNDFCT

# Study Findings




Image 62: Beneficiary of a bunk shop set up by the TNDFCT

## 1 Limited Livelihood Options and Economic Vulnerability Prior to the Intervention

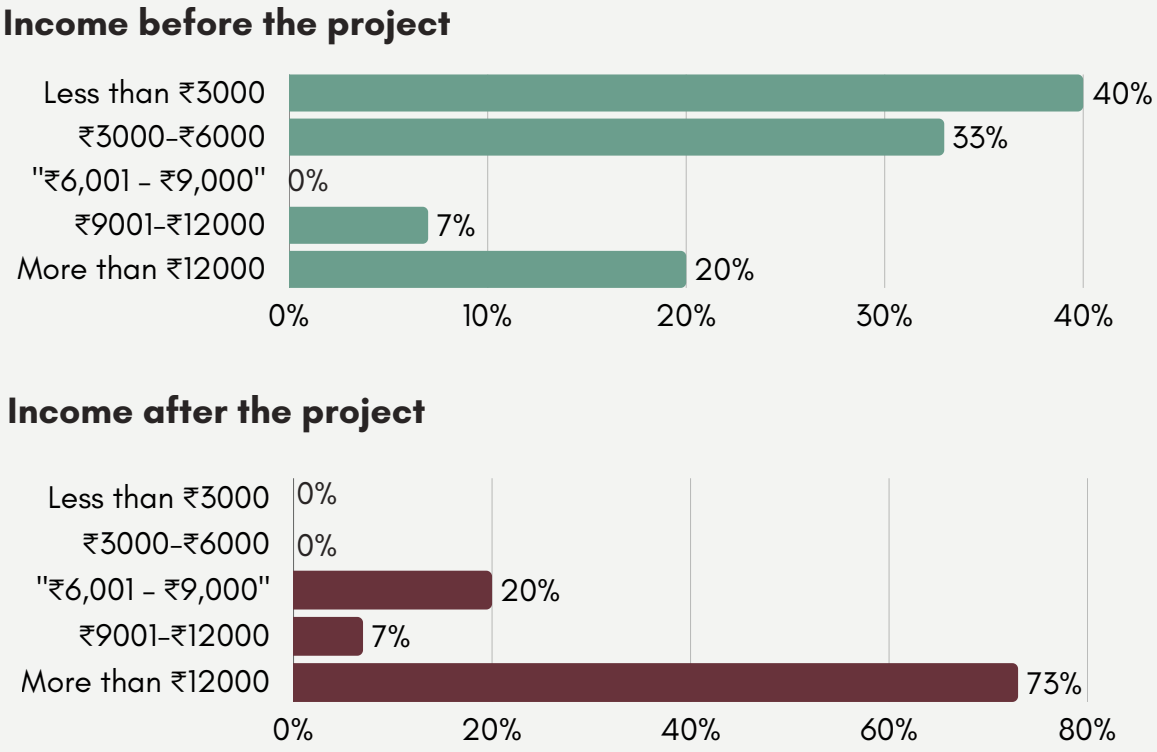
Before the introduction of the livelihood support initiative, most beneficiaries were engaged in irregular, low-income activities that were physically demanding and economically unstable. The majority of respondents belonged to low-income households and had limited access to employment opportunities suited to their physical abilities. A significant proportion of beneficiaries had locomotor or orthopaedic disabilities, which restricted their mobility and ability to engage in physically intensive occupations.

In addition to economic vulnerability, discussions with beneficiaries highlighted limited opportunities to participate meaningfully in household decision-making or financial contributions. Many described feeling dependent on others for financial support, which had implications for both their self-confidence and their perceived role within the family. During discussions, several respondents noted that while they were willing to work, the lack of accessible livelihood opportunities meant that their disability often became a barrier to employment rather than a condition that could be accommodated through appropriate livelihood design.

## 2 Significant Income Growth and Transition to Stable Livelihoods

Survey findings indicate that 73% of respondents were earning less than ₹6,000 per month prior to the intervention, with 40% earning less than ₹3,000, placing them well below a stable income threshold. These income levels were insufficient to support basic household needs and often resulted in dependence on family members or irregular work opportunities.

The intervention has resulted in a substantial improvement in the income levels of beneficiaries, indicating a strong shift from precarious income sources to more stable micro-enterprises. Post-intervention survey show that 73% of beneficiaries now earn more than ₹12,000 per month through their bunk shop enterprises, representing a two-to-threefold increase compared to their pre-project income levels.




Graph 66 : Analysis of Income before and after he project

This increase in income reflects the effectiveness of providing a livelihood model that is aligned with the physical abilities of persons with disabilities. The bunk shop model enables beneficiaries to operate from a fixed location, reducing mobility constraints while allowing them to engage in consistent commercial activity.

The additional income has translated directly into improved household stability. A majority of beneficiaries reported that earnings are primarily used for daily household expenses and children's education, suggesting that the economic gains extend beyond individual beneficiaries to support family well-being.

*Respondents consistently highlighted that the regularity of income has reduced financial uncertainty. Several beneficiaries noted that they are now able to plan household expenditures more confidently, rather than relying on sporadic income from irregular work. Mr Selvaraj, who has lost his limbs because of an accident, explained: "Earlier, I worked only when someone called me for small jobs. Now I open my shop every day and know that I will earn something for my family."The positive impact of regular income on financial stability and planning was a recurrent and significant theme in the beneficiaries' feedback. The consistent nature of the earnings, a direct outcome of the program, has fundamentally altered their approach to household finance by dramatically reducing the pervasive sense of financial uncertainty they previously experienced. Several respondents explicitly stated that they are now able to plan their household expenditures with a greater degree of confidence and foresight. This contrasts sharply with their former dependence on sporadic, unpredictable income streams, which necessitated a highly reactive and often stressful management of funds. The shift from an irregular, piecemeal income to a dependable, regular one represents a move from day-to-day survival to confident financial management.*

*This sentiment was powerfully illustrated by Mr. Selvaraj, a beneficiary who lost his limbs in an accident. His testimony perfectly encapsulates the transition from precarious, irregular employment to stable, self-directed work: "Earlier, I worked only when someone called me for small jobs—it was completely dependent on luck and other people's needs. Now I open my shop every day and know that I will earn something for my family. This assurance changes everything, allowing me to look beyond just the next meal." This regular, predictable earning capability has instilled a sense of security and autonomy, enabling a proactive approach to budgeting, saving, and long-term planning for his family's well-being.*



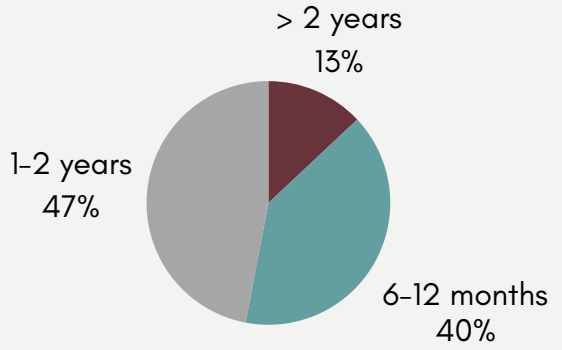



**Image 63: Bunk shop run by an disabled person**

## 3 High Enterprise Continuity Reflecting Strong Livelihood Viability

The duration of operating the bunk shops indicates encouraging levels of enterprise continuity among beneficiaries. Nearly 47% of respondents have been operating their bunk shops for 1–2 years, while 40% have been running them for 6–12 months, and 13% have sustained operations for more than two years. This distribution suggests that most beneficiaries have been able to maintain their enterprises beyond the initial establishment phase, reflecting the viability of the livelihood model.

**Duration of operating the bunk shop**




Graph 67: Duration of enterprise continuities

Operational sustainability of the bunk shops appears strong, with 93% of beneficiaries reporting that they operate their shops on almost every planned working day. This high level of operational consistency indicates that the livelihood model is both feasible and manageable for the target group.

The reliability of daily operations also suggests that beneficiaries have integrated the enterprise into their routine livelihood strategy rather than viewing it as a temporary activity. Regular shop operations help maintain customer relationships and ensure stable cash flow, both of which are critical for micro-enterprise sustainability.




Image 64: Beneficiary in a bunk shop

*During field discussions, Mr Arockia Raj, from Mayiladuthurai, who is visually impaired, explained that operating a fixed-location shop provides a sense of stability and routine. Unlike previous work that required physical movement or temporary labour arrangements, the bunk shop allows them to manage work according to their physical capacity. "This shop allows me to work without depending on others," Mr. Raj explained, underscoring the independence and dignity the venture provides. Unlike the physically demanding and often precarious nature of earlier work, which frequently involved temporary labor arrangements or required extensive physical movement, the bunk shop is manageable within his physical capacity. "Even with my disability, I can manage the business and serve customers every day." This fixed-location setup has proven to be a sustainable model, allowing him to maintain consistent productivity and income.*

*Furthermore, Mr. Raj shared a deeply personal benefit of his transition to self-entrepreneurship. The stability and community engagement afforded by the shop were instrumental in a life-changing personal development: he met his partner for life. The couple now collaboratively manages the business, pooling their efforts and sharing the responsibility of serving their community. Looking ahead, the couple is actively focused on business expansion and formalizing their infrastructure. They have already taken a significant step by applying for an electricity connection, which will allow them to extend their operating hours and potentially diversify their product offerings within their village. This initiative highlights their dedication not only to personal sustenance but also to contributing to the local economy and building a secure future together. The shop, therefore, represents more than just a source of income; it is a foundation for independence, partnership, and community integration.*




Image 65: Mr Arockia Raj, from Mayiladuthurai, with his own bunk shop

## 4 Emergence of Financial Planning and Entrepreneurial Mindsets




Image 66: Interaction with beneficiaries for the review of bunk shops

Beyond income improvements, the project has contributed to a notable shift in financial and business management behaviour among beneficiaries. The survey indicates that 80% of participants now plan their expenses more carefully, while 73% actively manage stock and sales planning.
This reflects an important behavioural transformation—from subsistence-level thinking to a more structured approach to micro-enterprise management. Beneficiaries are increasingly making decisions related to stock procurement, product variety, and pricing strategies to maintain consistent sales.

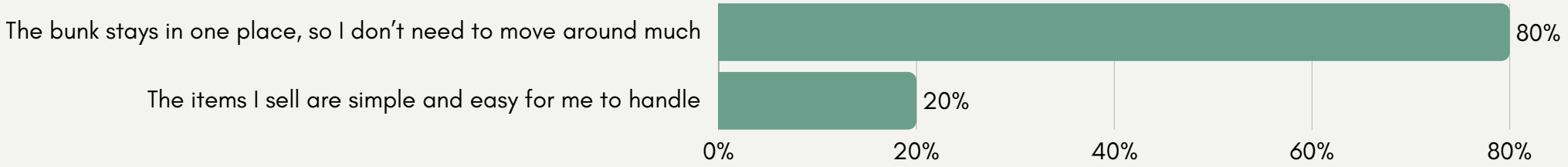
Discussions with respondents revealed that entrepreneurship training and mentoring support played an important role in shaping these behaviours. Beneficiaries reported that learning basic concepts such as inventory management and customer engagement helped them feel more confident in managing their businesses independently.
Additionally, 40% of beneficiaries have started saving small amounts regularly, indicating the early emergence of financial resilience and future planning.

During discussions, respondents expressed that these new financial habits were not only helping their businesses grow but were also influencing household-level budgeting practices. Several participants shared that they now discuss financial decisions more actively with family members.

## 5 Accessible Livelihood Design Reducing Physical Barriers

A key factor contributing to the success of the bunk shop model is its alignment with the physical abilities of persons with disabilities. Survey responses show that 80% of beneficiaries reported that the bunk staying in one place enabled them to work, as it reduced the need for frequent physical movement. Another 20% noted that the items sold are simple and easy to handle, making the enterprise manageable despite mobility limitations.

**What about the bunk made it possible for you to work and earn? (Select one that is most suitable)**




Graph 68: Advantages of a bunk shop



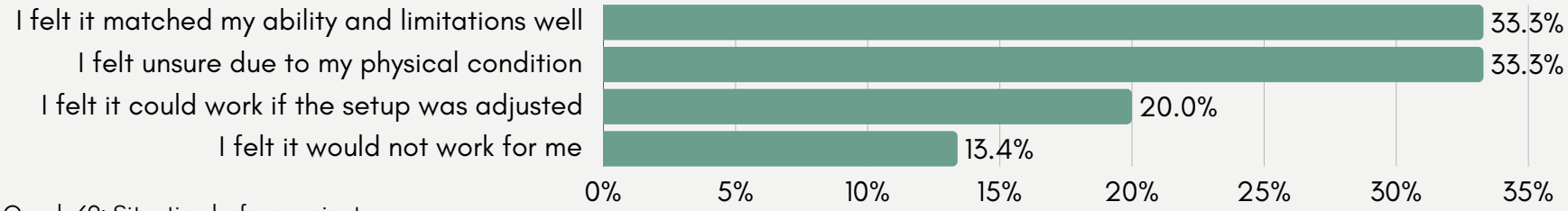




Image 67: Interaction with beneficiaries for the review of bunk shops

Before receiving the bunk, beneficiaries had mixed perceptions about whether this livelihood would be physically feasible. While 33% believed that the livelihood matched their abilities, an equal proportion (33%) expressed uncertainty due to their physical condition. Around 20% felt the model could work if the setup was adjusted, while 13% initially believed it might not be suitable for them.

**Before receiving the bunk, what were your main thoughts about whether this livelihood would work for you physically?**



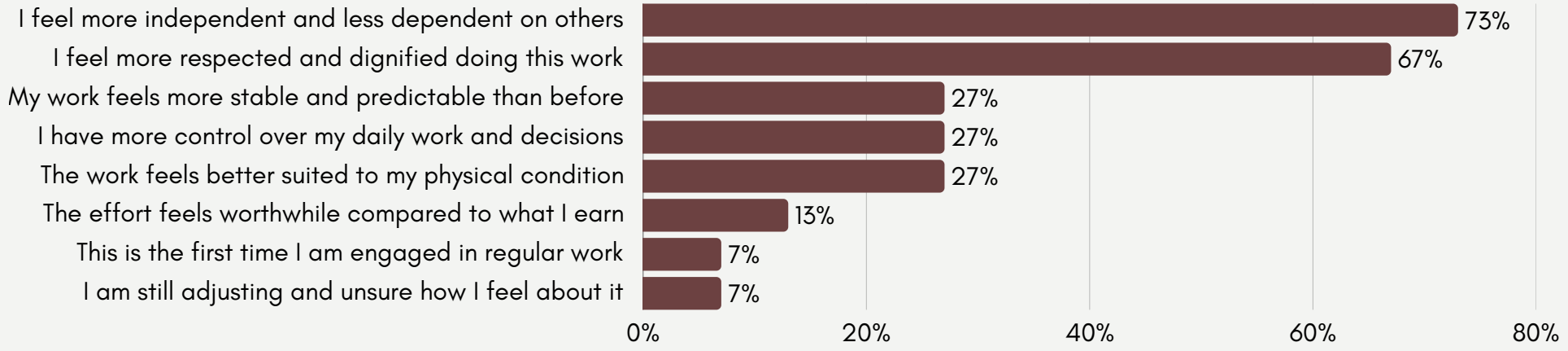

Graph 69: Situation before project

However, practical experience gradually helped beneficiaries gain confidence in managing the enterprise. During discussions, respondents explained that once they started operating the bunk and interacting with customers daily, they realised that the fixed-location setup made the work physically manageable and less exhausting compared to earlier forms of labour.

## 6 Strengthening Social Dignity and Household Contribution

The intervention has significantly strengthened beneficiaries' sense of independence and dignity. Survey findings show that 73% of beneficiaries reported feeling more independent and less dependent on others after starting their bunk shops. Additionally, 67% stated that they feel more respected and dignified while doing this work.

**Compared to work you did earlier, how does this livelihood feel? (multi select)**




Graph 70: Impact on livelihood due to Bunk shops

The project has also generated meaningful social outcomes, particularly in terms of dignity, inclusion, and perceived value within the family and community.

Survey findings show that 60% of beneficiaries now contribute regularly to household expenses, marking a shift from dependency toward financial contribution. This transition has significantly altered family dynamics, with beneficiaries increasingly being recognised as income earners within the household.

Moreover, 67% of respondents reported feeling more respected and dignified following the establishment of their businesses, reflecting the broader social impact of economic participation. Operating a visible enterprise within the community has helped beneficiaries redefine their social identity—from individuals defined primarily by disability to entrepreneurs providing services to the local community.

During discussions, several beneficiaries noted that customers now recognise them as shop owners, which has strengthened their confidence and social interaction within the neighbourhood.
Respondents also highlighted that the ability to support children's education is particularly meaningful. Many beneficiaries indicated that investing in education represents a long-term aspiration for improving the socio-economic prospects of their families.

## 7 Strong Ownership Reflected in Repayment Discipline and Future Confidence

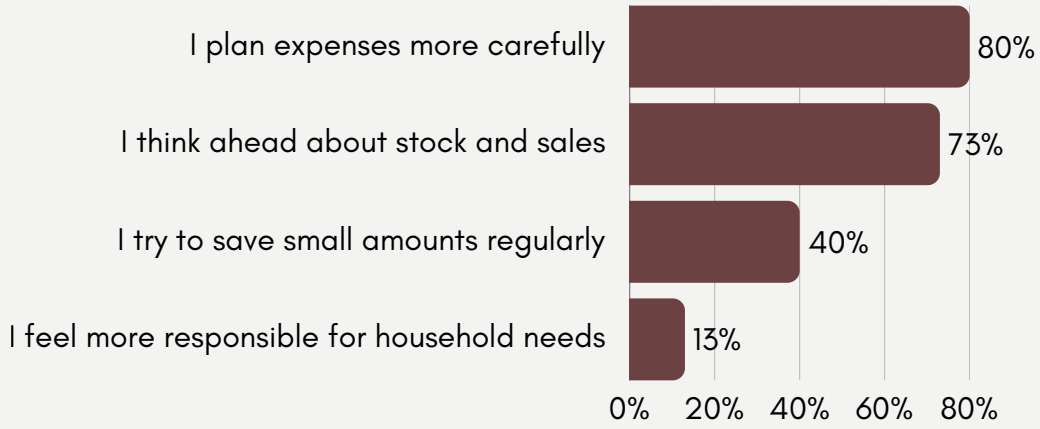
One of the most significant indicators of sustainability is the high level of ownership demonstrated by beneficiaries. Although the support was provided through an interest-free repayment model, 87% of beneficiaries are repaying their instalments regularly and on time.

This repayment discipline indicates both financial viability and a strong sense of responsibility toward the Program. Beneficiaries appear committed to sustaining their enterprises and maintaining accountability within the support framework.

Furthermore, 100% of beneficiaries expressed strong confidence in continuing their livelihood through the bunk shop model. While 73% view the enterprise as a long-term income source, others see it as a foundation for potential expansion into larger businesses.

The livelihood intervention has encouraged stronger financial planning and business management behaviour among beneficiaries. Survey results indicate that 80% of respondents now plan their expenses more carefully, while 73% actively think ahead about stock procurement and sales planning.

