

**HDFC FDP Impact
Assessment – Improving
Learning Attainment
Levels Through
Edutainment (P0310)**

**Impact
Assessment
Report**

**Submitted To
HDFC Bank CSR
Submitted By
Sambodhi Research and Communications**

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1. Executive Summary

Education is a key driver of socioeconomic transformation and nation-building. As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, **Parivartan**, HDFC Bank has launched various projects focused on empowering communities, particularly in the field of education. The **Improving Learning Attainment Levels Through Edutainment** project is one such initiative, aimed at improving educational outcomes in Palghar district of Maharashtra. Implemented by

AIILSG between 2020 and 2023, this project focused on enhancing the learning experiences of students while fostering holistic development through edutainment methods.

The study employed a **mixed-method approach**, combining both **qualitative** and **quantitative** components. The survey covered 240 students, 48 teachers, and 20 Shikshan Mitras (SMs) across 1 state. On the qualitative side, **55 key informant interviews** were conducted, targeting three main stakeholder groups: project partners, administration and implementation staff at the block or district level, and HDFC officials at the central level. The qualitative component allowed for a deeper understanding of the project's impact, capturing insights that might have been overlooked in the quantitative survey.

The **Improving Learning Attainment Levels Through Edutainment** project established 40 **Shikshan Ranjan Kendras (SRKs)** across 22 villages in Palghar, Maharashtra. The initiative benefited 2,000 children from 35 Zilla Parishad (ZP) schools. The project aimed to enhance language and numeracy skills in line with the **National Education Policy 2020**, build the capacity of **Shikshan Mitras (SMs)**, train ZP school teachers, and encourage greater parental involvement. In addition, it supported community health initiatives, including COVID-19 awareness campaigns and health camps, thus promoting holistic child development.

The Shikshan Ranjan Kendra, focused on improving both academic performance and holistic development. This included enhancing teaching methods, fostering community engagement, and promoting essential life skills such as hygiene and discipline. The training provided to teachers played a pivotal role in transforming classroom dynamics. With **90% teacher participation**, the program successfully introduced **interactive teaching methods**, group activities, and innovative tools, significantly enhancing student engagement and participation. Nearly all teachers (**98%**) reported increased student confidence and participation, and **100%** indicated improvements in students' academic progression, with many students advancing to grade-level expectations.

Teachers widely applied the core teaching strategies, with **100% of teachers** adopting the new methods. However, challenges remained in areas such as **local material application (74%)** and **time management (77%)**, indicating that future training should emphasize these aspects more.

Shikshan Mitras played a crucial role in minimizing learning loss, especially during the pandemic. An overwhelming **98% of students** reported receiving academic help from Shikshan Mitras, particularly during school closures. The SMs conducted visits on a **monthly (48%)** or **weekly (33%)** basis, ensuring continued educational engagement. At the **Shikshan Ranjan Kendras (SRKs)**, students participated in activities like **story reading, craft workshops, and library visits**, which not only helped deepen their understanding of subjects but also nurtured critical thinking and life skills.

The project focused heavily on improving **Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN)** skills. Among Grade IV students performed well in tasks like **identifying nouns (69%)**, while **Grade V** students showed significant **progress in reading passages** related to Marathi saints (41%). In writing, Grade IV students excelled in applying **proverbs (40%)**, and Grade V students demonstrated proficiency in using correct **punctuation (69%)**. In numeracy, Grade IV students performed strongly in **basic arithmetic operations (86%)** and **fractions (84%)**. However, Grade V students **faced challenges with more complex tasks**, such as identifying angles (39%), indicating areas that require focused improvement.

Parents expressed strong satisfaction with the program's impact, particularly in terms of **improved learning outcomes** and **self-confidence** among their children. They observed significant improvements in reading and writing skills, as well as in essential hygiene practices. The program's success was partly due to the active involvement of parents, who were engaged

through **regular communication** and **home visits**. This involvement helped extend the benefits of the program beyond the classroom and contributed to positive changes in students' behavior and attitudes.

The sustainability of the Shiksha Ranjan Kendras is strongly supported by ongoing **parental involvement and community engagement**. With **95%** of teachers committed to continuing the training methods after the project's conclusion, the program has shown lasting effectiveness. Parents have also expressed confidence that the program can be scaled to other rural areas, with community involvement and ownership being critical to its long-term success. This model has the potential to influence educational policies, promoting community-based learning and life skills education on a broader scale.

Despite its successes, the program faced challenges in the quality of intervention delivery. **Over half of the respondents** rated the intervention quality as "Poor," indicating areas for improvement in execution. Addressing these issues, particularly in terms of infrastructure, resources, and teacher training quality, will be crucial for the program's continued success.

The Shiksha Ranjan Education Center has demonstrated strong impact in improving academic outcomes, life skills, and community engagement. The program's holistic approach—emphasizing education, hygiene, discipline, and community support—has created lasting change in students' lives. With continuous improvement and community involvement, the program holds great potential for scalability and sustainability, helping to improve educational access and quality for children in rural regions for years to come.

2. Background

Education plays a pivotal role in the socio-economic transformation of a country and is a cornerstone of nation-building. Higher levels of education lead to improved earning profiles, which, in turn, drive productivity and economic growth. At the elementary level, strong educational foundations are essential, as they directly impact higher education outcomes and contribute to greater overall productivity.

It is widely accepted that high-quality teaching reduces the occurrence of low student performance. Teachers directly shape students' social behaviors, cognitive skills, and intellectual development, especially at the primary school level. Therefore, it is vital to focus on enhancing the capabilities of teachers, as they have the most substantial impact on student outcomes.

The complex interplay of these factors necessitates a comprehensive approach. In response, HDFC Bank's CSR initiative, Parivartan, has implemented a diverse range of projects, including those focused on education, to empower communities. The Focused Development Program (FDP), a core component of Parivartan, collaborates with implementing partners to address the specific needs of the multiple stakeholders across both urban and rural geographies, magnifying its efforts in the most deprived regions.

2.1 About Palghar District

Nestled between the Arabian Sea and the Sahyadri Mountains, Palghar is Maharashtra's 36th district¹. Known for its scenic beauty, the region is also defined by its stark disparities and

¹ <https://palghar.gov.in/en/about-district/>

challenges. Possessing a mere 4% of the state's health dispensaries, 2% of its primary health centers, and 2% of the roads, Palghar remains an underserved district, especially for its tribal communities².

Palghar's tribal geographies, including Jawhar, Vikramgad, Dahanu, and Mokhada, are marked by a high proportion of Scheduled Tribe (ST) populations—91.64%, 91.82%, 69.11%, and 92.08%, respectively³. These communities are heavily reliant on seasonal migration for livelihoods, causing disruptions in children's education. Moreover, the district faces challenges like child marriage and low literacy rates among its tribal populations⁴.

2.2 Need for the Project

The COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21 created not only an unparalleled global public health crisis but also led to an acute education crisis, disrupting lives worldwide. In India, over 240 million school children faced prolonged school closures, threatening significant learning losses⁵. The education system in Palghar, much like several other districts in the country, was severely affected due to prolonged school closures.

The pandemic worsened what Jaime Saavedra, the World Bank's Global Director for Education, termed "learning poverty," threatening future productivity, earnings, and well-being for a generation of children⁶. For Palghar, the stakes were even higher. Seasonal migration patterns left many children without parental supervision for months, and schools were ill-equipped to address the educational void created by remote learning challenges. Additionally, Deepa Pawar's research highlights the prevalence of early marriages in tribal regions like Thane (of which Palghar is a part), often driven by poverty and cultural practices, which compound the problems posed by the pandemic⁷. Online education is also a distant dream for most families in Palghar's remote villages, as access to even basic electricity and internet are not guaranteed.

To address these challenges, the education system must reimagine teaching methods, blending home-based and in-school learning to ensure quality education and resilience against future disruptions.

2.3 About the Project

Operating between 2020-21 & 2022-23, the **Improving Learning Attainment Levels Through Edutainment (P0310)** project by the All India Institute of Local Self-Government (AIILSG), established 40 Shikshan Ranjan Kendras (SRKs) to address the educational needs of 2,000 children from 35 Zilla Parishad (ZP) schools across 22 villages in Palghar, Maharashtra.

The objectives of the project included:



Enhancing learning attainment levels among disadvantaged children

² https://mahades.maharashtra.gov.in/ESM1920/chapter/English/esm2324_e.pdf

³ Population as per Census 2011 – <https://palghar.gov.in/en/about-district/>

⁴ <https://samtafoundation.org/success-story-palghar/>

⁵ https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/DOSEL_COMPILATION_ON_COVID_ACTIVITIES.pdf

⁶ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/learning-losses-covid-19-school-closures-could-impoverish-whole-generation>

⁷ Pawar, Deepa. "From criminalised histories to rightful present—nomadic women demand equal rights to sexual and reproductive health." *Sexual and Reproductive Health Matters* 29.2 (2021): 253-267.