**Which of the following habits have changed since you started running the bunk? (Select all that apply)**




Graph 71: results of Habitual changes







Image 68 :Interaction with people of all age running the bunk shops

In terms of financial outcomes, 47% of beneficiaries reported a reduced need to borrow money, while 27% highlighted improved management of daily expenses, and 27% indicated that they are able to save small amounts regularly.

During discussions, beneficiaries expressed pride in owning and operating their shops. Several respondents highlighted that the possibility of asset ownership after repayment motivates them to sustain the enterprise.

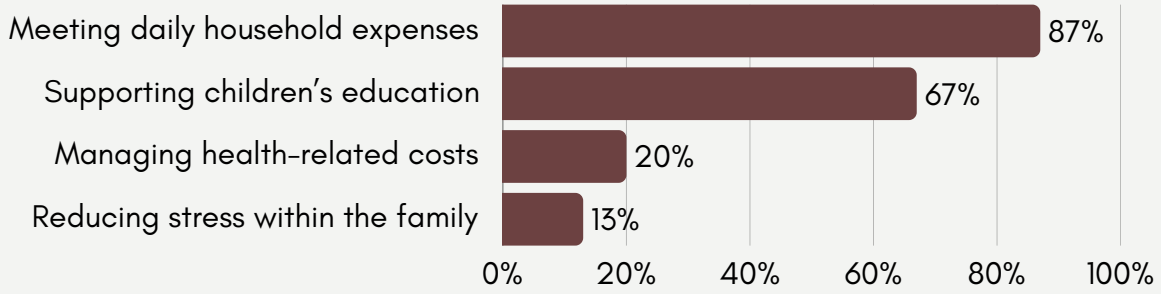
*"Mr. Kalidasan, a resident of Tindivanam, has found a path to economic stability and future growth through his small shop. He views this venture not merely as a source of temporary help, but as a foundational asset upon which he can build a more secure future for himself and his family. Prior to establishing or stabilizing this business, Mr. Kalaidasan struggled with an unreliable and meager monthly income, which typically ranged between ₹3,000 and ₹6,000. This inconsistent income made long-term financial planning nearly impossible.*

*However, with the success of his current shop, his outlook has dramatically improved. The stability and potential demonstrated by the shop have inspired him to take the next critical step in its development. Mr. Kalaidasan is now actively planning to invest in a refrigeration unit. This planned acquisition is a strategic move designed to significantly increase his business's capacity, allowing him to stock perishable goods and offer a wider range of products to his local community. By expanding his offerings, he anticipates a substantial boost in sales and overall profitability, signaling a confident step toward realizing the full potential of his enterprise.*

## 8 Improved Household Stability and Family Well-being

The income generated through the bunk enterprises has contributed to improved financial stability at the household level. Survey responses show that 87% of beneficiaries reported that their income now helps meet daily household expenses, while 67% indicated that it supports children's education.

**Because of your bunk income, which of the following has become easier for your household? (multi select)**



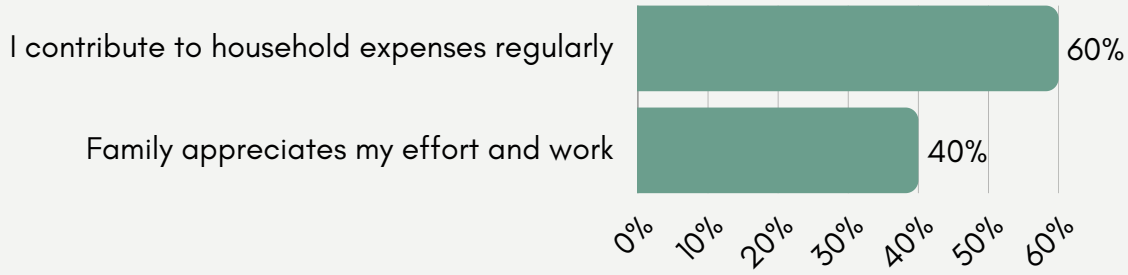

Graph 72: Financial Impact of bunk shops




Image 69: Experiencing interaction with beneficiaries across all age groups.

Additionally, 60% of beneficiaries reported that they now contribute regularly to household expenses, while 40% indicated that their families appreciate their efforts and work.

**What change, if any, have you noticed in your role within the family?**




Graph 73: Impact in family

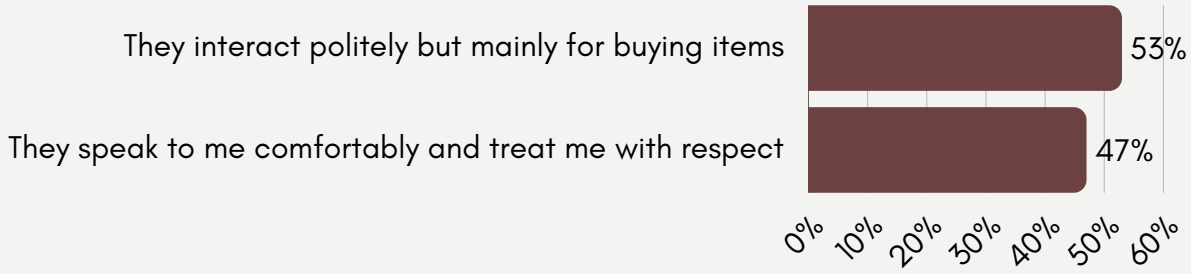



Image 70: engaging with beneficiaries at the bunk shop.

## 9 Positive Community Interaction and Social Inclusion

Operating a visible micro-enterprise within the community has strengthened social engagement for beneficiaries.

**How do people from community usually interact with you at the bunk?**



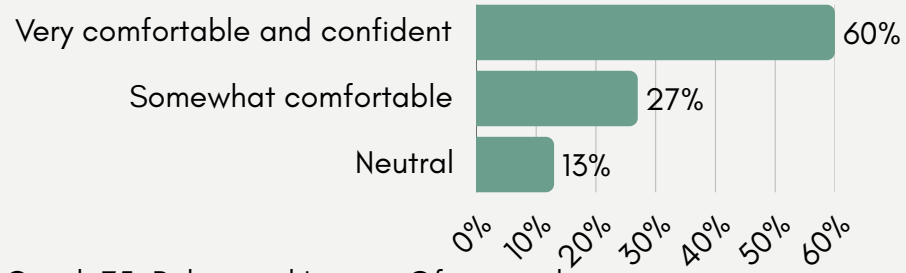

Graph 74 : Assessing overall Community impact




Image 71: Disabled people creating micro community space

Additionally, 60% of beneficiaries reported feeling very comfortable and confident being identified as shop owners, indicating improved self-confidence and community acceptance.

**How comfortable do you feel being identified as a shop owner in your area?**




Graph 75: Behavioral Impact Of respondents




Image 72: Connecting with beneficiaries at the bunk shop.

## 10 From Economic Dependency to Entrepreneurial Independence

The overall findings indicate that the livelihood intervention has generated multi-dimensional benefits that extend beyond immediate income improvements. By aligning livelihood opportunities with the physical abilities of persons with disabilities, the project has successfully enabled beneficiaries to transition from irregular, physically demanding work to stable entrepreneurship.

The project has also contributed to a broader transformation in how beneficiaries perceive themselves and their role within society. Increased income, improved financial management practices, and visible participation in local economic activity have collectively strengthened beneficiaries' sense of dignity and independence.
During discussions, respondents repeatedly emphasised that the most significant change was not only financial improvement but also the restoration of confidence and social recognition. The ability to operate a business independently has helped many beneficiaries reframe their identity—from being perceived as dependents to being recognised as capable entrepreneurs.

Importantly, the benefits of the intervention extend beyond individual beneficiaries. Increased household income supports children's education, improves financial stability for families, and contributes to the accessibility of everyday goods for local communities.

Overall, the project demonstrates how appropriately designed livelihood interventions can create sustainable pathways for economic inclusion, particularly for persons with disabilities who often face structural barriers in accessing formal employment opportunities.

# Case Study:

## Transition from Irregular Labour to Stable Livelihood through Auto-Rickshaw Support

**Beneficiary Name:** Selvam S, 42yrs
**Type of Disability:** Locomotor / Orthopaedic
**Education:** Secondary
**Household Size:** 1-2 members
**Location:** Tamil Nadu



**Image 73: Mr. Selvam sharing his experiences and struggles**

Before receiving the auto-rickshaw support, Mr. Selvam S relied primarily on daily wage and casual labour, earning between ₹3,000 and ₹6,000 per month. This work was physically demanding and irregular, making it difficult for him to maintain a stable income due to his locomotor disability. Opportunities for consistent employment were limited, and the nature of daily wage labour often required physical exertion that was challenging for him.

When the auto-rickshaw livelihood support was introduced, Selvam initially felt confident that driving would suit his physical ability. After receiving the vehicle, he began operating it regularly and has now been driving for 6-12 months. The auto-rickshaw has allowed him to work almost every planned working day, significantly improving his ability to earn consistently.

As a result of this transition, Selvam's monthly income has increased substantially to more than ₹20,000, marking a major shift from irregular labour to a stable livelihood. He explained that the auto has enabled him to work more frequently and independently, providing greater financial stability. According to him, the livelihood has not only increased his income but also improved his confidence and sense of dignity.

Selvam shared that passengers generally interact with him respectfully, which has helped strengthen his confidence as a driver. The income from driving has made it easier for him to manage household expenses and meet health-related costs, reducing financial stress within the household. He also mentioned that he has developed new financial habits, such as saving small amounts regularly.
Importantly, Selvam noted that driving the auto is physically manageable for him, allowing him to sustain the work comfortably. When challenges arise, such as minor repairs or fluctuations in demand, he usually manages them independently.

The auto was provided under an interest-free repayment arrangement, and Selvam has been repaying the instalments regularly and on time, demonstrating strong ownership of the livelihood asset. Looking ahead, he expressed strong confidence in continuing this livelihood in the future, viewing the auto-rickshaw as a long-term and stable source of income. He believes that additional guidance on routes and demand patterns could further strengthen his earnings potential.
Selvam's experience highlights how providing an accessible and mobility-based livelihood asset can enable persons with disabilities to transition from unstable labour to dignified, independent, and sustainable self-employment.

# Case Study:

## From Dependency to Dignified Entrepreneurship – The Story of Ammalu

**Beneficiary Name:** Ammalu, 30yr
**Type of Disability:** Locomotor / Orthopaedic
**Education:** Secondary
**Household Size:** 3-4 members




**Image 74: Bunk shop run by a woman**

Before receiving the bunk shop support, Ammalu was fully dependent on her family for financial support and had no regular source of income. Due to her physical disability and limited access to suitable livelihood opportunities, she was uncertain about her ability to manage any form of work independently. When the bunk shop support was first introduced, she initially believed that the livelihood might not work for her physically.

However, the design of the bunk shop—particularly the fact that it operates from a fixed location and does not require constant physical movement—made it possible for Ammalu to manage the enterprise. Over time, she gradually gained confidence in running the shop and interacting with customers.

Today, Ammalu operates her bunk shop almost every planned working day and earns more than ₹12,000 per month, marking a significant transformation from complete financial dependency to stable income generation. She shared that this is the first time she has been engaged in regular work, which has greatly improved her confidence and sense of independence.

The income from the shop has helped her contribute to household expenses and manage health-related costs, reducing financial stress within the family. Running the business has also encouraged her to develop better financial habits, such as planning stock purchases and managing daily expenses more carefully.

Despite initial doubts about her ability to run the enterprise, Ammalu now expresses strong confidence in continuing the bunk shop livelihood in the future and has been repaying the interest-free instalments regularly and on time. She hopes to gradually improve the shop and expand the business in the coming years.

Reflecting on her journey, Ammalu shared:
*"This is the first time I have been able to work regularly and earn for my family. The bunk shop has given me confidence that I can manage my own livelihood."*
Ammalu's story demonstrates how an accessible livelihood intervention can enable persons with disabilities—particularly women who were previously economically dependent—to transition toward financial independence, dignity, and long-term livelihood stability.

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

- **Targeting:** The project is highly relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries. 87% have locomotor or orthopaedic disabilities, and the data shows the "static" nature of the bunk directly addresses their specific physical constraints.
- **Economic Need:** Prior to the project, 73% were earning less than ₹6,000/month, indicating a clear need for a stable income source.
- **Alignment:** The intervention aligns with the goal of economic inclusion for People with Disabilities (PwDs), shifting them from "irregular/physically difficult work" to a manageable business model.



### Coherence

- **Internal Coherence:** The survey mentions collaboration between Chrysalis Services and Five Star Business Finance Limited, showing a coherent partnership between social implementation and financial backing.
- **External Coherence:** The project adheres to the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, ensuring that the impact assessment and data handling are aligned with current national legal frameworks.



### Effectiveness

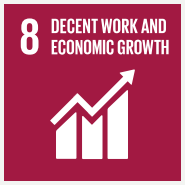
- **Income Generation:** The project exceeded expectations in income growth. 73% of beneficiaries moved into the highest income bracket (>₹12,000/month), effectively doubling or tripling their previous earnings.
- **Operational Consistency:** Effectiveness is demonstrated by the high "uptime" of the shops, with 93% operating almost every planned working day.
- **Financial Literacy:** The objective of building self-reliance was met, as evidenced by 80% of beneficiaries now planning expenses more carefully and 73% managing their own stock and sales.



### Efficiency

- **Repayment Model:** The use of an interest-free repayment model is an efficient way to recycle capital. The 87% on-time repayment rate indicates that the capital is being recovered effectively, allowing for potential "revolving fund" scalability.
- **Self-Management:** Most challenges (stock, sales, health) are resolved independently by beneficiaries (or with minimal family support), suggesting low ongoing management costs for the NGO/Trust.

Note: Further data on the initial cost per bunk would be required to calculate a full Cost-Benefit Ratio.

| SDG Goal | Goal Target | Alignment Description |
|---|---|---|
|   | Target 1.2: By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women, and children of all ages living in poverty. | Economic Uplift: 73% of beneficiaries transitioned from earning less than ₹6,000 to over ₹12,000 monthly, moving significantly above the poverty threshold. |
|   | Target 8.5: Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including for persons with disabilities. | Entrepreneurship: The project created 15 stable livelihoods for persons with locomotor disabilities, with a 93% daily operational rate and 100% beneficiary confidence in long-term sustainability. |
|   | Target 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of disability. | Social Inclusion: 67% of participants reported feeling more "respected and dignified," and 60% noted improved roles and contributions within their family unit. |
|   | Target 12.8: Ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles. | Financial Literacy: 80% of participants developed new habits of careful expense planning, and 73% transitioned to proactive stock management. |

### Impact

- **Social Capital & Dignity:** The project had a profound non-economic impact. 10 out of 15 beneficiaries specifically cited feeling "more respected and dignified," and 60% noted an improved role within their family.
- **Intergenerational Benefits:** 67% (10/15) of beneficiaries are using the income to support children's education, indicating a long-term positive impact on the next generation's social mobility.
- **Behavioural Change:** There is a documented shift from "subsistence thinking" to "business thinking," with beneficiaries now saving and planning for the future.

### Sustainability

- **Confidence Levels:** 100% of beneficiaries are "Very Confident" about the future, which is a strong lead indicator of sustainability.
- **Long-term Outlook:** 73% see this as a permanent, long-term source of income rather than a stop-gap measure.
- **Financial Health:** Reduced need to borrow money and the ability to save small amounts regularly provide a financial cushion that increases the shop's resilience to shocks.

## Recommendation

**Introduce Repayment Flexibility:** While repayment discipline is high, most participants indicated a preference for a flexible schedule. Transitioning to a model that allows for variable payments based on seasonal sales or health-related downtime would improve financial resilience.

**Refine Ergonomic Design:** Address the 27% of participants requesting design improvements by incorporating participatory feedback on shelf heights, ventilation, and accessibility features to better accommodate specific physical disabilities.

**Implement Digital & Fintech Tools:** Given that 80% of the cohort has a secondary education or higher, there is a clear opportunity to introduce digital payment systems (UPI) and basic mobile inventory management to professionalize operations.

**Facilitate Formal Recognition:** Help participants secure local trade licenses or formal identity cards to solidify their status as "Shop Owners." This reinforces the social dignity and confidence gains reported by the current group.

# Conclusion




**Image 75: beneficiaries at the bunk shop.**

## What Changed

The project successfully transitioned 15 individuals from irregular, physically taxing work to stable entrepreneurship. Monthly incomes for 73% of the cohort moved from under ₹6,000 to over ₹12,000. Beyond finances, there was a documented shift in daily habits, with 80% of participants adopting professional financial planning and stock management practices.

## Why It Matters

This transformation validates the OECD-DAC criteria for high Relevance and Impact. By matching the livelihood to the specific physical abilities of the participants, the project restored social dignity and shifted family dynamics from dependency to contribution. Furthermore, because two-thirds of the income is directed toward children's education, the project is creating intergenerational benefits that extend far beyond the immediate beneficiaries.

## What Remains to be Addressed

Operational friction persists regarding shop placement and financial flexibility. A significant majority of participants indicated that "better customer flow" is essential for long-term growth. Additionally, while repayment discipline is currently high, the rigid nature of the repayment schedule remains a point of concern for beneficiaries who may face health-related or seasonal income fluctuations.

## Strategic Way Forward

The project is highly sustainable, with 100% of participants expressing confidence in their future operations. To scale this success, the strategic focus should shift toward:

- Data-Driven Placement: Implementing micro-market analysis for future bunk locations to ensure immediate profitability.
- Adaptive Financing: Introducing flexible repayment models that align with the specific needs of entrepreneurs with disabilities.
- Professionalization: Leveraging the high literacy rates within the group to introduce digital tools for inventory and payments, ensuring these small businesses remain resilient in a modernizing economy.