Strengthening teaching capacities in Zilla Parishad schools



Sensitizing multiple stakeholders about girl education



Boost school enrolment of adolescent girls and growth of health awareness among them



Promoting improved health and hygiene behaviors among students

Figure 1: Objectives of the Project

In order to attain the above stated objectives, the project undertook a plethora of activities like liaising with key education department officials and local authorities, undertaking capacity building of Shikshan Mitras (SMs) on developing teaching aids and tracking student progress, training Zilla Parishad school teachers to address educational challenges and adopt innovative strategies, focusing on improved language and numeracy skills of the children as espoused in the National Education Policy 2020, promoting greater parental involvement in child's education vis-à-vis participation in Parent-Teacher Meetings, inculcating the habit of reading in children through library promotions and finally, improved health within the community through COVID-19 awareness campaigns and establishment of health camps to promote vaccination.

All these activities, cumulatively, were designed to create a supportive environment for holistic child development and ensure sustained educational engagement in the target communities.

3. Objectives of Impact Assessment & Scope of Work

The overarching objective of the assignment is to conduct a systematic impact assessment of the project and to evaluate the efficacy, effectiveness of the project interventions, and sustainability of the project's outcomes.

The primary objectives of this impact study are:

1. To assess the educational outcomes for children in primary schools due to efforts of Shikshan Ranjan Kendras
2. To evaluate the improvement in Teachers' capacities owing to training modules and understanding level of community engagement in enhancing students' learning attainment and school enrolment with a focus on female students
3. To ascertain health and hygiene awareness among students stemming from the learnings at Shikshan Ranjan Kendras
4. To identify the best practices and improvement areas for scaling up the project

4. Approach And Methodology

4.1.1 Research Design

Design & Approach:

The present impact assessment employed a **retrospective pre-post design** for capturing the perceived changes resulting from HDFC's interventions. This approach, while subject to recall

bias, provides valuable insights into the perceived impact of the intervention by leveraging participant's memories of their pre-intervention conditions. Wherever possible the existing baseline and midline figures would be utilized to gauge the impact of the program and in case of absence of such figures, the concerned values would be computed using secondary sources and available program documents.

To enhance the reliability and depth of this design, a **mixed-methods approach**¹⁰ was also utilized. This convergent methodology will combine **quantitative** and **qualitative** data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project. Quantitative data will measure the extent of changes in key outcomes, while qualitative insights will delve into the reasons and mechanisms behind these changes, offering a richer understanding of the intervention's impact. Primary data will be collected through surveys, interviews, focus group discussions and classroom observations, while secondary data will be reviewed to contextualize findings and support the analysis.

Evaluation Framework:



Figure 2: OECD DAC Framework

Considering the objectives of the project and in synergy with the research design stated above, this assessment will be based on the **OECD-DAC framework**.⁸ The components of the proposed evaluation framework will be a guiding beacon in our conceptualization of areas of enquiry and key indicators, against which the impact of the project can be assessed.

The components of the proposed evaluation framework are –

1. **Relevance** – The extent to which the objectives of the development intervention are consistent with beneficiary requirements, state needs, institutional priorities, partners, and funding stakeholders, as well as mission coherence in achieving its objectives.
2. **Coherence** – The extent to which activities can converge with other programs/projects running the geography/sector. As per the RfP, the element of *convergence* stated in the assessment framework aligns closely with the coherence component of OECD DAC framework, ensuring continuity of the project's interventions owing to support from the wider ecosystem.
3. **Effectiveness** – The extent to which the development project's objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved considering their specificities (not just physical outputs but also high-level results; explaining factors determining achievements, including change of context; looking at other possible achievements). As per the RfP, the element of *replicability* stated in the assessment framework supplements the effectiveness of the program by highlighting the fidelity of activities undertaken as also indicating the

probable execution & extension of project across newer geographies (outside of target areas).

4. **Efficiency** – A measure of how economically resources/inputs are converted into results, with reference to project benchmarks (include project delays, overruns; technical issues)
5. **Sustainability** – The likely continuation of net benefits from a development intervention beyond the phase of funding support. It also includes an assessment of the likelihood that actual and anticipated results will be resilient to risks beyond the mission activities.
6. **Impact** – The changes that have occurred or are expected to occur in the lives of the target beneficiaries (direct and indirect). Within the component of Impact, Sambodhi will also study the aspect of *Equity* to discern the extent to which the benefits of the project were equally distributed among the members, especially from the marginalized communities.

Methodology:

As stated before, a convergent methodological approach combined with **quantitative** and **qualitative** data collection to provide a comprehensive understanding of the project.

In quantitative analysis, to measure the students' educational attainment in the primary classes, particularly grades 4th & 5th, emphasis will be given to established **assessment tools used in baseline**. To gain a granular understanding of the impact of the program, a **short survey** will also be administered. Furthermore, to substantiate our findings, secondary documents such as school report cards will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive estimation of students' abilities.

In the case of teachers, a **self-reported assessment tool** would be administered to gauge the effectiveness of their pedagogy. Emphasis would be laid upon motivation in education settings, ability to put trainings to practice, incorporation of innovative mechanisms in imparting lessons and execution of Competency-based Learning framework in classrooms. Moreover, classroom observations will also be undertaken to holistically capture teaching outcomes.

In the aforementioned exercises, Sambodhi will attempt to ensure a balanced gender ratio in student and teacher coverage.

For the qualitative analysis, **Semi-Structured Interviews, Key informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** will be conducted with various stakeholders to understand the various aspects of project activities both targeted and achieved, and the challenges/obstacles faced during the process of implementation. These would include, teachers who have undergone training, school leadership (Headmasters/Principals), Shiksha Ranjan Kendras, education officers & government stakeholders, parents as well as program implementation & management partners.

4.1.2 Study Tools and Sampling Strategy

Quantitative Sample

In line with the objectives of the study and the expected outcomes of the project, the following method was used to estimate the sample size for the evaluation.

Using a two sample proportion formula, at a 95% confidence level and 80% power, together with a design effect of 1.5, the sample size came to be 222 across the project area. We took approximately 10% extra sample to account for the potential loss of sample due to non-responsiveness and other reasons like drop outs, migration, refusal among others. As a result, a sample of 240 was considered sufficient to provide representative estimates at the project level.

Considering that a key objective of the project was to focus on teachers' competency and their ability to impart improved pedagogy, incorporating elements of NEP and innovative delivery, we also assessed the capacities of 48 teachers, who represent the total teacher population.

This has been further detailed out in the in the table below:

Project 2: Improving learning attainment levels through edutainment (P0310)							
District (Palghar)	Blocks	Total Shiksha Ranjan Kendras across blocks	Students from each SRK (Grade 4 & Grade 5)	Total Students	Total Schools (Primary Only)	Teachers from each school	Total Teachers
1	4	20	12	240	16	3	48

Table 1: Quantitative Sampling Frame

To measure the learning outcomes, the representative sample of 240 students was assessed on the Project (Self-Assessed Planning) tool used in baseline. Furthermore, to determine the impact of the project, students' were surveyed through a short questionnaire.

As a consequence of discussions and deliberations with key partners, it was decided that the data collection of students would take place at Shikshan Ranjan Kendras (SRKs) to capture the impact of the project as also allow the enumerators to focus towards conducting teacher-centric surveys in schools.

In the case of teachers, a self-reported tool was employed to measure their motivation levels and effectiveness in classrooms.

As a result, across the 16 Primary schools, on average, we surveyed 3 teachers, totaling 48 teachers.

In a similar vein, across each of the 20 SRKs, we surveyed 12 students, 6 each from Grade IV and Grade V, cumulatively covering 240 students.

Qualitative Sample

For the qualitative analysis, Semi-Structured Interviews, Key informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted with multiple stakeholders to understand the various aspects of project activities both targeted and achieved, and the challenges/obstacles faced during the process of implementation.

An indicative list of stakeholder categories to be covered during primary research is provided in the table below:

Project 2: Improving learning attainment levels through edutainment (P0310)		
Stakeholder	Size	Method
Shikshan Mitras at Shikshan Ranjan Kendras (SRK) (random selection of 5 per block)	20	Semi-Structured Interviews
Teachers (random selection of 3 per block; to be covered in schools)	12	KIIs

Headmasters (random selection of 3 per block; to be covered in schools)	12	KIIs
Parents (1 per block; to be conducted at SRKs)	4	FGDs
Education Officers* ⁸ (1 in every alternate block)	2	KIIs
Implementing Partners	4	KIIs
Senior Management HDFC CSR	1	KIIs
Total	55	

Table 2: Qualitative Sampling Frame

5. Demographic Profile of Respondents

5.1 Demographic Profile of Students

Among the surveyed students, a fraction less than half were enrolled in Grade 4, while the remaining 51% were in Grade 5. Furthermore, barring one child, the rest of the 243 students (~100%) fell within the age range of 9 to 11 years, which corresponds closely to the typical age group for these grades as outlined under the NIPUN Bharat program^{9 10 11}.