# NIOS Open School for Children with Special Needs – Inclusive Education & Functional Development Initiative

Impact Assessment for FY 2024-25

NGO/Trust: Hope Public Charitable Trust (HOPE)






Image 76: NIOS Open School for Children with Special Needs – Inclusive Education & Functional Development Initiative

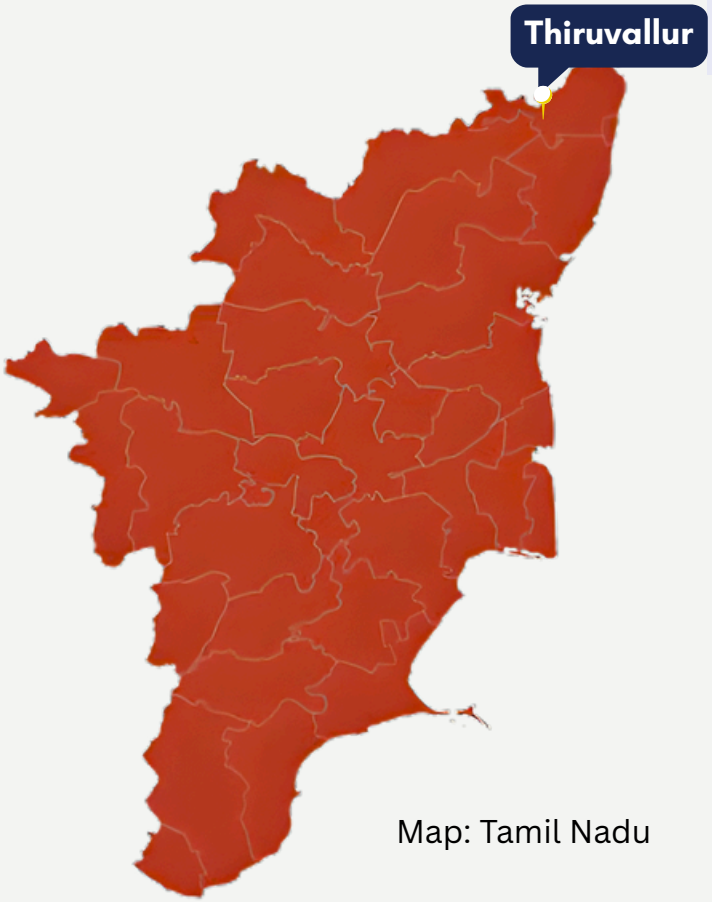
# Executive Summary




Image 77: NIOS community space

| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
|---|---|---|
| NIOS Open School for Children with Special Needs – Inclusive Education & Functional Development Initiative | Hope Public Charitable Trust (HOPE) | FY 2024-25 |

**Project Location: Annambedu Village, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu**




Map: Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** 89 children and youth with intellectual disabilities, autism, learning disabilities, and other special learning needs (expected to scale to ~200 students)
**Indirect:** Families and caregivers of enrolled children; 15-17 educators and special educators; community members across Annambedu and neighbouring villages

## Project Activities:

- Establishment of barrier-free NIOS Open School infrastructure including classrooms, computer lab, library, accessible washrooms, and recreational spaces
- Enrolment of children with special needs from surrounding villages and baseline functional assessments
- Delivery of NIOS-aligned academic instruction (Open Basic and Secondary levels) through individualized and group learning
- Special education support focusing on literacy, numeracy, communication, and functional academics
- Provision of therapy services including occupational therapy, speech therapy, and behavioural interventions as required
- Digital learning exposure through computer lab-based learning
- Co-curricular activities such as arts, music, sports, and life-skills training for holistic development
- Caregiver counselling and community awareness sessions on inclusive education and disability rights
- Individual Education Plans (IEPs), monthly progress tracking, attendance monitoring, therapy logs, and annual reporting

## Performance Snapshot



**Bridging Critical Gaps in Inclusive Education:** The NIOS Open School initiative addressed the absence of structured education opportunities for children with intellectual disabilities and autism in Annambedu and nearby villages, where many children had previously dropped out or remained excluded from formal schooling.



**Expanded Access to Education for Previously Excluded Learners:** The Program has enrolled 89 students, with infrastructure designed to accommodate up to 200 learners, providing barrier-free classrooms, accessible facilities, and safe learning environments for children with diverse needs.



**Flexible Learning Pathways through NIOS Education:** The adoption of the NIOS open schooling model, combined with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and specialised teaching methods, enables students who could not adapt to mainstream schools to continue structured learning and progress academically.



**Functional and Skill-Oriented Learning Approach:** The curriculum integrates literacy, numeracy, life skills, and creative activities such as art, music, gardening, and crafts, promoting experiential learning and practical skill development suited to children with mild intellectual disabilities.



**Improved Student Engagement and Behavioural Development:** Teachers and parents reported noticeable improvements in attention span, communication skills, and participation in classroom activities, indicating early progress in educational reintegration.



**Strengthened Parental Awareness and Community Inclusion:** The initiative has improved parental understanding of the educational potential of children with disabilities, while community outreach efforts have helped identify and enrol previously excluded learners.



**Institutional Innovation in Special Needs Education:** The Program represents an early example of a NIOS-based open schooling model for children with special needs in Tamil Nadu, creating alternative pathways for continued education, vocational training, and future employment.



**Strong Community Demand and Potential for Scale:** High parental interest and increasing enquiries indicate strong community demand, positioning the school as a sustainable and scalable model for inclusive education in underserved regions.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Flexible NIOS-Based Learning Model:** The open schooling approach allowed children with learning challenges to pursue education at their own pace through adaptive curriculum and personalised learning plans.

**Barrier-Free Infrastructure and Safe Learning Environment:** Accessible classrooms, sanitation facilities, and activity spaces reduced physical barriers and created a supportive environment for children with diverse needs.

**Activity-Based and Skill-Oriented Teaching Methods:** Integrating functional academics with creative and practical activities improved student engagement, confidence, and learning participation.

**Strong Community Outreach and Parent Engagement:** Continuous counselling, awareness efforts, and local mobilisation helped identify out-of-school children and encouraged families to enrol them in the Program.



Image 78: Parents of the Children enrolled in the programme

# Project at a glance



Image 79: Facilities  and activities demonstrated in School

**About NGO/Trust:** Hope Public Charitable Trust (HOPE), established in 2007 and based in Chennai, is a non-governmental organization committed to improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable communities through comprehensive education, rehabilitation, and empowerment initiatives. The organization's name reflects its vision as a Humanitarian Organization for People's Empowerment.

HOPE provides a continuum of services for children with autism and intellectual disabilities, including special education, early intervention, occupational therapy, speech therapy, behavioural therapy, physiotherapy, and vocational training aimed at promoting independence and social inclusion. Currently, hundreds of children receive care and rehabilitation services across Chennai, Tiruvallur, and Kancheepuram districts.

## Objective

To establish and operationalize an inclusive NIOS Open School that provides accessible, flexible, and structured education for children and youth with special needs, enabling improvements in functional learning, life skills, social inclusion, and long-term educational and vocational readiness.

## Thematic

Education – Inclusive Education & Special Needs Support

## Geography

Annambedu Village, Thiruvallur District, Tamil Nadu

## Coverage

- Project Type: One-time infrastructure development with ongoing educational services
- Status: Construction completed; school operational
- Enrolment: 89 students currently; expected to scale to ~200 students

## Beneficiary Profile:

Primary Beneficiaries:

- Children and Youth with Intellectual Disabilities
- Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Children with Learning Disabilities and other special learning needs
- Learners requiring flexible NIOS-based education pathways

Secondary Beneficiaries:

- Families and caregivers of enrolled children
- Special educators and school staff
- Community members from Annambedu and neighbouring villages benefiting from increased awareness and inclusion of children with disabilities.

# Study Findings



Image 80 : Newly constructed space for learning

## 1 Before Project Limited Inclusive Education Opportunities for Children with Special Needs

Prior to the establishment of the NIOS Open School initiative, children with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other learning challenges in Annambedu and neighbouring villages had very limited access to structured and inclusive education pathways. Many families reported that conventional schools were either unable to accommodate children with special learning needs or lacked the specialized teaching approaches required to support them effectively. As a result, a significant number of children either dropped out of school early or remained excluded from formal education systems.

Discussions with the NGO/Trust revealed that the local economy is largely driven by brick kiln labour, where children often accompany their parents to work sites. This socio-economic context contributed to a higher incidence of school dropouts and reduced educational continuity among children with disabilities. According to the project team, the absence of specialized institutions in the surrounding areas further compounded the challenge, leaving families with limited alternatives for their children's educational development.

The project therefore emerged as a response to a clear service gap—providing an accessible, structured, and flexible education model tailored for children with special needs while simultaneously supporting caregivers and raising community awareness on disability inclusion.

Qualitative discussions also indicated that many parents previously relied on external scribes during examinations for their children. While this allowed children to formally complete exams, it did not necessarily contribute to meaningful learning or skill development. The introduction of the NIOS-based education model was therefore designed to prioritize functional understanding, practical knowledge, and independent learning progression.




Image 81: New construction and infrastructure To ensure smooth education

## 2 Expanded Access to Inclusive Education for Previously Excluded Learners

The establishment of the NIOS Open School has significantly improved access to inclusive education for children with special needs in the region. At the time of assessment, 89 students had already been enrolled, with the facility designed to scale up and potentially accommodate up to approximately 200 learners in the coming years.

The school infrastructure includes barrier-free classrooms, accessible sanitation facilities, a computer lab, library spaces, and recreational areas, enabling children with different mobility and learning needs to participate in a safe and supportive learning environment. These infrastructural provisions play a critical role in reducing physical and psychological barriers to education.

Beyond physical access, the initiative has also introduced individualized learning approaches through Individual Education Plans (IEPs), therapy support where required, and structured academic delivery aligned with the NIOS system. This combination of flexible curriculum and specialized instruction has created pathways for children who had previously disengaged from mainstream schooling.

During discussions, educators highlighted that nearly 70% of enrolled children fall within the mild intellectual disability category, indicating significant potential for academic and functional learning progression when provided with appropriate teaching strategies.

S Mumtaj, a parent, reflected this shift during discussions, *"Earlier, we did not know where to send our child after he left school. Now there is a place where he can continue learning and improve his skills."*



Image 82: Foyer of NIOS open school

## 3 Functional Learning and Skill-Oriented Education Pathways



Image 83: Meeting and gathering area at the learning space

One of the key distinguishing features of the intervention is its emphasis on functional academics and skill-oriented education, rather than purely theoretical learning. The curriculum integrates literacy, numeracy, communication development, and life skills alongside co-curricular activities such as music, art, gardening, baking, and craft-making.

Educators reported that such integrated learning approaches help improve both cognitive engagement and self-confidence among students. Activities such as painting, music, and practical crafts also serve as tools for behavioural engagement and motor skill development. The Program further incorporates reward-based learning strategies such as token economy systems to reinforce positive learning behaviour and consistent participation.

This shift toward applied learning and skill exposure is particularly relevant for children with mild intellectual disabilities who may benefit more from experiential and visual learning methods. Discussions with educators indicated that such pedagogical approaches are already helping students demonstrate improved engagement during classroom sessions.

Mr Rakesh Sharma, an educator, said during the interview, *"When the learning is practical and activity-based, the children participate more actively and gradually build confidence in their abilities."*

## 4 Behavioural and Learning Engagement Transformation

Early observations from educators and caregivers indicate noticeable behavioural changes among participating children. Structured classroom routines, supportive learning environments, and individualized teaching methods have contributed to improvements in attention span, communication, and classroom participation.

Teachers also reported gradual improvements in basic reading and writing abilities among several students, particularly those who had previously discontinued schooling. Activities designed to improve fine motor skills, such as drawing and crafts, have contributed to improved hand coordination and task completion.

Parents shared that their children appear more motivated to attend school regularly and are beginning to demonstrate curiosity toward learning activities at home. Such behavioural shifts indicate early signs of educational reintegration among children who had previously disengaged from structured learning environments.



Image 84: Discussion with staff and supervisors

*During a recent series of stakeholder discussions aimed at evaluating the impact of the school's new engagement strategies, Lakshmi, a dedicated parent and primary caregiver, offered a particularly insightful and encouraging piece of feedback. She shared, "My child now talks about school activities every day, describing what they learned, the games they played, and who they interacted with." This is a profound change from the past, where she noted, "Earlier he used to stay quiet at home and had no interest in learning, often giving one-word answers or simply shrugging when asked about his school day." This shift, as described by Lakshmi, highlights a significant transformation in her child's attitude towards education.*

*The daily, enthusiastic recounts of school life suggest not only increased engagement within the classroom but also a newfound personal connection to the learning process. The previous silence indicated a passive, possibly alienated experience, whereas the current level of communication demonstrates that the child is now actively processing and internalizing their experiences, viewing school as a source of meaningful discussion and intellectual stimulation, rather than a mere obligation. This powerful anecdotal evidence underscores the success of the initiative in fostering intrinsic motivation and bridging the gap between the school environment and home life.*

These behavioural changes represent important early indicators of long-term educational inclusion and developmental progress.

## 5 Strengthening Family Engagement and Social Inclusion

The project has also contributed to improved awareness among parents and caregivers regarding the educational potential of children with disabilities. Many families previously perceived limited opportunities for their children beyond home care or informal work support. Through counselling sessions and community engagement activities, the initiative has helped shift perceptions toward recognizing the capabilities and learning potential of children with special needs.

Parents expressed appreciation for the fact that the school does not charge fees, which reduces financial barriers and encourages sustained enrolment. This affordability factor has played an important role in building trust with families from economically vulnerable backgrounds.

In addition, the presence of an inclusive education facility within the community contributes to greater social visibility for children with disabilities. Over time, such visibility can help reduce stigma and strengthen acceptance within the broader community.

Educators also highlighted that community outreach methods—including school dropout identification, snowball referrals, and local mobilization—have been effective in identifying previously excluded children and encouraging families to enrol them in the Program.

## 6 Institutional Strengthening and Programmatic Innovation

The initiative represents a notable institutional innovation, as it is among the early efforts by a non-governmental organization in Tamil Nadu to introduce a NIOS-based open schooling model specifically for children with special needs and school dropouts.

By combining specialized education with flexible open schooling pathways, the project provides an alternative learning route for children who are unable to adapt to mainstream schooling structures. The model also opens future possibilities for vocational training, certification, and employment pathways for students.

Discussions with the project leadership further revealed plans to expand complementary services, including a proposed community-based health facility that would support both children with disabilities and local residents. Such forward-looking initiatives demonstrate the organization's commitment to building a holistic ecosystem of support for vulnerable populations.

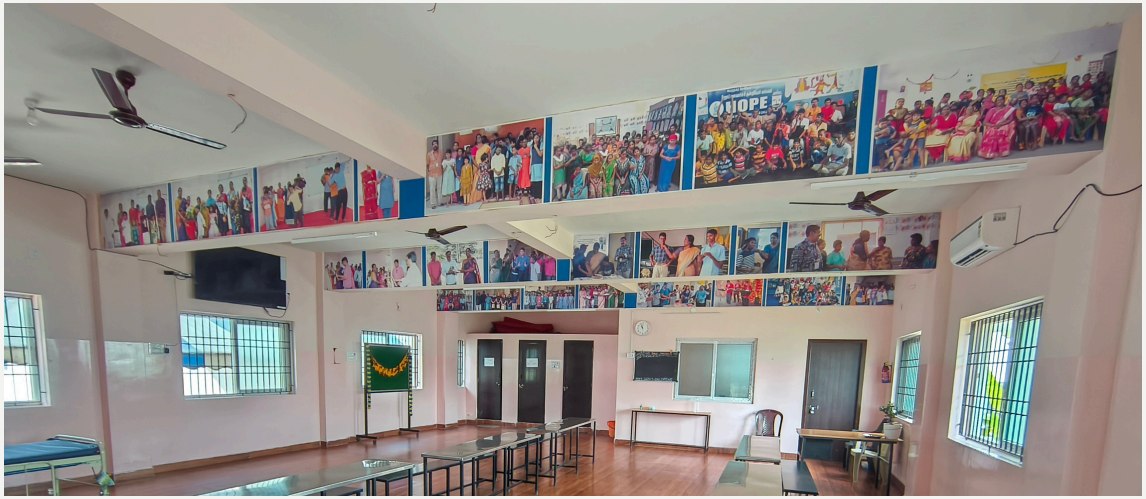



Image 85: Area for  engagement and innovation

## 7 Sustainability and Community Ownership

The sustainability of the initiative appears promising due to several structural and community-level factors. First, the investment in permanent, accessible infrastructure provides a long-term platform for inclusive education services. The facility is designed to accommodate a significantly larger student population in the coming years, enabling gradual scale-up.

Second, strong parental interest and community demand for the school indicate potential for sustained enrolment growth. The project team reported receiving around 90 initial enquiries from families, demonstrating clear demand for specialized education services in the region.

Third, the integration of individualized learning plans, progress monitoring systems, and therapy logs supports structured Program management and long-term tracking of student outcomes.

However, discussions also highlighted areas requiring additional support, including the need for more specialized educators, talking books, and expanded assistive learning resources to support future scale-up. Addressing these requirements will be important for maintaining Program quality as enrolment increases.



Image 86: Leisure and rest facilities for students

## 8 Overall Perceived Transformation

Overall, the intervention has laid the foundation for a significant transformation in educational access and developmental opportunities for children with special needs in Annambedu and surrounding areas. By establishing a dedicated inclusive education facility, the project has begun addressing longstanding gaps in accessible schooling for children who had previously been excluded from formal education systems.

Early evidence suggests improvements in student engagement, parental confidence, and community awareness regarding the importance of inclusive education. The combination of barrier-free infrastructure, flexible NIOS-based learning pathways, and skill-oriented educational approaches positions the initiative as a promising model for supporting the functional development and social inclusion of children with disabilities.

As the school continues to expand its enrolment and programmatic offerings, the initiative has the potential to create long-term impact by enabling students to pursue further education, vocational opportunities, and greater independence in adulthood.

## Alignment with OECD Framework

### Relevance

- The project demonstrates strong relevance to the local context by addressing a significant gap in access to inclusive education for children with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other learning challenges in Annambedu and surrounding villages in Tiruvallur district. Prior to the intervention, families had limited options for structured education tailored to the needs of children with disabilities. Mainstream schools often lacked the specialized teaching methodologies and support systems required for inclusive learning, resulting in high dropout rates and prolonged exclusion from formal education pathways.
- The initiative responds directly to these challenges by establishing a dedicated NIOS Open School model that provides flexible, accessible education combined with functional skill development. The approach aligns well with national priorities on inclusive education and contributes to global development goals related to quality education, reduced inequalities, and improved well-being.
- During discussions, educators highlighted that many children in the locality had discontinued schooling due to a lack of supportive learning environments. By introducing a structured yet flexible learning pathway, the project addresses both educational and social barriers faced by children with disabilities.

### Effectiveness

- The project has been effective in establishing the foundational systems required for inclusive education delivery. At the time of assessment, the school had already enrolled 89 students, indicating strong demand for specialized education services within the community.
- The infrastructure developed under the project includes barrier-free classrooms, accessible sanitation facilities, learning spaces, and digital learning infrastructure such as a computer lab. These provisions create a supportive environment for children with varying mobility and learning needs. In addition, the use of Individual Education Plans (IEPs), structured progress monitoring, and specialized teaching strategies helps tailor learning experiences to individual student capabilities.
- Early observations from educators suggest improvements in student engagement, attention span, and participation in classroom activities. The integration of co-curricular activities such as music, arts, and skill-based learning has further enhanced student motivation and engagement.

One educator noted during discussions:

"Children who had earlier withdrawn from classroom environments are gradually becoming more comfortable participating in activities and interacting with peers."

Such early behavioural changes indicate that the intervention is effectively re-integrating children with disabilities into structured learning environments.

### Efficiency

- The project demonstrates a relatively efficient use of resources by combining one-time infrastructure development with ongoing educational programming. The construction of a barrier-free learning facility enables long-term service delivery without the recurring costs associated with temporary infrastructure or rented spaces.
- Furthermore, the infrastructure has been designed with future scalability in mind. While the current enrolment stands at 89 students, the facility has the capacity to accommodate a larger student population, with the organization anticipating gradual expansion toward approximately 200 students.
- Community outreach methods such as identifying school dropouts through local networks, snowball referrals, and targeted mobilization efforts have also enabled efficient beneficiary identification. These strategies ensure that the Program reaches children who are most in need of specialized educational support.
- However, discussions with the project team also highlighted the need for additional human resources and assistive learning tools, such as talking books and specialized educators, to support future scale-up. Addressing these resource gaps will further enhance operational efficiency as the Program expands.