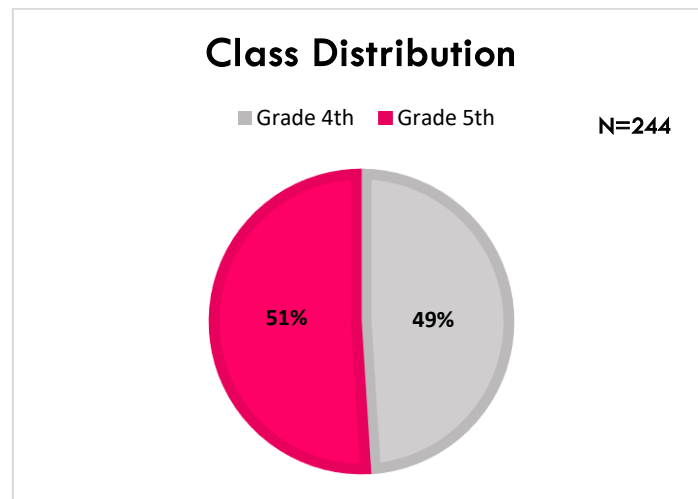


Figure 3: Class Distribution of Students

⁸ Despite informing them well in advance, through the implementing partner agency, interviews with the concerned Education Officers could not be carried out, owing to their schedules and in some cases transfers, which did not permit them to share their vies and perspectives with our enumerators

⁹ <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/nipun-bharat>

¹⁰ <https://static.pib.gov.in/WriteReadData/specificdocs/documents/2021/jul/doc20217531.pdf>

¹¹ <https://dpsdurgapur.com/admissions/age-criteria/>

In terms of geographical coverage, approximately three-fifth (149 students) of the student beneficiaries belonged to Jawhar block on account of it being the largest and having the maximum concentration of schools & Shiksha Ranjan Kendras. Mokhada block comprised of 46 students whereas Vikramgad and Dahanu blocks consisted of 36 and 13 students beneficiaries respectively.

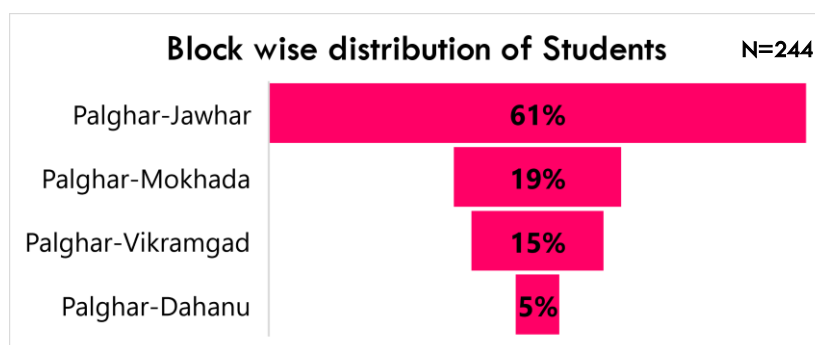


Figure 4: Block wise distribution of students

Furthermore, the students surveyed were approximately equally divided between the two genders, with 52% of the respondents being girls and the remaining 48% being boys.

Close to three-fourths of the students' mothers had attained some level of education, as reflected in the data below. Among them, 35% had attended Primary School, while 32% had studied up to Class 10. An additional 6% had completed their entire schooling education, and 1% were reported to be graduates. However, approximately a fourth of the students indicated that their mothers had never received any formal schooling.

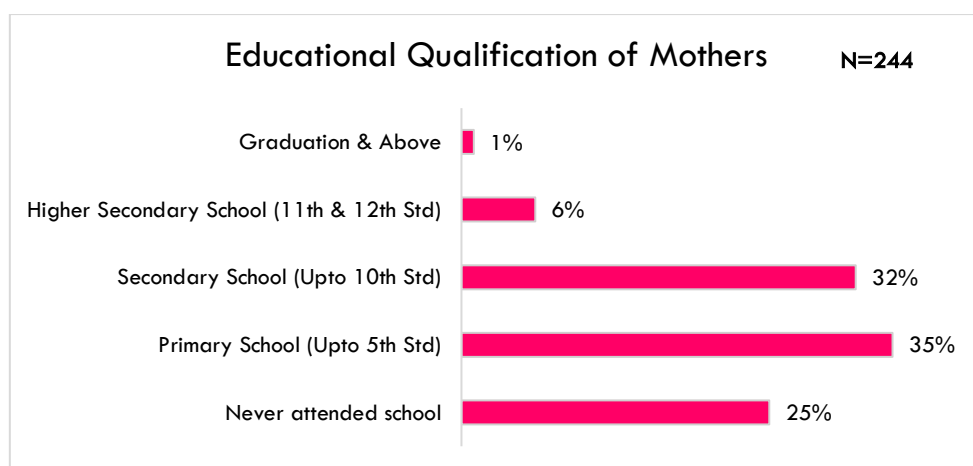


Figure 5: Educational Qualification of Mothers as reported by students

With respect to the distribution of occupation, the graph below highlights that a majority of mothers are engaged in agriculture related tasks (76%) as per the understanding of their sons and daughters covered during the survey, with fewer involved in solely household oriented activities, wage-based or salaried jobs.

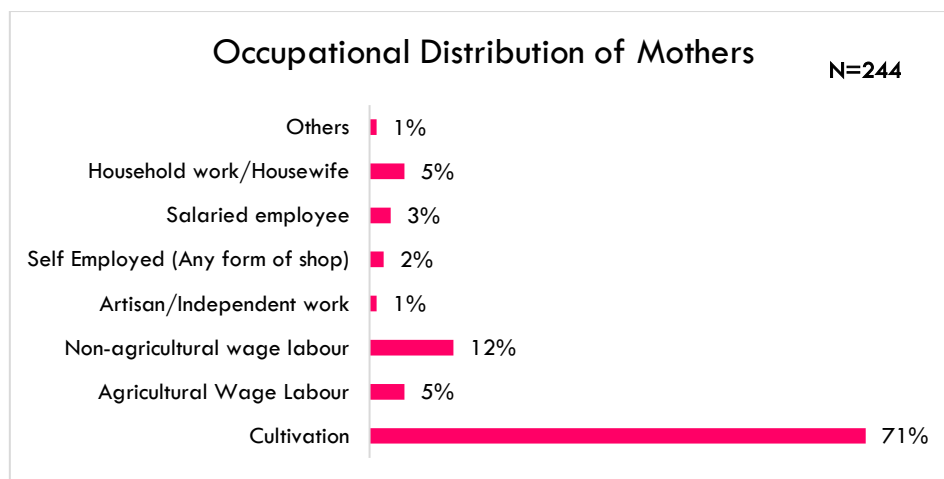


Figure 6: Occupational Distribution of Mothers as reported by students

The pie chart below illustrates the educational qualifications of fathers as reported by the student beneficiaries. Marginally less than one-fifth (17%) reported that their fathers had never attended school.

A majority of students (38%) stated that their fathers had completed secondary school (up to 10th standard). Approximately, a fourth of the respondents (24%) reported their father's obtaining basic education till the primary level (upto 5th standard), while 13% had successfully completed their formal schooling education (11th and 12th standard). Only 7% of fathers possessed degrees signalling graduate or post-graduate status.