### Coherence

- The project demonstrates strong coherence with broader policy frameworks related to inclusive education and disability rights. The NIOS Open School model provides an alternative education pathway for children who cannot fully integrate into conventional schooling systems, aligning with national education policies that emphasise flexible learning options for diverse learners.
- At the community level, the project complements existing educational systems by filling a service gap rather than duplicating existing services. Stakeholder discussions indicated that there were no comparable inclusive educational facilities in the immediate locality, which reinforces the strategic importance of the intervention.
- The initiative also contributes to broader development priorities by supporting social inclusion, skill development, and community awareness regarding disability rights. These outcomes align with Sustainable Development Goals related to quality education, reduced inequalities, and inclusive communities.

## Impact

- Although the project is still in its early stages of implementation, several positive outcomes are already emerging. Children who were previously disengaged from formal education are now participating in structured learning environments tailored to their abilities. Early improvements in communication skills, motor coordination, and classroom participation have been observed by educators and caregivers.
- Parents reported that their children are showing greater interest in learning activities and demonstrating improved confidence in social interactions. The combination of academic learning, therapy support, and skill-based activities contributes to holistic developmental progress among students.
- Beyond individual student outcomes, the project has also contributed to broader social impact by raising awareness among families about the educational potential of children with disabilities. Many caregivers expressed increased optimism about their children's future opportunities.

One parent shared during discussions:
"Before this school started, we did not know how our child would continue their education. Now we feel there is a path for him to learn and grow."
Such shifts in perception represent an important step toward greater social inclusion of children with disabilities.

## Sustainability

- The sustainability of the intervention appears promising due to several structural and institutional factors. The establishment of permanent, accessible infrastructure provides a long-term platform for inclusive education services in the region. As enrolment grows, the facility will continue to serve as a dedicated centre for learning and skill development for children with special needs.
- Strong parental interest in the Program further supports sustainability. The project team reported receiving approximately 90 enquiries from families interested in enrolling their children, indicating strong community demand for inclusive education services.
- The organisation's long-standing experience in special education and rehabilitation services also strengthens institutional sustainability. HOPE's integrated approach—which includes therapy services, caregiver counselling, and vocational skill development—creates a holistic ecosystem of support for children with disabilities and their families.
- Looking ahead, expanding partnerships, strengthening educator capacity, and introducing vocational certification pathways will further enhance the long-term sustainability and impact of the initiative.

| SDG Goal | Goal Target | Alignment Description |
|---|---|---|
|  | Target 3.4: Reduce premature mortality from non-communicable diseases and promote mental health and well-being. | Health & Well-being: The program enabled children with intellectual and developmental disabilities to access structured therapeutic and rehabilitation support, including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioural interventions. |
|  | Target 4.5: Eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to education and vocational training for persons with disabilities. | The initiative established a structured NIOS-based open schooling model that provides flexible learning pathways for children with special needs. Students gained access to adaptive learning methods, life-skills training, and individualized academic support |
|  | Target 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of disability. | The project strengthened the inclusion of children with disabilities within their families and communities. Parents reported greater acceptance, improved confidence among children, and increased participation in community life, contributing to reduced stigma and stronger social integration. |
|  | Target 11.7: Provide universal access to safe, inclusive, and accessible public spaces and community infrastructure. | The establishment of a dedicated educational and rehabilitation facility created an accessible and supportive learning environment for children with disabilities. |

## Recommendation



**Strengthening Institutional Partnerships for Inclusive Education**

To enhance long-term impact, the initiative could benefit from stronger partnerships with government education departments, NIOS regional centres, and disability-focused institutions. Such collaborations can support certification pathways, inclusive teaching resources, and institutional recognition of the NIOS model for children with special needs. Strengthening these linkages would also position the school as a potential regional resource centre for inclusive education in Tiruvallur district.



**Expanding Skill-Based Learning and Livelihood Pathways**

Given that a large proportion of students fall within the mild intellectual disability category, expanding structured vocational and skill-based learning opportunities would further strengthen student outcomes. Introducing certified skill Programs in areas such as crafts, gardening, digital literacy, and other practical skills could improve future employability and independence for students.



**Enhancing Educator Capacity and Learning Resources**

As enrolment grows, additional trained special educators and assistive learning tools will be important to maintain quality education delivery. Resources such as talking books, adaptive learning materials, and digital learning aids could further support students with diverse learning needs. Investing in educator training and assistive technologies will help sustain individualized learning approaches.



**Strengthening Community Outreach and Early Identification**

Continued community awareness efforts can support early identification of children with special needs and encourage families to enrol them in inclusive education Programs. Collaboration with local schools, health workers, and community networks can help reach children who remain outside formal education systems.



**Integrating Holistic Support Services**

The organisation's plans to expand into community health services present an opportunity to build a more holistic support ecosystem. Integrating health, therapy, and education services could significantly improve developmental outcomes for children with disabilities while also benefiting the wider community.

# Conclusion



Image 86: Leisure and rest facilities for students

## What Changed

The establishment of the NIOS Open School by HOPE Public Charitable Trust has created a dedicated and accessible learning environment for children with special needs in Annambedu and surrounding villages of Tiruvallur district. The initiative has enabled children who were previously excluded from mainstream education or had discontinued schooling to re-engage with structured learning pathways tailored to their abilities. With 89 students currently enrolled and infrastructure designed to accommodate more learners, the project has significantly improved access to inclusive education in the region. Early observations from educators and caregivers indicate improvements in student engagement, communication, and participation in learning activities. The combination of individualized learning plans, skill-based education, and supportive learning environments has helped students develop greater confidence and interest in education. At the same time, parents and caregivers have become more aware of the learning potential and developmental capabilities of their children.

## Why It Matters

The project addresses a critical gap in inclusive education by providing an alternative and flexible learning pathway for children with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other special learning needs. In communities where economic pressures and a lack of specialised educational institutions often lead to school dropouts, the initiative plays a vital role in restoring educational opportunities and promoting social inclusion. Beyond academic learning, the Program contributes to broader developmental outcomes, including improved life skills, increased student confidence, and enhanced family awareness of disability inclusion. By demonstrating that children with special needs can actively participate in structured education and skill development, the initiative helps shift community perceptions toward greater acceptance and inclusion.



Image 87: Interaction with a supervisor

## What Remains to be Addressed

Looking ahead, the initiative holds strong potential for expansion and deeper impact. Strengthening vocational learning pathways, enhancing educator capacity, and introducing assistive learning resources will further improve educational outcomes for students. Building partnerships with educational institutions, government bodies, and vocational training centres could also help create clearer progression pathways for students transitioning into higher education or livelihood opportunities. As enrolment grows and community awareness continues to increase, the HOPE NIOS Open School has the potential to evolve into a regional model for inclusive education, supporting not only children with disabilities but also families and communities striving toward greater educational equity and social inclusion.

## Strategic Way Forward

While the project has created an important platform for inclusive education, a few areas require continued strengthening. As enrolment grows, additional trained special educators and support staff will be needed to maintain individualized learning support for students. Expanding assistive learning resources, such as talking books and adaptive digital materials, would also help improve accessibility for children with diverse learning needs. In addition, developing structured vocational and certification pathways will be important to translate students' skills into future livelihood opportunities. Strengthening community outreach and early identification efforts can help reach more children with special needs who may still remain outside formal education systems. Finally, enhancing monitoring and long-term outcome tracking will support evidence-based improvements and demonstrate sustained impact as the Program expands.




Image 88: Notice board of inauguration by Five star

# Infrastructure Development for Paradise Home – Residential Care & Special Education Facility for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

Impact Assessment for FY 2024-25

NGO/Trust: Paradise Home



Image 89: School of residential Care & Special Education Facility for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities

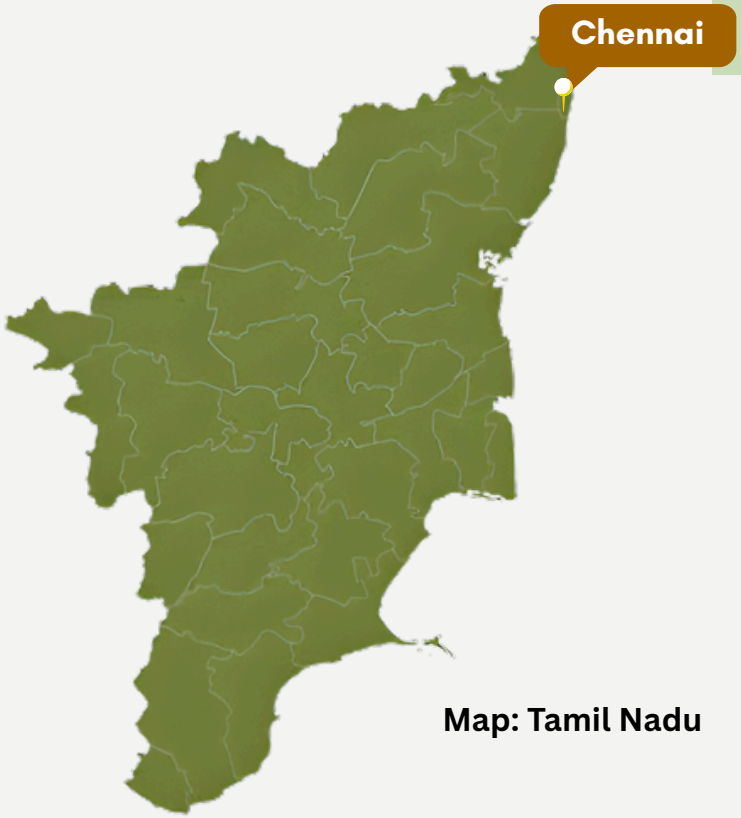
# Executive Summary




Image 90: Interaction of Student teacher  in a classroom

| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Residential Care & Special Education Facility for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities | Paradise Home | FY 2024-25 |

**Project Location: Muttukadu (near Chennai), Tamil Nadu**




**Map: Tamil Nadu**

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** ~120 residents including children and adults with intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy, along with teachers, therapists, caregivers, and support staff
**Indirect:** 1,000+ beneficiaries including families of residents, local community members, interns/trainees, NGOs, government departments, and local service providers

## Project Activities:

- Completion of a new multi-level building to support residential care and special education services
- Construction and fitting of additional special classrooms for structured learning and therapy sessions
- Development of separate dormitories for children and adults with improved ventilation, hygiene, and safety
- Establishment of on-site staff quarters for teachers and caregivers to ensure continuous care and emergency response
- Installation of an accessibility lift and barrier-free features to support residents with limited mobility
- Installation of solar panels and solar water heating systems to improve energy efficiency and ensure hot water access
- Creation of a temporary canteen structure, exterior finishing, painting, and overall facility enhancement
- Strengthening institutional capacity to expand admissions and comply with government regulations

## Performance Snapshot



**Transformation from Basic Shelter to Structured Care Environment:** The infrastructure upgrade enabled Paradise Home to transition from a space-constrained shelter to a well-organised residential and therapeutic campus, improving facilities for care, education, and rehabilitation for individuals with intellectual disabilities.



**Improved Opportunities for Learning, Care, and Development:** 100% of caregivers reported improvements in learning, care, and social development opportunities, with 65% observing significant improvement following the facility upgrade.



**Enhanced Resident Wellbeing and Behavioural Stability:** A majority of caregivers (94%) observed improvements in residents' overall wellbeing, while 82% reported better adherence to daily routines and 65% noted calmer emotional behaviour, reflecting the positive impact of structured environments.



**Improved Hygiene, Safety, and Living Conditions:** Upgraded dormitories, sanitation facilities, and ventilation significantly improved living standards, with 94% of parents satisfied with cleanliness, safety, and overall living conditions in the new campus.



**Strengthened Quality of Care and Dignified Treatment:** The new infrastructure has improved supervision and caregiving practices, with 94% of respondents rating care as good or excellent and 100% confirming that residents are treated with greater dignity and respect.



**Reduced Caregiver Stress and Improved Family Wellbeing:** The intervention has had strong indirect benefits for families, with 100% of caregivers reporting reduced stress and greater peace of mind regarding their child's safety and wellbeing.



**Institutional Strengthening for Specialized Care Delivery:** Dedicated classrooms, therapy spaces, staff quarters, and accessibility features have strengthened the institution's operational capacity, enabling more structured caregiving, learning, and rehabilitation services.



**Sustainability through Energy Efficiency and Institutional Trust:** Solar energy systems have reduced electricity costs by over 45% annually, while increased caregiver trust and satisfaction indicate strong long-term institutional credibility.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Infrastructure Designed for Special Needs Care:** The development of specialised classrooms, therapy spaces, and safe residential facilities created an environment that supports structured routines, therapy, and holistic care for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

**Integrated Care and Learning Ecosystem:** Combining residential care with dedicated spaces for education and rehabilitation enabled more consistent therapy, structured activities, and improved behavioural outcomes.

**Strong Family Engagement and Trust:** Positive feedback from parents and caregivers reflects strong confidence in the institution's care standards and its ability to provide a safe, dignified environment for residents.

**Sustainable Infrastructure Investments:** Renewable energy systems and well-planned facilities have strengthened operational sustainability while allowing the institution to allocate more resources toward caregiving and therapeutic services.

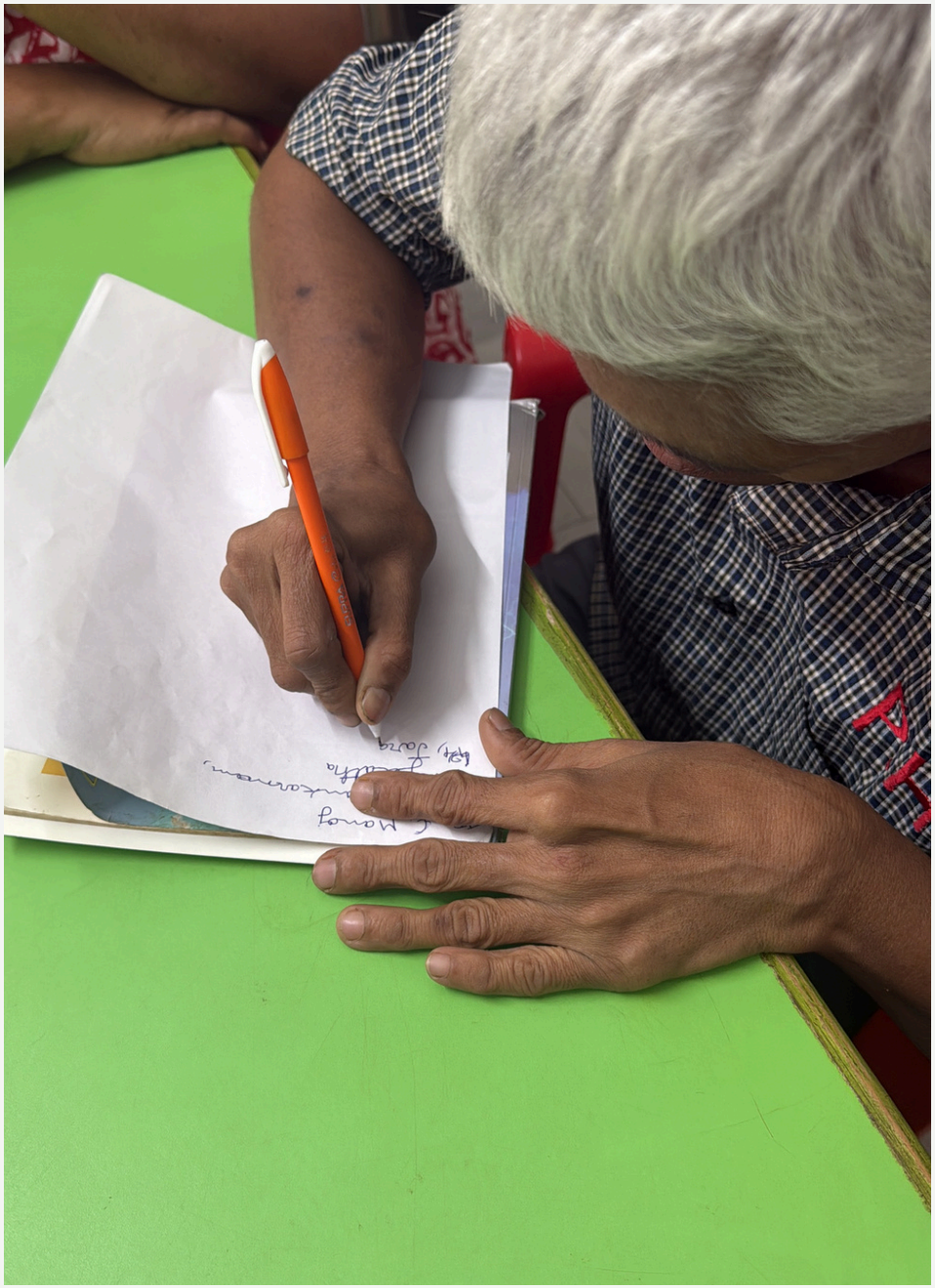


Image 91: people in the residential care performing day to day activities

# Project at a glance




Image 92: man residing in the residential center

**About NGO/Trust:** Paradise Home is a Chennai-based non-profit organization dedicated to providing care, protection, and rehabilitation for destitute, abandoned, and homeless individuals, particularly the elderly and those with mental health challenges. The organization works to restore dignity, safety, and a sense of belonging to vulnerable persons who are often found living in unsafe and neglected conditions on the streets.

The institution offers residential shelter along with essential services such as nutritious food, clothing, medical care, psychiatric support, and counselling. A key focus of Paradise Home's work is the rescue, recovery, and rehabilitation of homeless individuals, followed by efforts toward family tracing, reintegration, or long-term assisted living where required.

## Objective

To strengthen Paradise Home's capacity by constructing compliant, accessible, and sustainable infrastructure that enhances residential care, special education, therapy services, and overall wellbeing for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, while enabling expansion of services to accommodate more beneficiaries.

## Thematic

Disability Care & Inclusive Education (Special Needs Support)

## Geography

Muttukadu (near Chennai), Tamil Nadu

## Status

Construction completed and facility operational

## Focus

Additional classrooms, residential spaces, staff quarters, accessibility lift, solar systems, and overall facility strengthening to support current residents and future capacity expansion

## Beneficiary Profile:

Primary Beneficiaries:

- Children with intellectual disabilities residing at Paradise Home
- Adults with intellectual disabilities and cerebral palsy living on campus
- Teachers, therapists, caregivers, and support staff working at the facility

Secondary Beneficiaries:

- Families of residents (reduced caregiving burden and improved confidence in care)
- Local community members and service providers
- Interns, trainees, and professionals in special education and rehabilitation
- Government and disability welfare stakeholders through improved institutional capacity and compliance.

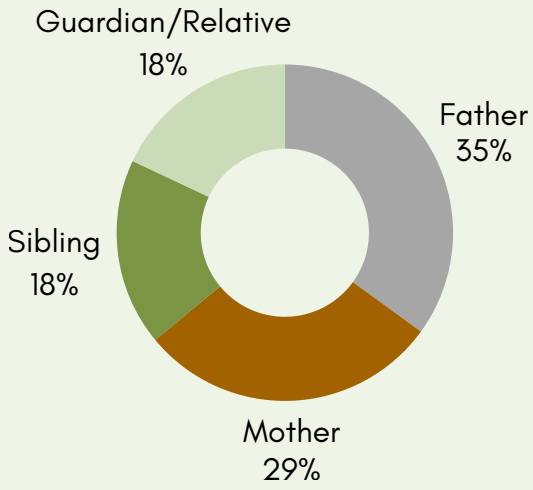
## Respondent Profile

The respondents primarily comprised parents and guardians of children residing at Paradise Home. Among them, 35% were fathers and 29% were mothers, while 18% were siblings and 18% were other guardians or relatives, indicating involvement of both immediate and extended family members in the child's care.

In terms of occupation, 29% of respondents were retired and 24% were homemakers, while others were engaged in private sector jobs (18%) and small businesses or self-employment (18%). A smaller proportion reported agriculture (6%) or government employment (6%), suggesting varied but often modest livelihood sources.

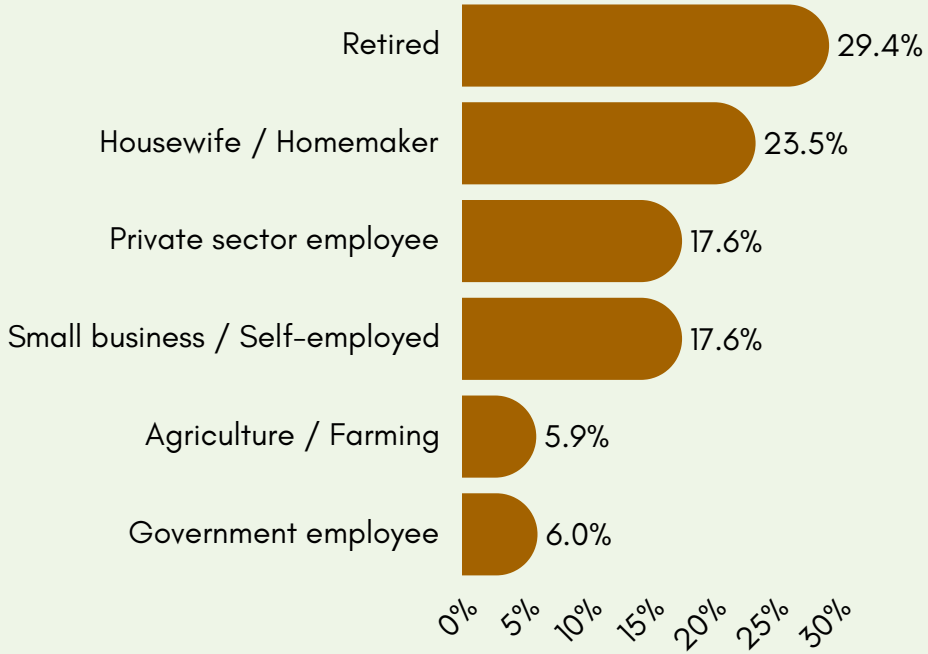
Most respondents (94%) preferred not to disclose their household income, with only 6% reporting income above ₹50,000 per month. Additionally, 88% of families have one child enrolled at Paradise Home, indicating that the institution largely supports children from different households rather than multiple siblings from the same family.

### Relationship to the Child



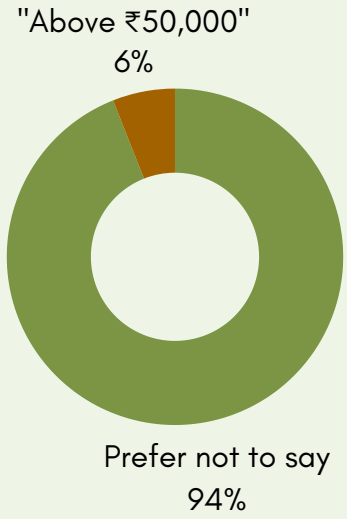

Graph 76: Respondents gaurdians

### Occupation of Parent / Caregiver



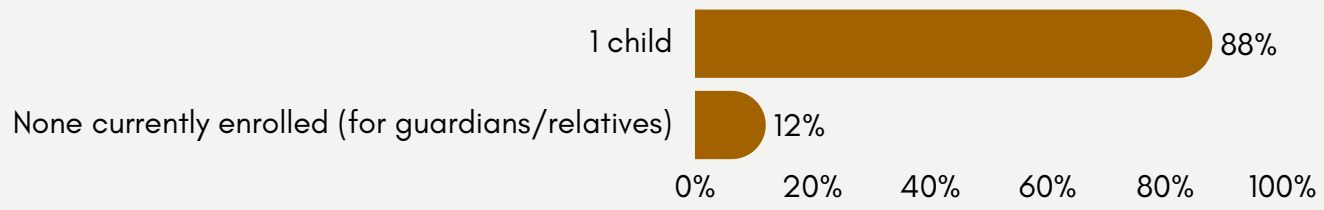

Graph 77: Parents Occupation

### Monthly Household Income (approx.):



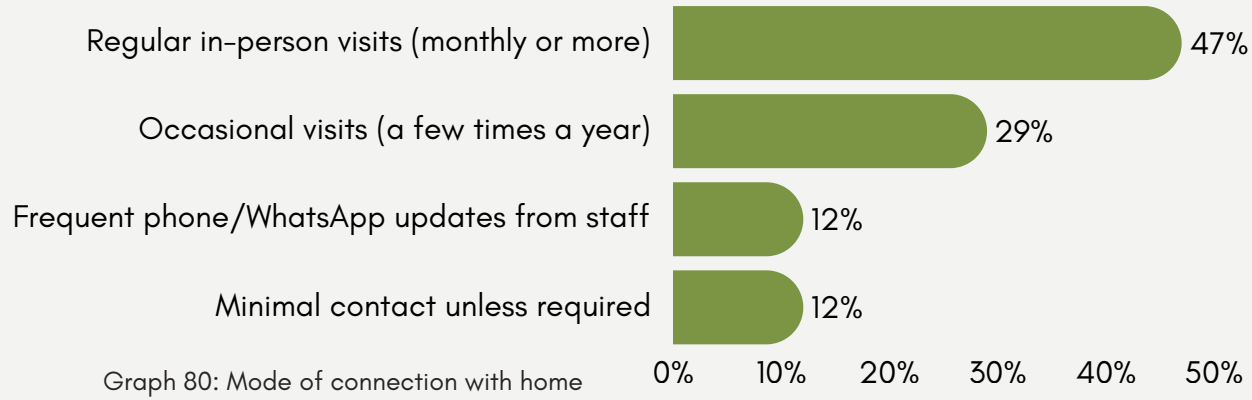

Graph 78: Monthly Income

## How many children from your family are currently enrolled at Paradise Home?




Graph 79: Enrollment status

## How do you usually stay connected with Paradise Home?




Graph 80: Mode of connection with home



Image 93: children and caregivers of paradise residential home



# Study Findings




Image 94: Kids engaged in an activity in the residential home

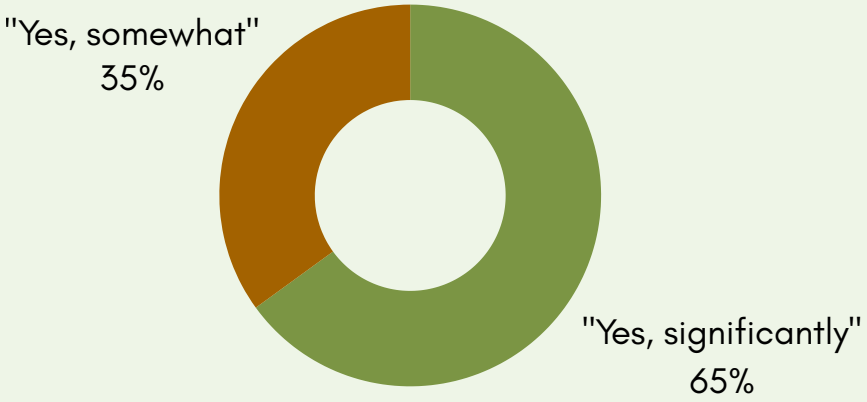
## 1 From Basic Shelter to Structured and Dignified Care

Prior to the infrastructure upgrade, Paradise Home functioned with limited residential and learning space, which constrained the quality of care, therapy sessions, and structured routines required for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Caregivers often expressed concern about safety, hygiene, and the adequacy of facilities to support specialized care needs. The absence of dedicated classrooms, optimized dormitory spaces, and staff accommodation limited the institution's capacity to provide consistent supervision and structured educational activities.

The infrastructure development—including new residential blocks, specialized classrooms, accessibility features, and renewable energy systems—was designed to address these structural gaps while creating a safer, more dignified, and enabling environment for residents and staff. The upgraded campus now supports both therapeutic interventions and day-to-day caregiving in a more structured manner.

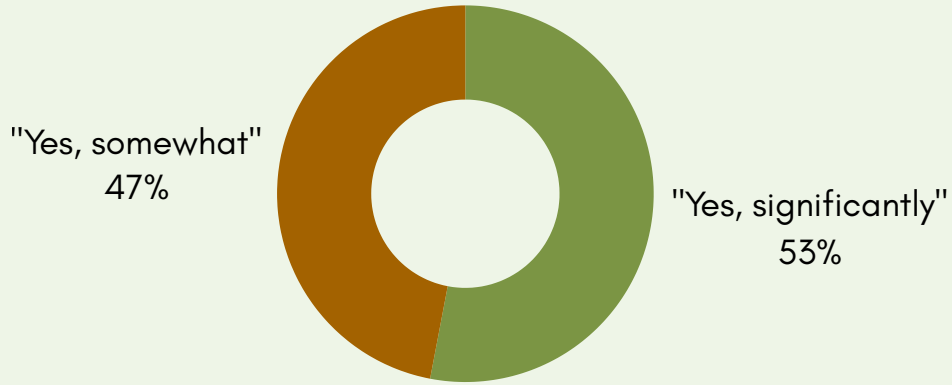
Feedback from parents and guardians further reflects this improvement. Around 65% of respondents reported that their child is receiving significantly better opportunities for learning, care, and social development since the facility upgrade, while the remaining 35% observed some level of improvement. Similarly, 53% of respondents felt that the new building and services have significantly improved the overall quality of Paradise Home, while 47% noted moderate improvements, indicating a strong positive perception of the upgraded infrastructure and services among caregivers.

**Since the upgraded facilities, do you feel your child is receiving better opportunities for learning, care, and social development?**




Graph 81: Impact on better opportunity

**Do you feel the new building and services have improved the overall quality of Paradise Home?**



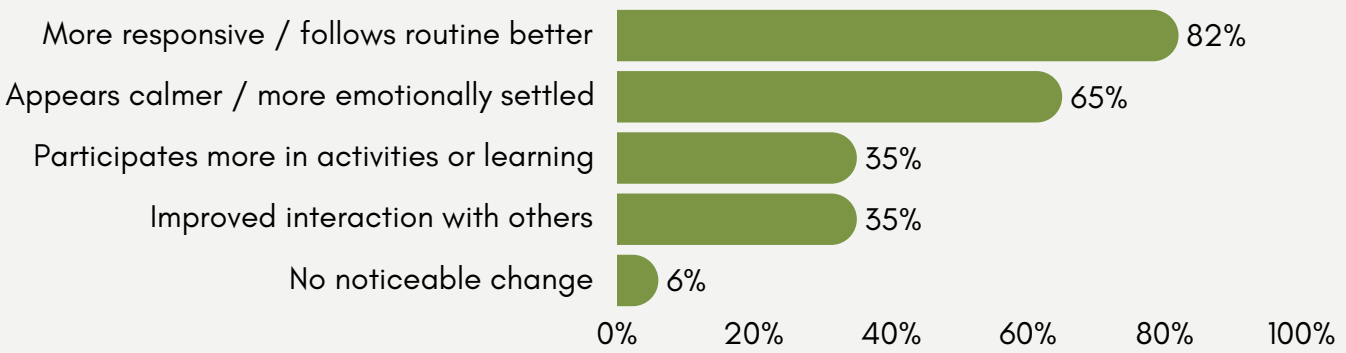

Graph 82: Impact on improved services

## 2 Improved Wellbeing and Behavioural Stability Among Residents

One of the most significant outcomes of the infrastructure intervention is the noticeable improvement in the wellbeing of residents. A majority of caregivers (94%) reported a positive change in their child's overall wellbeing, with 59% indicating that the improvement has been substantial.

Behavioural improvements were also widely observed. Around 82% of caregivers noted that their children have become more responsive and are able to follow daily routines better, while 65% reported that their children appear calmer and emotionally more settled.

**Which of the following positive changes have you noticed in your child? (Select up to 3)**




Graph 83: Assessment of Behavioral Changes (multi select)

These findings suggest that improvements in the physical environment, such as better living conditions, organized spaces for therapy and learning, and safer dormitories, have directly contributed to emotional stability and behavioural regulation among residents. For individuals with intellectual disabilities, predictable environments and structured routines are known to significantly enhance cognitive and emotional functioning.

During discussions, several caregivers emphasised that the new infrastructure has enabled children to participate more consistently in structured activities and therapy sessions. The availability of dedicated spaces for learning and rehabilitation appears to have played an important role in stabilising behavioural patterns and improving engagement.

One parent shared during the interview, "*Earlier, my child used to be restless and irregular with routines. Now the environment is more organized, and we can see that he is calmer and responds better to caregivers.*"

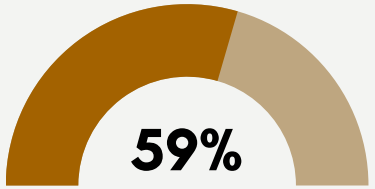


Image 95: bead making activity conducted for students

## 3 Enhanced Hygiene, Safety, and Physical Comfort

The improved infrastructure has also significantly enhanced hygiene standards and physical comfort within the facility. Approximately 59% of respondents explicitly identified improved hygiene and physical comfort as the most noticeable positive change resulting from the upgraded campus.

**Better hygiene and physical comfort**



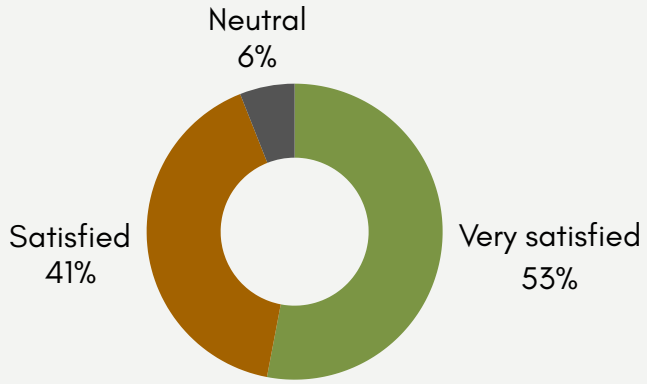

The new dormitories, improved ventilation, sanitation facilities, and organized living spaces have created a healthier residential environment for individuals who require constant care and supervision. Such improvements are particularly critical in residential disability care settings where residents may have limited ability to manage personal hygiene independently.



Image 96: People resiiding int the residential care

Furthermore, 94% of parents expressed satisfaction with the cleanliness, safety, and overall living conditions of the upgraded campus. This high satisfaction level indicates that the infrastructure improvements have addressed one of the most fundamental concerns of caregivers—ensuring a safe and dignified living environment for their children.

**How satisfied are you with the cleanliness, safety, and living conditions in the upgraded campus?**



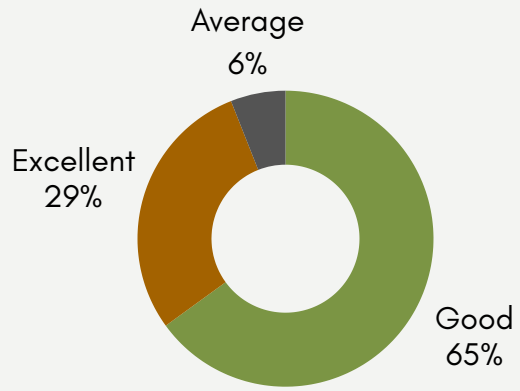

Graph 84: Assessment of safety and security

During discussions, respondents highlighted that the facility now feels more like a "proper residential campus" rather than a basic shelter. The structured environment has improved daily routines for residents while enabling staff to maintain higher hygiene standards.

## 4 Improved Care Quality and Dignified Treatment of Residents

The upgraded infrastructure at Paradise Home has significantly enhanced the quality of care, supervision, and the overall treatment of residents. Feedback from parents and guardians indicates a strong positive shift in how children are cared for within the new facility. Around 65% of respondents rated the overall care and supervision their child now receives as good, while 29% rated it as excellent, and only 6% considered it average, reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the caregiving environment.

**How would you rate the overall care and supervision your child now receives in the new facility?**




Graph 85: Assessment of care and supervision

In addition to improved supervision, families unanimously acknowledged the enhanced dignity and respect experienced by residents. All respondents (100%) reported that their child is now treated with greater dignity, comfort, and respect in the improved environment.

These findings suggest that the upgraded facility has not only strengthened caregiving systems and supervision but has also created a more respectful, comfortable, and person-centred environment for individuals with intellectual disabilities

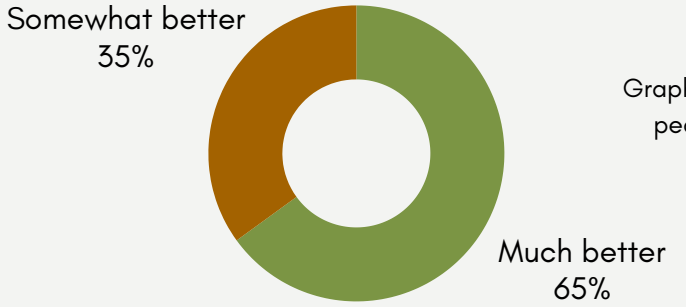



Image 97 : Vulnerable people given shelter and care in paradise home

## 5 Reduced Caregiver Stress and Strengthened Family Wellbeing

A notable indirect impact of the project has been the significant reduction in emotional stress among parents and caregivers. During the survey, all respondents (100%) reported a reduction in personal stress and worry regarding their child's safety and wellbeing, with 71% indicating that their stress has reduced "significantly."

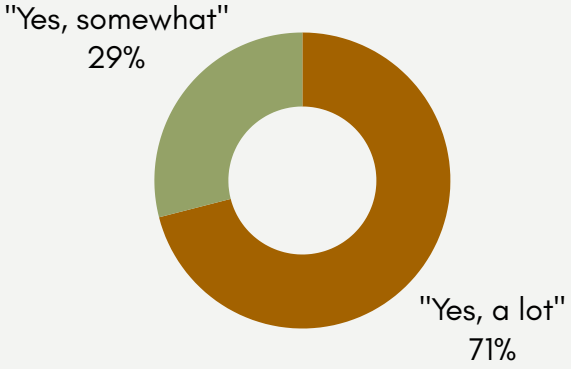
**Since Paradise Home, how has your peace of mind changed regarding your child's wellbeing?**




Graph 86: Improved peace of mind

Similarly, 100% of caregivers reported improved peace of mind about their child's safety at the institution, with nearly two-thirds (65%) stating that their confidence has improved "much more" than before.