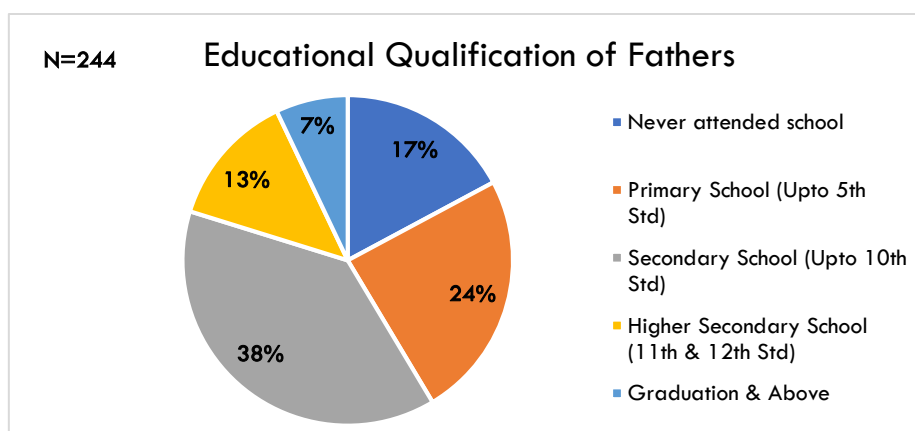


Figure 7: Educational Qualification of Fathers as reported by students

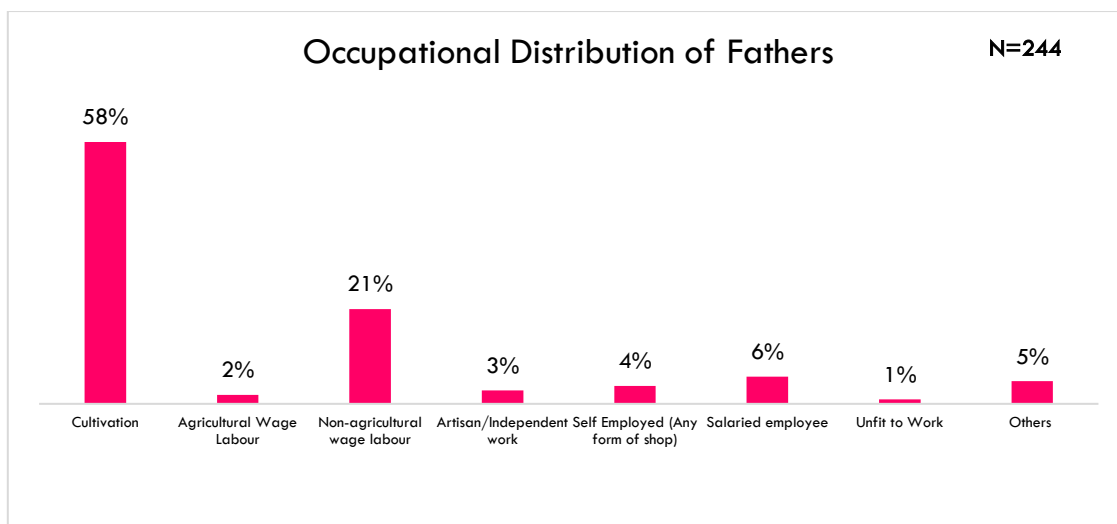


Figure 8: Occupational Distribution of Fathers as reported by students

The above chart elucidates the occupational distribution of fathers, highlighting that a majority (58%) are engaged in cultivation. This is followed by 21% involved in artisan or independent work, while smaller proportions are distributed among salaried employees (6%), self-employed individuals (4%), and non-agricultural wage labor (3%). Marginal groups include agricultural wage laborers (2%), those deemed unfit to work (1%), and others (5%). Thus, the data highlights a strong reliance on non-agricultural wage labor, with smaller yet notable shares of self-employment, artisanal work, and cultivation.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Teachers

The demographic profile of teachers surveyed under the **Improving Learning Attainment Levels Through Edutainment** project provides a clear and concise understanding of the primary beneficiaries.

In terms of **gender**, **77%** of the respondents are male, while **23%** are female. This indicates a resulting in a sample heavily skewed towards male teachers.

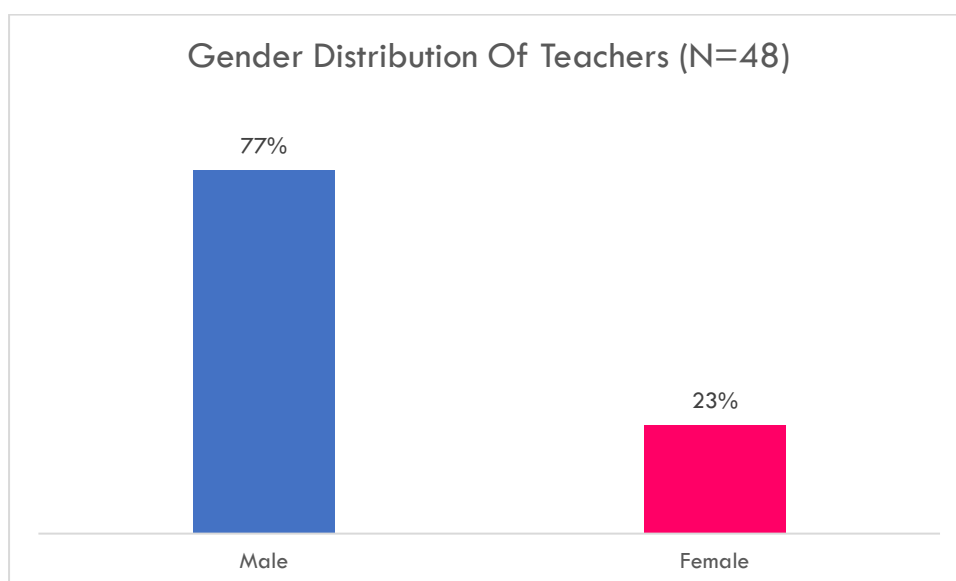


Figure 9: Gender distribution of teachers

For **religion**, **98%** of the respondents identified as Hindu while the remaining 2% were Muslims, reflecting the dominant religious demographic in the regions surveyed.