**Do you feel your stress or worry has reduced because your child is in a safer, better equipped place?**




Graph 87: Impact on stress



**Image 98: Disabled people taken care under paradise home**

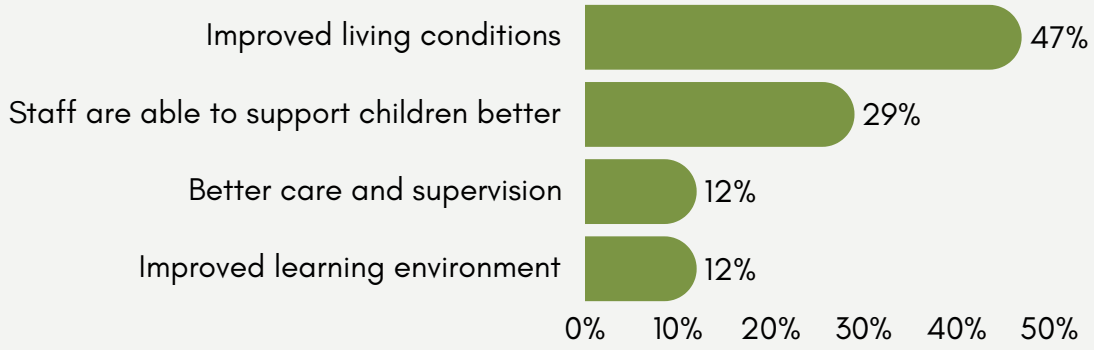
This outcome highlights the broader family-level impact of the intervention. When caregivers feel confident that their children are receiving safe and compassionate care, it allows them to focus more effectively on their livelihoods, family responsibilities, and personal wellbeing.

During discussions, many parents expressed that the upgraded infrastructure signals long-term institutional stability. Around 53% of respondents specifically mentioned increased trust in the organization's ability to continue providing reliable care in the future. One caregiver remarked: "*Knowing that my child is staying in a safe and well-maintained place gives us peace of mind. Earlier we used to worry a lot, but now we feel reassured.*"

## 6 Institutional Strengthening and Improved Care Delivery

Beyond improving living conditions (47%), the infrastructure development has also strengthened the operational capacity of Paradise Home. Approximately 29% of respondents observed that the new facility allows staff to support residents more effectively.

**In your view, what has been the biggest benefit of the upgraded building and facilities?**




Graph 88: Assessment of benefits in the infrastructure

The availability of dedicated classrooms, therapy spaces, staff quarters, and accessibility infrastructure has enabled caregivers and educators to deliver services more efficiently. When caregivers are located on campus and have better facilities to conduct structured activities, response times during emergencies improve and the quality of supervision increases.

This institutional strengthening reflects an important shift from basic residential care toward a more structured model that integrates education, therapy, and long-term rehabilitation for persons with intellectual disabilities. During discussions, respondents acknowledged that staff members now appear more organized and better able to manage daily routines and activities for residents.



Image 99: Showcasing community bonding




Image 100: enabling the people of the community

## 7 Emerging Social Recognition and Dignity for Families

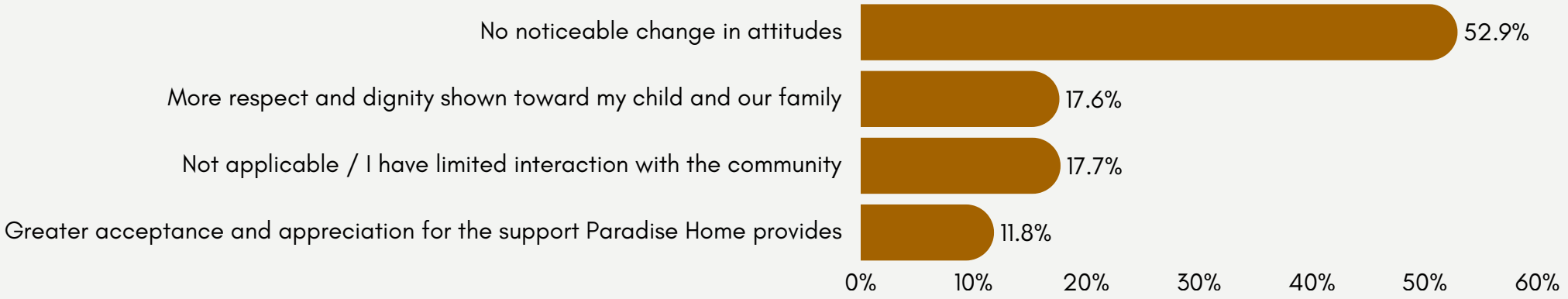
While social stigma around intellectual disability remains a broader societal challenge, the upgraded facility has begun to influence perceptions within the community.

Around 18% of respondents reported that their families now receive greater respect and dignity from the community because their children are enrolled in a well-maintained and professionally managed institution. Additionally, 12% of families reported greater acceptance of their child's enrolment in the facility.



Image 101: Gym inside the  home to keep the people active.

**Have you noticed any change in how your family or community perceives your child's enrolment at Paradise Home?**




Graph 89: Assessment of Community Attitude

Although more than half of respondents (53%) noted that community attitudes have not yet changed significantly, the early signs of increased respect suggest that improved institutional standards can gradually reshape social perceptions.

Some parents also expressed a sense of pride that their children are living in a dignified and well-maintained environment. This shift in perception is particularly important in disability care, where social stigma often leads families to feel marginalised. During discussions, some caregivers noted that visitors and community members now view the institution as a model facility rather than a charity-based shelter.

## 8 Sustainability and Institutional Ownership

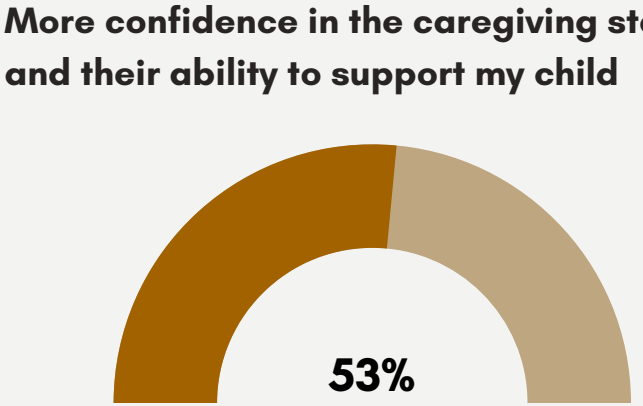


Image 102: Student in the paradise home

The sustainability of the intervention is supported by both infrastructural and institutional factors. The installation of solar panels and solar water heating systems has improved energy efficiency while reducing operational costs, contributing to long-term financial sustainability.

The project has reportedly reduced the electricity expenditure of the institution by over 45% annually, enabling the organization to allocate more resources toward caregiving and therapeutic services.

Equally important is the strong level of trust expressed by caregivers. Over half of the respondents (53%) reported increased confidence in the institution's long-term stability and service delivery.




Graph 90: Qualitative feedback Assessment on Caregiving Staff

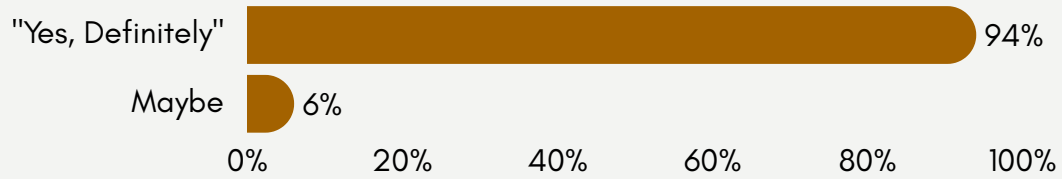
However, qualitative feedback also highlighted areas for future improvement, including the provision of individual beds for residents and the need for more specialized trainers. These suggestions indicate that while the infrastructure foundation is strong, continued investment in personalized care systems will further enhance sustainability.

## 9 From Shelter to a Dignified Care Ecosystem

The infrastructure development has resulted in a transformative shift in the quality of care provided at Paradise Home. The facility has evolved from a basic residential shelter into a structured, dignified, and inclusive care environment that supports the physical, emotional, and developmental needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Perceptions of parents and guardians strongly reflect this positive change. A large majority of respondents (94%) reported that they would definitely recommend Paradise Home to other families of children with special needs, while 6% indicated they might recommend it. This high level of endorsement suggests growing confidence among families in the institution's care standards, infrastructure, and services.

**Would you recommend Paradise Home to other families of children with special needs?**




Graph 91: Recommendation of future endorsement

These program demonstrate that infrastructure investments in disability care institutions can generate benefits that extend beyond the immediate residents to positively influence families, caregivers, and community perceptions.

As during the discussion, Mr Santhanam said, "*This place now feels like a real home where our children are safe, cared for, and respected.*"



Image 103: showcasing an inclusive environment

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

- **Alignment:** The upgrades are highly relevant to the specific needs of children with special needs and their families. The survey shows that the focus on "better hygiene," "physical comfort," and "safety" aligns directly with the core requirements of this vulnerable group.
- **Evidence:** 94% of parents feel the child is treated with "greater dignity and respect," confirming that the facility improvements addressed a fundamental human right and a priority for the beneficiaries.



### Coherence

- **Alignment:** This looks at how the project fits within the community and social norms.
- **Evidence:** There is emerging coherence between the facility's standards and community perceptions. 18% of families already report "more respect and dignity" from their community, suggesting the project is helping to reduce the social stigma often associated with special needs care.



### Effectiveness

- **Alignment:** The project has been highly effective in achieving its primary goal of improving resident well-being.
- **Evidence:** Over 94% of respondents reported improved well-being. The specific objective of behavioural stabilisation was also met, with 82% of children showing better responsiveness and 65% appearing calmer.



### Efficiency

- **Alignment:** While the survey does not contain financial data, it highlights "operational efficiency." The upgraded environment allows staff to perform their roles more effectively.
- **Evidence:** 29% of parents identified the "ability of staff to support children better" as the single biggest benefit, suggesting the physical infrastructure has optimized the human resource output of the home.



### Impact

- **Alignment:** The "Impact" here extends beyond the primary beneficiary (the child) to the secondary beneficiary (the family). This represents a significant positive "spillover effect."
- **Evidence:** 100% of parents reported a reduction in personal stress and an increase in peace of mind. This indicates a transformative impact on the family unit's mental health and overall quality of life.



### Sustainability

- **Alignment:** Sustainability in this context is reflected in the long-term trust and institutional stability perceived by the stakeholders.
- **Evidence:** 53% of parents explicitly mentioned "Greater trust in Paradise Home's long-term stability" as a key personal improvement. However, the qualitative feedback regarding the need for "individual beds" and "specialized trainers" suggests that continued investment is required to sustain these high-impact gains.

## Recommendation



**Transition to Individualized Care Models:** While the infrastructure is now "Excellent," the qualitative feedback suggests a need to shift focus from environmental improvement to human resource specialization. Investing in specialized trainers and individualized focus plans will ensure the new facility is utilized to its full therapeutic potential.



**Expansion of Adult Resident Services:** The assessment identifies a perceived gap in the care standards for adult residents compared to children. Expanding the high-quality infrastructure and specialized programming to the adult wing would ensure "Coherence" in service delivery across the entire institution.



**Addressing Infrastructure Gaps:** To maintain the high scores in "Dignity and Respect", the institution should prioritize the procurement of individual beds for all residents. This was a specific recurring suggestion from the parents to further enhance the sense of personal dignity.



**Community Advocacy Program:** Given that 18% of families already notice increased community respect, Paradise Home should leverage its new "dignified environment" as a platform for broader disability advocacy. Using the facility as a model could help combat local social stigma more aggressively.

| SDG Goal | Goal Target | Alignment Description |
|---|---|---|
|   | Target 3.4: Promote mental health and well-being. | 94% of children showed improved wellbeing; 65% appeared calmer or more emotionally settled. 100% of parents reported a reduction in stress and worry |
|   | Target 4.5: Ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities. | 65% of parents feel their child is "significantly" receiving better opportunities for learning and social development in the upgraded facility. |
|   | Target 6.2: Achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all. | 59% of respondents explicitly noted "Better hygiene and physical comfort" as a primary positive change resulting from the facility improvements. |
|   | Target 7.1: Ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services. | The building has reduced more than 45% of the electricity budget for a year through the renewable energy installed in the building |
|   | Target 10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of disability. | 94% of parents feel their child is now treated with greater dignity and respect. 18% noted an increase in respect and dignity shown by the community toward their family. |
|   | Target 11.7: Provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for persons with disabilities. | 94% satisfaction with the safety and living conditions of the upgraded campus, providing a specialized, safe communal space for a vulnerable population. |

# Conclusion




Image 104: Notice board of solar heater inauguration by five star

## What Changed

The facility upgrades at Paradise Home have triggered a comprehensive shift in the quality of life for residents and their families. Quantifiable data show that 94% of children have experienced improved well-being, marked by higher responsiveness and emotional stability. Simultaneously, the environment has shifted from basic shelter to a dignified residence, with 100% of caregivers reporting a significant reduction in personal stress and a profound increase in peace of mind.

## Why It Matters

In the context of the OECD-DAC framework, these changes represent high Relevance and Impact. The project has successfully addressed the "whole-family" unit; by securing the child, the institution has rehabilitated the mental resilience of the parents. Furthermore, the 18% increase in community respect suggests that improving physical standards is a critical step in combatting the social stigma and marginalization typically faced by families of children with special needs.

## What Remains to be Addressed

While the physical infrastructure now meets "Excellent" standards, a few critical gaps remain in the Sustainability and Coherence of the intervention:

- Individualized Infrastructure: The transition from communal to individual-focused care (e.g., individual beds) is still in progress.
- Demographic Parity: There is a perceived need to ensure the same high standards of care and infrastructure are applied to adult residents as they are to children.
- Specialized Human Capital: The new environment requires a corresponding upgrade in specialized training and individualized learning programs to reach its full potential.

## Strategic Way Forward

The project has successfully built a "Foundation of Dignity." The strategic focus should now shift from Physical Infrastructure to Specialized Programming.

- Investment in Specialization: Prioritize hiring and training specialized staff to leverage the new facilities for advanced therapeutic outcomes.
- Infrastructure Refinement: Fulfill the specific request for individual beds to solidify the commitment to resident dignity.
- Advocacy Leadership: Use the upgraded facility as a "model center" to lead community advocacy and policy discussions on high-standard disability care in the region.

# Integrated Education, Health, and Livelihood Support for Scheduled Irular Tribal Families

Impact Assessment for FY 2021-25

NGO/Trust: M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF)




Image 105: beneficiaries from Irula community

# Executive Summary



Image 106: Beneficiaries of Integrated Education, Health, and Livelihood Support for Scheduled Irular Tribal Families

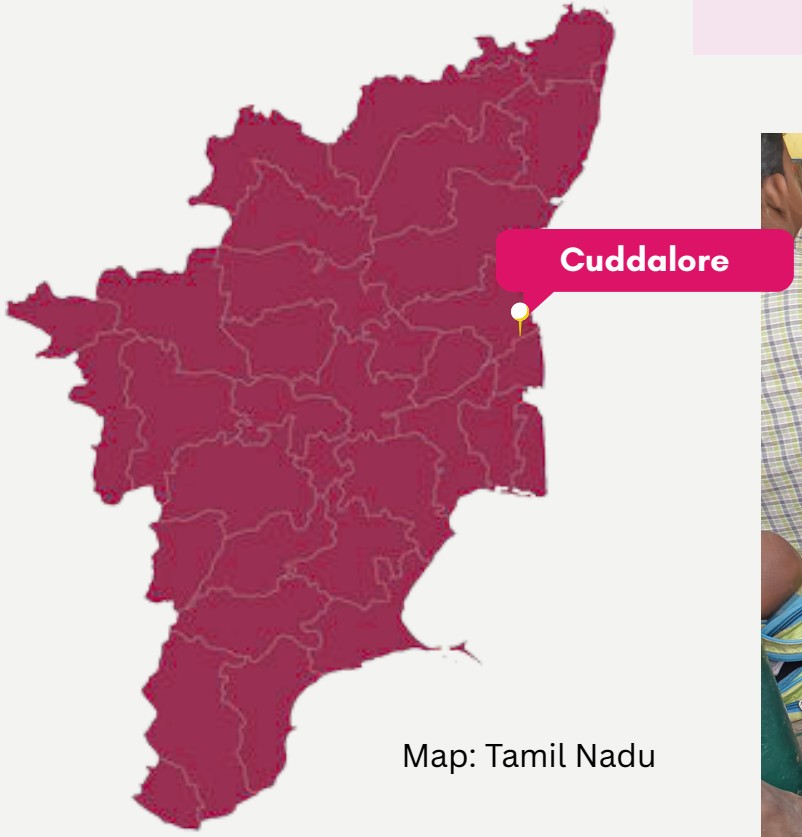
| Project Name: | NGO/Trust: | Project Assessment Years: |
|---|---|---|
| Integrated Education, Health, and Livelihood Support for Scheduled Irular Tribal Families | M S Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) | FY 2021- 2025 |

**Project Location:** Five Irular tribal settlements in Parangipettai Block, Cuddalore District (near Chidambaram), Tamil Nadu

## Total Beneficiaries:

**Direct:** ~1,880 individuals including ~500 Irular households, 150 school-going children, women engaged in mangrove fishing, and tribal youth

**Indirect:** Teachers, community volunteers, elderly members, and the wider tribal community benefiting from improved services and resilience systems




Map: Tamil Nadu



Image 107: students benefitted from the project

## Project Activities

### Education & Learning

- Establishment of evening tuition centres across five villages
- Implementation of ECAS (Every Child A Scientist) sessions to promote scientific thinking
- Engagement of trained teachers to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy
- Provision of access to village libraries and digital learning resources

### Livelihood Enhancement

- Skill training for youth and women in improved fishing practices, navigation, gear handling, and alternative livelihood options
- Distribution of fishing gear and protective equipment for safer mangrove fishing
- Facilitation of forward and backward market linkages to support sustainable income

### Health & Nutrition

- Promotion of household and community Nutri Gardens to improve dietary diversity
- Organization of medical and occupational health camps
- Nutrition awareness and wellness education for families, especially women

### Community Knowledge & Digital Access

- Establishment and operation of Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) with ICT facilities
- Digital literacy training for youth and community members
- Provision of real-time information on weather advisories, fishing conditions, and government schemes
- Strengthening disaster preparedness and occupational safety





Image 108: activities undertaken for livelihood enhancement

## Performance Snapshot



**Addressing Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability in Irular Tribal Communities:** The intervention responded to interconnected challenges in livelihoods, education access, health awareness, and information gaps among Irular tribal households largely dependent on seasonal fishing.



**Strengthened Livelihood Security and Income Stability:** Skill development initiatives such as boat engine maintenance, mangrove crab fattening, and hygienic fish processing improved economic resilience, with 75% of households reporting improved income levels.



**Improved Occupational Safety and Confidence Among Fishers:** Training and safety measures enhanced self-reliance and reduced operational risks, enabling fishers to manage technical issues independently and make safer livelihood decisions.



**Enhanced Educational Engagement and Aspirations:** Education support Programs, including evening tuition and ECAS (Every Child A Scientist) sessions, strengthened foundational learning, with 87% of households reporting increased importance of education for their children.

**Strengthened Women's Agency and Economic Participation:** Women reported greater involvement in household decision-making (71% increase) and safer participation in fishing-related activities due to protective equipment and safety training.



**Improved Community Health Awareness and Nutrition Practices:** Health camps and Nutri Garden initiatives enhanced preventive health awareness, with 100% of respondents noting reduced health problems and improved dietary diversity among participating households.



**Technology-Enabled Disaster Preparedness and Information Access:** Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) improved access to weather advisories and government information, with 76% of fishers using VKC alerts to make safer fishing decisions.



**Emerging Community Resilience and Ownership:** The integration of livelihood skills, education support, health awareness, and digital access has strengthened community confidence and laid the foundation for long-term socio-economic resilience.

## SDG Alignment




## What Worked Well

**Integrated Community Development Approach:** Addressing livelihoods, education, health, and information access simultaneously helped tackle the structural drivers of vulnerability in the tribal community.

**Skill-Based Livelihood Interventions:** Practical training aligned with existing occupations improved income opportunities while strengthening occupational safety and self-reliance.

**Community-Based Education Support for Children:** Evening tuition centres and science learning Programs increased children's engagement with education and strengthened parental support for schooling.

**Village Knowledge Centres as Information Hubs:** Providing access to weather alerts, government schemes, and digital information significantly improved safety, awareness, and decision-making among fishing households.




Image 109: Showcasing integrated community development

# Project at a glance



Image 110: students belonging to the irula community

**About NGO/Trust:** The M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF) is a not-for-profit research organization established in 1988 and headquartered in Chennai, dedicated to fostering sustainable and inclusive rural development. Guided by a pro-poor, pro-nature, and pro-women approach, the Foundation works to bridge the gap between scientific research and grassroots action to enhance the livelihoods and resilience of rural and coastal communities.

MSSRF focuses on key thematic areas including sustainable agriculture and food security, natural resource management, biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation, coastal systems research, nutrition, and gender equity. Through community-based interventions, participatory research, and technology dissemination, the Foundation promotes ecological sustainability, improved farm productivity, enhanced nutrition, and livelihood security for small and marginal farmers, fisherfolk, and vulnerable populations.

## Objective

To improve the overall wellbeing and socio-economic resilience of Scheduled Irular tribal families by strengthening foundational education for children, enhancing health and nutrition practices, promoting diversified and safer livelihood opportunities, and enabling community access to digital knowledge and disaster preparedness systems.

## Thematic

Education, Health & Nutrition, Livelihoods, and Community Resilience

## Geography

Five Irular tribal settlements in Parangipettai Block, Cuddalore District (near Chidambaram), Tamil Nadu

## Coverage:

Focus Areas: Evening tuition centres, ECAS science learning, Nutri Gardens, medical camps, livelihood skill development and equipment support, and establishment of Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) for digital access and early-warning information

## Beneficiary Profile:

Primary Beneficiaries:

- Scheduled Irular tribal families (~500 households)
- School-going children (including ~150 children supported through education interventions)
- Women engaged in mangrove fishing and are facing occupational risks
- Tribal youth seeking skill development and alternative livelihood opportunities

Secondary Beneficiaries:

- Teachers, community volunteers, and local facilitators
- Elderly community members are benefiting from health and nutrition initiatives
- Households benefit from improved community resilience, digital access, and disaster preparedness systems.

## Respondent Profile

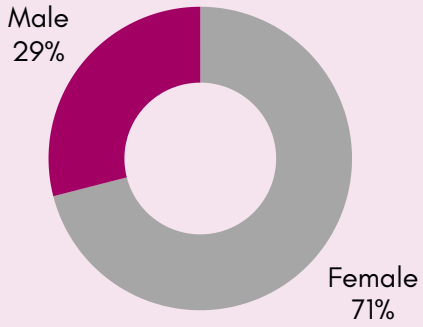
The beneficiary profile reflects participation from 17 respondents, predominantly women (71%), indicating strong female engagement in the intervention. The respondents largely belong to the 25-38 years age group, representing economically active individuals within their households.

Beneficiaries are distributed across four settlements, with MGR Nagar and Seshil Nagar each accounting for 29%, followed by Kalaignar Nagar (24%) and Grid Nagar (18%), demonstrating the Program's outreach across multiple fishing communities.

Most households consist of four or more members (88%), suggesting relatively large family sizes with multiple dependents. The primary livelihood source is fishing (82%), while a small proportion depend on daily wage labour (12%) or homemaking roles.

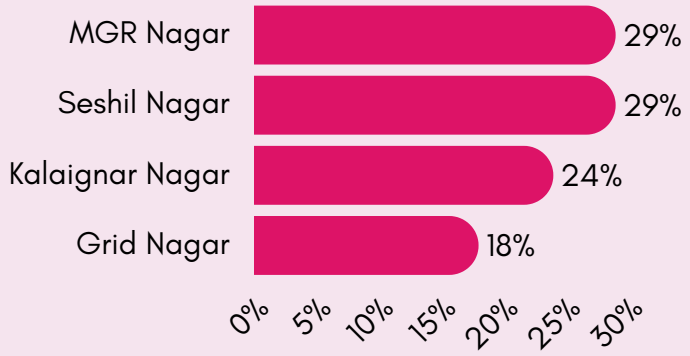
Educational attainment among heads of households remains limited, with 24% having no formal schooling, while others have studied up to primary, upper primary, or secondary levels. Income levels indicate economic vulnerability, with 77% of households earning below ₹10,000 per month.
In terms of education of children, 76% of households have one or two school-going children, reflecting moderate school participation among beneficiary families.

### Gender



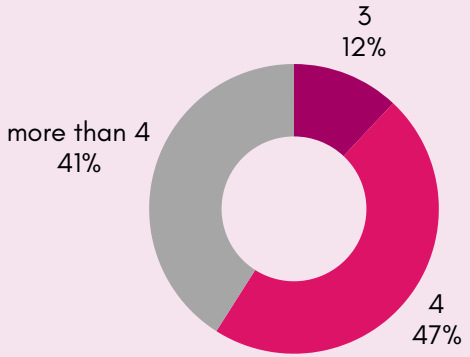

Graph 92: Respondents Gender

### Village / settlement



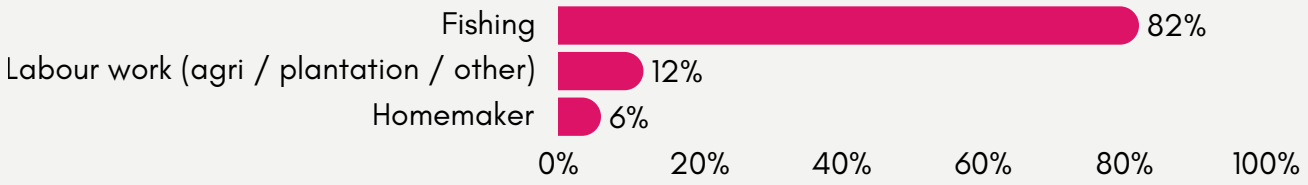

Graph 93: Respondents Village

### Total Members in the household



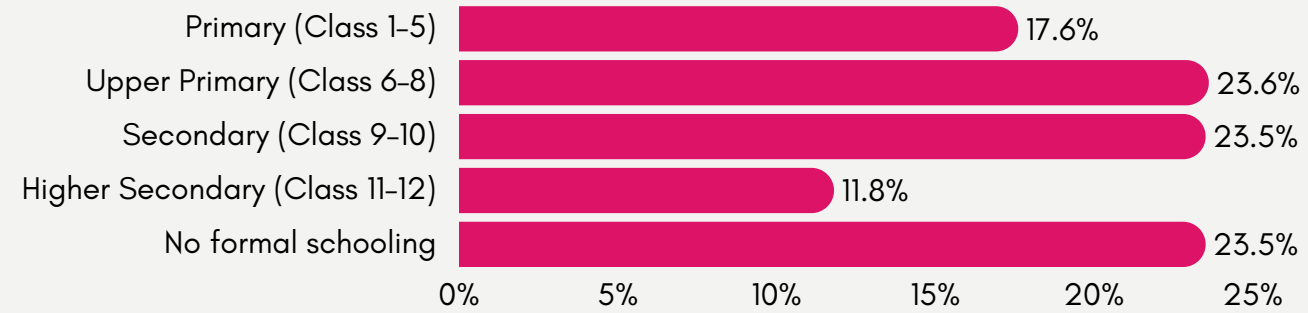

Graph 94: Household members

## Occupation of main income earner



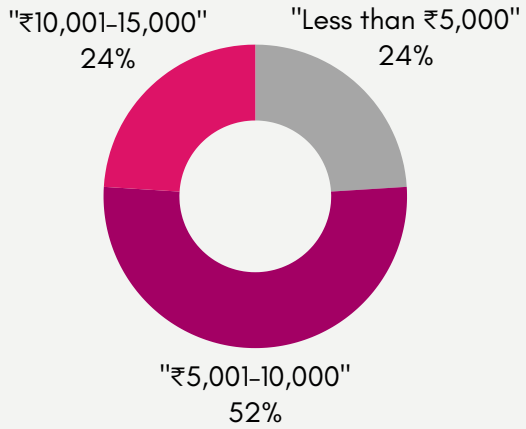

Graph 95: Income

## Education details of head of the family



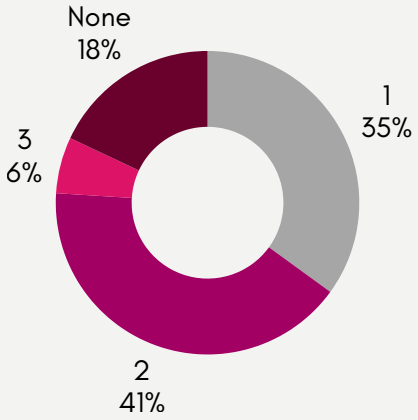

Graph 96: Education details

## Monthly household income (approx.)




Graph 97: Household Income

## Number of school-going children




Graph 98: Number of school going children



Image 111 :Interaction with the irula tribal community woman



Image 112: students getting access to digital infrastructure

# Findings




**Image 113: A irula tribal community beneficiary**

# 1 Multi-Dimensional Vulnerability among Irular Tribal Households

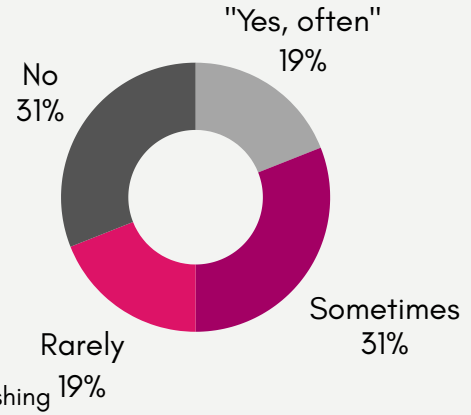
Prior to the intervention, the Irular tribal settlements in Parangipettai Block faced multiple interconnected vulnerabilities related to livelihoods, education access, health awareness, and information systems. With nearly 82% of households dependent on fishing as their primary occupation, income streams were highly seasonal and exposed to climatic risks, fluctuating market prices, and occupational hazards. The absence of reliable weather information and safety equipment further increased livelihood risks for fishers, particularly women involved in mangrove-based fishing activities.

Educational continuity for children was another challenge. Many households had limited access to structured academic support, and parental awareness regarding the long-term value of education was comparatively low. As a result, foundational learning outcomes—particularly in literacy, numeracy, and scientific curiosity—remained weak.

Health and nutrition also presented systemic challenges. Limited dietary diversity, work-related physical strain, and low awareness about occupational health risks contributed to persistent health concerns within the community. Access to timely health services and preventive awareness was minimal.

Survey findings also indicate that health risks associated with fishing were common, with nearly half the households reporting frequent or occasional health problems linked to their occupation.

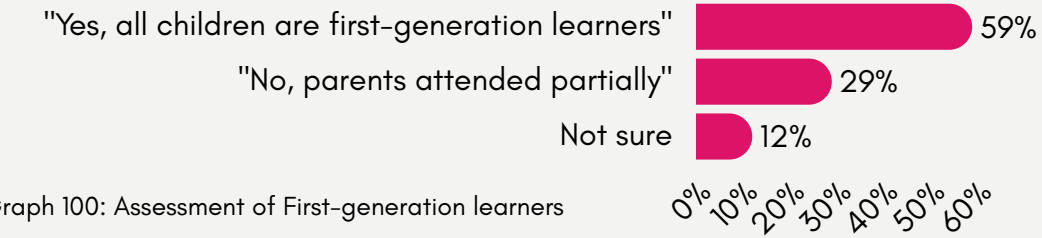
**Health issues due to fishing**




Graph 99: Vulnerabilities due to fishing

Educational continuity for children was another challenge. A significant proportion of children were first-generation learners, highlighting the structural educational disadvantage faced by the community.

**First Generation Learners**




Graph 100: Assessment of First-generation learners

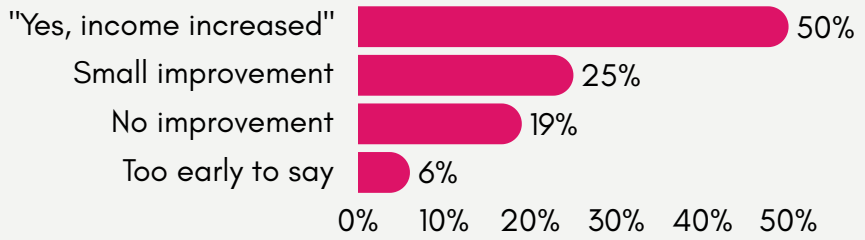
Study findings underline the intergenerational educational gaps within the community prior to the intervention.

During community discussions, respondents indicated that information gaps—particularly regarding weather advisories, government schemes, and livelihood opportunities—contributed significantly to their vulnerability. The absence of digital access points limited the community's ability to make informed decisions related to fishing safety, health, and education.

## 2 Strengthening Livelihood Security and Income Stability

One of the most visible impacts of the intervention has been the strengthening of livelihood security through skill development and occupational safety measures. Approximately 50% of respondents reported an improvement in household income, with half indicating a clear increase and another 25% reporting moderate improvement following participation in livelihood training programs.

### Have these skills helped improve your household income?




Graph 101: perceived impact In Households

These improvements were linked to practical skill-building initiatives such as boat engine maintenance training, mangrove crab fattening techniques, and hygienic fish processing methods. By enhancing technical skills and reducing dependence on external mechanics or intermediaries, households were able to reduce operational costs and improve efficiency in their fishing activities.

Importantly, participants highlighted that the training programs also improved their confidence and willingness to explore additional livelihood options beyond traditional practices.

*"The impact of the specialized training programs extended far beyond mere increases in earning potential, profoundly influencing the psychological and professional well-being of the participants. A recurring theme in the feedback sessions was the substantial reduction in occupational uncertainty and the resultant increase in self-reliance and confidence. For many, the previous reality was one of dependence—on external technicians, experienced elders, or guides for critical maintenance and troubleshooting. This dependency often translated into lost time, increased costs, and a pervasive sense of vulnerability, particularly when out at sea. The training, however, fundamentally shifted this dynamic.*

*A compelling case in point was shared by Mr. K. Ranganathan, a respondent whose testimony encapsulated the sentiment of many peers. He stated, "Earlier we depended on others to repair engines or guide us. We had to wait, or pay someone else, even for small problems. Now, the training has given us the fundamental knowledge. We understand the work ourselves, not just the 'how' but the 'why.' This knowledge is power. We now feel completely confident handling problems at sea, whether it's a minor engine fault or a more complex navigation issue. The uncertainty, the biggest stressor in our line of work, has been significantly reduced." This newfound mastery translated into tangible operational benefits, including reduced downtime for repairs, more efficient operation of equipment, and, crucially, a greater sense of safety and control over their livelihood. The internalisation of technical knowledge fostered a culture of proactive maintenance and independent problem-solving, cementing the training's role as a transformative force in their professional lives.*

This indicates that the intervention contributed not only to economic gains but also to self-reliance and occupational resilience among fishing households.

## 3 Expanding Educational Aspirations and Learning Outcomes among Children

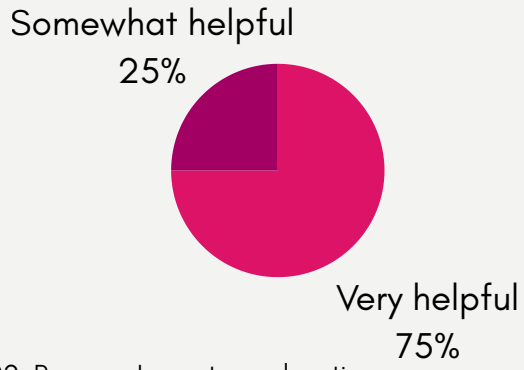
The project's education interventions—including evening tuition centres, ECAS (Every Child A Scientist) sessions, and community-based learning support—have played a significant role in improving both learning outcomes and the perceived value of education within households.

Around 75% of parents described the educational support as "very helpful," indicating strong acceptance and usefulness of the Program's academic support structures.



Image 114: Educational infrastructure for the tribal children

### Usefulness of Education Support Activities




Graph 102: Program Impact on education




Image 115: Interaction on programme impact with the students

Parents reported visible improvements in children's reading ability, writing skills, and understanding of science concepts, suggesting that the Program helped address foundational learning gaps. The introduction of hands-on science sessions also appeared to stimulate curiosity and interest in schooling among children who previously viewed education as distant from their daily lives.

More significantly, 87% of respondents reported that the importance of education within their households has increased since the intervention.

## 4 Parental Observations on Enhanced Student Engagement



Image 116: Showcasing student engagement

A key theme emerging from the group discussions was the profound sense of pride expressed by several parents regarding their children's noticeably increased interest and enthusiasm for learning. This shift was often directly attributed to the impact of the educational programs being discussed.

*One particularly compelling anecdote was provided by Ms S Suganya, a mother whose child is a consistent participant in the "Every Scientist Program." Ms Suganya shared the transformative effect she has observed at home. "The change in my child is remarkable," she stated. "They now actively explain science experiments and concepts to us, demonstrating a real grasp and excitement for the subject. Before, they often struggled with their studies and viewed learning as a chore. Now, they genuinely enjoy the process of discovery and have developed a profound curiosity."*

This sentiment was echoed by other parents who noted improvements not just in specific subjects, but in their children's general attitude toward schoolwork, indicating that the programs are successfully fostering intrinsic motivation and a positive association with educational content. The engagement goes beyond mere participation; it translates into active learning, application of knowledge at home, and a self-driven pursuit of understanding.

This shift reflects a behavioural transformation in educational attitudes, suggesting that the intervention has begun to reshape long-term aspirations for the next generation.

## 5 Enhancing Women's Agency, Safety, and Economic Participation

A major outcome of the Program has been the strengthening of women's agency and safety in both household and economic spaces. The survey findings show that 71% of households reported a significant increase in women's decision-making power at home, indicating a shift in traditional household dynamics.

Women's economic participation has also become safer and more structured. Among women involved in fishing activities, 93% reported feeling significantly safer at work, primarily due to the distribution of protective equipment and training on occupational safety practices.

The Program also facilitated women's participation in community processes. Survey responses indicate that women are actively engaged in community meetings (43%), livelihood training sessions (50%), and Village Knowledge Centre (VKC) activities (50%).

These changes suggest that the project contributed to greater gender inclusion within both livelihood systems and local decision-making processes.

During discussions, women highlighted that safety training and protective gear reduced physical strain during mangrove fishing activities. Several participants mentioned that these improvements encouraged them to participate more confidently in economic activities that were previously considered risky.

## 6 Improving Community Health Awareness and Nutritional Practices

The project's health and nutrition initiatives—particularly through medical camps, nutrition awareness Programs, and the promotion of Nutri Gardens—have led to noticeable improvements in community health awareness.

Notably, 100% of respondents identified "reduced health problems" as one of the most significant positive changes within their community. This suggests that preventive health awareness, combined with access to medical consultations during camps, has contributed to early identification and management of health issues.

In addition, 45% of households with Nutri Gardens reported significant improvements in family food habits, indicating that households are gradually diversifying their diets by incorporating vegetables grown locally.

Qualitative discussions further revealed that families are becoming more conscious of nutrition and hygiene practices. Women particularly highlighted that growing vegetables at home helped ensure a steady supply of fresh food even during periods when fishing income fluctuated.

These outcomes indicate that the project helped shift community attitudes from reactive healthcare to preventive health and nutrition practices, strengthening long-term wellbeing.

## 7 Digital Access and Disaster Preparedness through Village Knowledge Centres

The establishment of Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) has emerged as a critical infrastructure component of the intervention, particularly in improving access to timely information and disaster preparedness.

Survey responses indicate that 76% of fishers rely on weather alerts and information from VKCs when making decisions about fishing activities. This access to real-time information has significantly reduced exposure to weather-related risks and improved safety at sea.

Community members reported that VKCs also serve as important hubs for accessing information about government schemes, livelihood opportunities, and educational resources.




Image 117: Community gathering at a VKC center

During discussions, several respondents emphasised that the ability to check weather forecasts before venturing into the sea has helped them avoid dangerous situations.

*As articulated by M. Kannan, a long-time fisherman from the area, "Before, we would go to the sea without knowing the weather. Now we check the updates first and decide safely." This simple statement highlights a profound transformation in how the local fishing community operates. This change is largely attributable to improved access to reliable and timely weather and sea condition forecasts. Historically, fishermen relied on traditional knowledge, visual cues, and guesswork, which often exposed them to unpredictable and dangerous weather events. The consequences ranged from damaged gear and lost income to, tragically, loss of life. Today, thanks to initiatives promoting digital literacy and the dissemination of information through mobile technology and community communication centers, fishermen are integrating scientific data into their daily planning. Checking weather updates —whether through government meteorological services, specialized apps, or even community warning systems—has become a non-negotiable step before venturing out. This precautionary measure allows them to avoid rough seas, anticipate cyclonic weather patterns, and optimize their fishing routes, leading to more productive and, crucially, safer expeditions. Kannan's comment perfectly encapsulates this cultural and technological adaptation: a move from blind reliance on fate to making well-informed, safety-conscious decisions.*

The VKCs therefore represent an important step toward technology-enabled resilience for marginalized coastal communities.

## 8 Community Ownership and Emerging Sustainability Pathways

Evidence from the assessment suggests that the intervention has begun fostering community ownership of key Program components, particularly in education support, digital information systems, and livelihood skill development.

High satisfaction levels among beneficiaries indicate strong community acceptance of the Program. Many participants expressed willingness to continue using the skills and services introduced through the intervention.

However, discussions also revealed certain structural constraints that may affect long-term sustainability. Community members highlighted the need for productive assets such as fishing boats, ice boxes, and improved storage infrastructure to fully capitalize on the skills gained through livelihood training.

Despite these challenges, the Program's emphasis on skill transfer, community-based learning, and digital access infrastructure provides a strong foundation for long-term sustainability.

The Village Knowledge Centres in particular have the potential to evolve into community-managed information hubs, supporting continued access to weather advisories, education resources, and livelihood information.

## 9 Overall Perceived Transformation: From Vulnerability to Emerging Resilience

Overall, the findings indicate that the project has contributed to multi-dimensional transformation across economic, social, and institutional dimensions within the Irular tribal settlements.

Economic resilience has improved through skill-based livelihood diversification and increased income stability. Educational aspirations among households have strengthened, creating pathways for long-term social mobility. Women have gained greater agency and safety in both household and economic contexts, while community health awareness and nutrition practices have improved significantly.

Perhaps most importantly, the introduction of digital information systems through Village Knowledge Centres has strengthened the community's ability to make informed decisions in the face of climatic and occupational risks.

Taken together, these changes suggest that the intervention has moved beyond isolated service delivery and has begun addressing the structural drivers of vulnerability among Irular tribal communities, laying the groundwork for sustained social and economic resilience.

## Alignment with OECD Framework



### Relevance

The intervention is directly aligned with the socio-economic needs of the population. With over 80% of households dependent on fishing, the focus on occupational safety, weather alerts via Village Knowledge Centres (VKC), and educational support for children addresses the most critical local vulnerabilities.



### Coherence

The integration of education, health, and livelihood components suggests a holistic approach. The synergy between the VKC information services and local safety practices indicates high internal coherence across the program's various modules.



### Effectiveness

The program has demonstrated high effectiveness in achieving its intended outputs. Approximately 75% of participants reported improved household income following livelihood training, and 75% of parents rated the education support as "very helpful." This indicates that the activities are successfully translating into tangible benefits for the participants.



### Efficiency

While specific cost-to-output data is not detailed, the high levels of community satisfaction—94% combined "Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied"—suggest that the program's delivery model is viewed as valuable and appropriate by its stakeholders.



### Impact

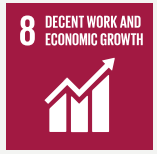
The findings show significant evidence of transformative social and economic change:

- **Gender Equality:** A 71% increase in women's decision-making power at the household level.
- **Safety:** A 93% reported increase in safety and reduced strain for women participating in fishing activities.
- **Community Health:** 100% of respondents identified "Reduced health problems" as a primary change in the village.
- **Social Value:** 87% of households reported an increased valuation of education within the community.



### Sustainability

The focus on skill acquisition (e.g., boat engine repair and fish processing) and the establishment of the VKCs as permanent information hubs provides a foundation for long-term benefits. However, qualitative feedback regarding the need for capital assets like ice boxes and boats indicates that continued support or improved market linkages may be required to maintain these gains independently.

| SDG Goal | Alignment Detail | Key Evidence from Findings |
|---|---|---|
|   | Increasing economic resilience through livelihood diversification and skill acquisition. | 75% of households reported an improvement in income following livelihood training. |
|   | Reducing occupational health hazards and improving community nutrition. | 100% of respondents identified "Reduced health problems" as a major community change. |
|   | Enhancing learning outcomes and increasing the perceived value of formal schooling. | 87% of respondents noted an increased importance of education in their homes. |
|   | Enhancing women's agency in domestic decisions and safety in economic participation. | 71% reported an increase in women's decision-making power at home; 93% report feeling safer at work. |
|   | Promoting safe working environments and technical skill development for coastal communities. | Livelihood training in engine repair and safety gear reduced physical strain and occupational risks. |
|   | Strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards. | 76% of fishers use Village Knowledge Centre (VKC) weather alerts to make safer fishing decisions. |
|   | Supporting sustainable artisanal fishing and the sustainable use of marine resources. | Technical training in mangrove crab fattening and hygienic processing promotes sustainable resource use. |

## Recommendation

**Invest in Cold Chain Infrastructure:** Address the primary community request for ice boxes and refrigeration. Reducing post-harvest losses will allow fishing households to command better market prices and stabilize daily income.

**Scale Value-Added Livelihoods:** Transition from basic fishing safety to advanced processing training, specifically for dry fish production and micro-entrepreneurship. This will diversify income streams and reduce the community's total reliance on raw catch.

**Facilitate Asset Ownership:** Move beyond skill-building by establishing linkages with micro-finance or government subsidies to help households acquire capital assets, such as boats and large-scale fishing gear, which remain a significant barrier to economic growth.

**Institutionalize Community-Led Education:** To sustain the reported gains in child learning, transition the evening tuition centers and science sessions (ECAS) into community-managed models. Strengthening the Village Knowledge Centres (VKC) as permanent hubs for both educational and weather-related data will ensure the community remains resilient and informed.

**Formalize Gender-Inclusive Leadership:** Leverage the significant increase in women's decision-making and safety by creating formal roles for women in community governance and resource management. This will capitalize on the project's success in empowerment and ensure that village-level decisions reflect the needs of all community members.



Image 118 : Beneficiary of the programme

# Conclusion




Image 119 : Beneficiaries from the tribal community

## What Changed

The intervention successfully transformed community dynamics across the four settlements, most notably in the areas of economic resilience and social equity. Quantifiable gains include a 75% increase in household income following livelihood training and a 71% improvement in women's domestic decision-making power. Critically, the program achieved a 100% success rate in perceived health improvements and established the Village Knowledge Centres (VKC) as a life-saving infrastructure, with 76% of fishers now relying on them for safety-critical weather decisions.

## Why It Matters

These shifts indicate that the program moved beyond short-term relief to address the structural drivers of coastal vulnerability. By integrating occupational safety with educational support, the project has begun to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty; 87% of families now place a higher value on formal education. Under the OECD-DAC lens, this demonstrates high Relevance and Effectiveness, proving that localized, tech-enabled information systems (VKCs) combined with gender-inclusive training can fundamentally alter the risk profile of a fishing-dependent community.

## What Remains to be Addressed

- Despite these gains, a "dependency gap" exists regarding physical capital. The qualitative feedback highlights that while skills have improved, the lack of productive assets—specifically boats and cold-chain infrastructure (ice boxes)—limits the community's ability to maximize their new skills and achieve full financial autonomy. Furthermore, while health awareness has peaked, the transition from basic safety to sustainable entrepreneurship (such as value-added fish processing) is still in its infancy.

## Strategic Way Forward

The project must now pivot from capacity building to market integration. The strategic priority is to institutionalize the gains by:

1. Securing Assets: Facilitating access to credit or subsidies for cold-storage and fishing equipment.
2. Value Chain Upgrading: Scaling dry-fish processing and micro-entrepreneurship training to diversify income.
3. Governance: Formalizing women's leadership roles within community institutions to ensure social gains are permanent.
4. Sustainability: Transitioning VKCs into community-funded or government-linked hubs to ensure long-term operational viability without external aid.

## Index


Graph 1: Total students respondents
Graph 2: Education status
Graph 3: Livelihood Pattern
Graph 4 : Recent enrollments
Graph 5 : First generation learners
Graph 6: Prior education experiences
Graph 7: Reasons for choosing the education premises
Graph 8: Impact on Exam Results
Graph 9: Impact on Beneficiaries in difficult questions
Graph 10: Perceived usage of Digital tools in everyday activities
Graph 11: Perceived capacity of usage of Digital education tools
Graph 12 : Changes noticed by students after studying
Graph 13: Assessment of extracurricular activities
Graph 14 : Gender of respondents
Graph 15 : Education status of parents
Graph 16 : Occupational status of Parents
Graph 17: Activity performed by students in the evenings previously
Graph 18: Improvement in various subjects
Graph 19: Improvement in learning habits
Graph 20: Feedback on the most enjoyed components of STS classes
Graph 21: Impact of attendance In evening classes
Graph 22 : Interest behind ettending Single Teacher School daily
Graph 23 : Student Participation in School Activities
Graph 24: Students interested in continuing the education
Graph 25: Perceived Interests in STS classes
Graph 26 : Type of respondents
Graph 27 : Age of respondents
Graph 28 : Source of income
Graph 29 : Household size
Graph 30 : Girls age profile
Graph 31 : Job card ownership
Graph 32 : Women age
Graph 33: No of girls and boys enrolled
Graph 34: No of years spent in the institution
Graph 35: Facilities in the classroom
Graph 36: Rating of new classrooms
Graph 37: New Infrastructure impacting learning
Graph 38: Usage of laboratory
Graph 39: Impact on experimentl
Graph 40: Perceived Usage of Science laboratories
Graph 41: Impact of Library on reading habit
Graph 42: Impact on Academic Performance
Graph 43: Assessment of behavioral and study patterns
Graph 44 : Impact on students due to new facilities
Graph 45 :Respondents age
Graph 46 : Studnets Enrollment
Graph 47 : Branch of study
Graph 48: Years spent in Ramakrishna Mission Home
Graph 49: Future without the program
Graph 50: Reason of joining Polytechnic college
Graph 51: Impact on Technical Skill - Rating
Graph 52: Rating on Quality of lab
Graph 53: Hands on training
Graph 54 : Confidnece in Securing Employement
Graph 55: Campus Placement
Graph 56: Residential environmenal imapct
Graph 57: Impact of residential benefits
Graph 58 : Challenges encountered
Graph 59 : Assessment of term aspirations and transformations
Graph 60: Age Female
Graph 61: Age Male
Graph 62: Working status
Graph 63: Type of Disability
Graph 64: Education level
Graph 65: Household size
Graph 66 : Analysis of Income before and after the project
Graph 67: Duration of enterprise continuities
Graph 68: Advantages of a bunk shop
Graph 69: Situation before project
Graph 70: Impact on livelihood due to Bunk shops
Graph 71: results of Habitual changes
Graph 72: Financial Impact of bunk shops
Graph 73: Impact in family
Graph 74 : Assessing overall Community impact
Graph 75: Behavioral Impact Of respondents
Graph 76: Respondents Gaurdians
Graph 77: Parents Occupation
Graph 78: Monthly Income
Graph 79: Enrollment status
Graph 80: Mode of connection with home

## Index

Graph 81: Impact on better opportunity
Graph 82: Impact on improved services
Graph 83: Assessment of Behavioral Changes
Graph 84: Assessment of safety and security
Graph 85: Assessment of care and supervision
Graph 86: Improved peace of mind
Graph 87: Impact on stress
Graph 88: Assessment of benefits in the infrastructure
Graph 89: Assessment of Community Attitude
Graph 90: Qualitative feedback Assessment on Caregiving Staff
Graph 91: Recommendation of future  endorsement
Graph 92: Respondents Gender
Graph 93: Respondents Village
Graph 94: Household members
Graph 95: Income
Graph 96: Education details
Graph 97: Household Income
Graph 98: Number of school going children
Graph 99: Vulnerabilities due to fishing
Graph 100: Assessment of First-generation learners
Graph 101: perceived impact In Households
Graph 102: Program Impact on education

Images

Image 1: Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Educare Centre
Image 2: Classroom supported by Fivestar CSR
Image 3: student survey in process
Image 4: Notice Board of the Inauguration of the infrastructure
Image 5: Children learning in classroom
Image 6: Tablet used for learning
Image 7: Classroom Interaction with Students
Image 8: Modern digital Infrastructure
Image 10: Community learning space
Image 11: Discussion In an STS meeting
Image 12: Collecting Feedback from STS members
Image 13: Parent community discussion
Image 14: Parent community discussion
Image 15: Discussion with an STS member
Image 16: Community household of STS
Image 17: Interaction with STS community members
image 18: Interactive Activities
Image 19: Parent Interaction during KII
Image 20: Beneficiaries of the toilet cum Bathroom Project
Image 21: Community Beneficiary in front of the constructed toilet
Image 22 : Community Beneficiary Infront of the sanitation Inauguration notice board
Image 23: Respondent Infront of the toilet constructed
Image 24: Respondent Infront of the toilet constructed
Image 25: beneficiaries of the strengthening Affordable Healthcare through Advanced Diagnostic and Surgical Equipment Support
Image 26: Lab Technicians using the new laboratory facilities
Image 27: Computer labs Built to increase service efficiency
Image 28: Thermo-flo Machine
Image 30: Beneficiaries using the new equipment enhancing medical diagnosis
Image 31: Upgraded Ultrasound Machine

Image 32: Upgraded Medical Equipment
Image 33: Interaction with the fundraising Manager
Image 34 : Reflection of results after the induction of Mammogram
Image 35: Hospital Premises
Image 36: New laboratory facilities
Image 37: Compact B Touch Scan equipment
Image 38: Genset Support system
Image 39: Ultrasound Machine
Image 40: Lab bench system
Image 41: Physics Lab
Image 42: Respiratory testing Equipment
Image 43: Auto refractometer
Image 44: Infrastructure of quality education
Image 45: Students In computer Lab
Image 46: School Laboratory
Image 47: Computer Lab
Image 48 : Computer laboratory Inaugurated by Five star
Image 49 : Lab Bench System
Image 50: Polytechnic Institution
Image 51: Class pathway
Image 52: Discussion Held at a Lab Facility
Image 53: B Chandrashekaran, Project in charge
Image 54: Balaji,a third-year student
Image 55: Pushkaran, a mechanical engineering student
Image 56: Bunk shops set up for disabled people
Image 57 : showcasing impact of project
Image 58: People Purchasing utilities form bunk shop
Image 59: Beneficiary of TNDFCT Intervention
Image 60: A five star sponsored Bunk shop
Image 61: Beneficiary of a bunk shop set up by the TNDFCT
Image 62: Beneficiary of a bunk shop set up by the TNDFCT
Image 63: Bunk shop run by an disabled person
Image 64: Beneficiary in a bunk shop

Image 65: Mr Arockia Raj, from Mayiladuthurai, with his own bunk shop
Image 66: Interaction with beneficiaries for the review of bunk shops
Image 67: Interaction with beneficiaries for the review of bunk shops
Image 68 :Interaction with people of all age running the bunk shops
Image 69: Experiencing interaction with beneficiaries across all age groups.
Image 70: engaging with beneficiaries at the bunk shop.
Image 71: Disabled people creating micro community space
Image 72: Connecting with beneficiaries at the bunk shop.
Image 73: Mr. Selvam sharing his experiences and struggles
Image 74: Bunk shop run by a woman
Image 75: beneficiaries at the bunk shop.
Image 76: NIOS Open School for Children with Special Needs – Inclusive Education & Functional Development Initiative
Image 77: NIOS community space
Image 78: Parents of the Children enrolled in the programme
Image 79: Facilities and activities demonstrated in School
Image 80 : Newly constructed space for learning
Image 81: New construction and infrastructure To ensure smooth education
Image 82: Foyer of NIOS open school
Image 83: Meeting and gathering area at the learning space
Image 84: Discussion with staff and supervisors
Image 85: Area for engagement and innovation
Image 86: Leisure and rest facilities for students
Image 87: Interaction with a supervisor
Image 88: Notice board of inauguration by Five star
Image 89: School of residential Care & Special Education Facility for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities
Image 90: Interaction of Student teacher in a classroom
Image 91: people in the residential care performing day to day activities
Image 92: man residing in the residential center
Image 93: children and caregivers of paradise residential home
Image 94: Kids engaged in an activity in the residential home
Image 95: bead making activity conducted for students
Image 96: People resiiding int the residential care
Image 97 : Vulnerable people given shelter and care in paradise home
Image 98: Disabled people taken care under paradise home
Image 99: Showcasing community bonding

Image 100: enabling the people of the community
Image 101: Gym inside the home to keep the people active.
Image 102: Student in the paradise home
Image 103: showcasing an inclusive environment
Image 104: Notice board of solar heater inauguration by five star
Image 105: beneficiaries from Irula community
Image 106: Beneficiaries of Integrated Education, Health, and Livelihood Support for Scheduled Irular Tribal Families
Image 108: activities undertaken for livelihood enhancement
Image 109: Showcasing integrated community development
Image 110: students belonging to the irula community
Image 111: Interaction with the irula tribal community woman
Image 112: students getting access to digital infrastructure
Image 113: A irula tribal community beneficiary
Image 114: Educational infrastructure for the tribal children
Image 115: Interaction on programme impact with the students
Image 116: Showcasing student engagement
Image 117: Community gathering at a VKC center
Image 118 : Beneficiary of the programme
Image 119 : Beneficiaries from the tribal community

# Thank you!

## Impact Assessment Report of Five Star

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