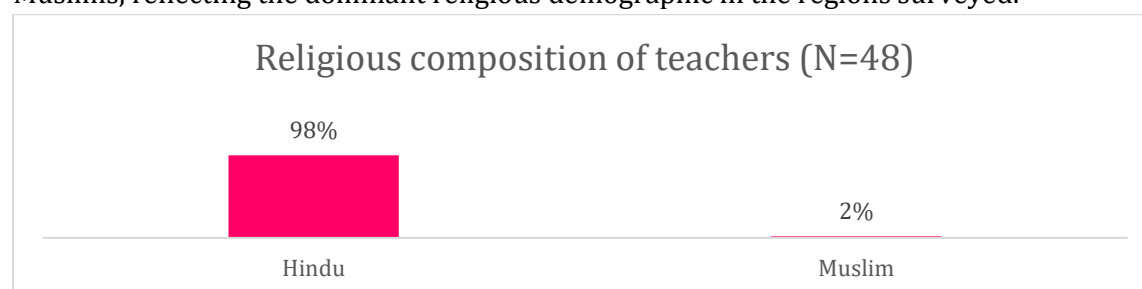


Figure 10: Religious composition of teachers

For **educational qualifications**, a significant portion of teachers are highly educated. **46%** hold postgraduate degrees, while **50%** are graduates. Additionally, **4%** have achieved a PhD or higher degree, indicating advanced academic credentials.

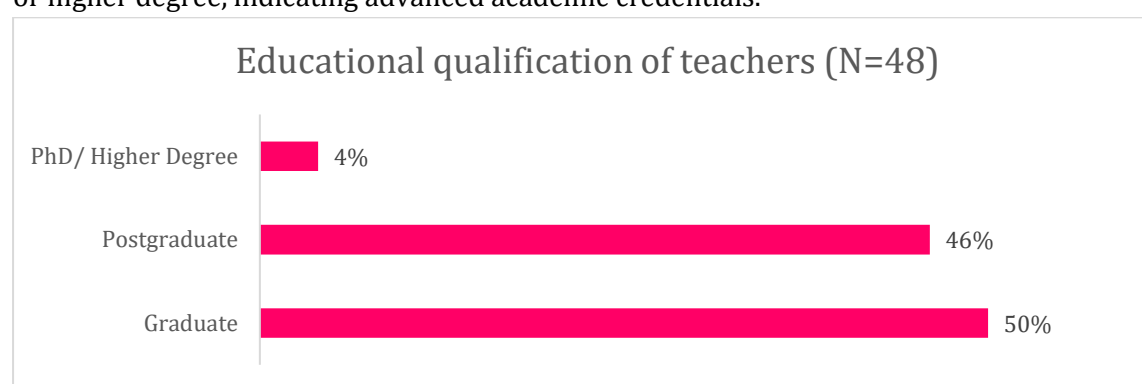


Figure 11: Educational qualification of teachers

6 Key Findings

6.1 Students' Perspectives on Project Interventions

A tailored survey was administered to the students to gather their perspectives on the primary objectives of the project and to assess both the scope and nature of its impact on the intended beneficiaries. The objectives of the initiative, pertaining to students, centred around:

- Enhanced learning outcomes and academic attainment levels among disadvantaged children through access to quality education and improved pedagogy
- Raising awareness and sensitization about the significance of girls' education
- Promoting better health and hygiene practices among students, instilling positive behavioral changes that contribute to their overall well-being and long-term development.

The findings from our analysis are summarized in the subsequent sections.

6.1.1 Perception & Awareness towards Academics

During the survey, 71% of the students surveyed stated that they have an older sibling. Flowing from this, as depicted in the chart below, 68% of the respondents sought their help in their studies. Additionally, the education of parents played a key role in 56% beneficiaries approaching

them for assistance in their studies alongside 44% and 12% seeking the support of Shikhan Mitras and friends, respectively, to learn better.

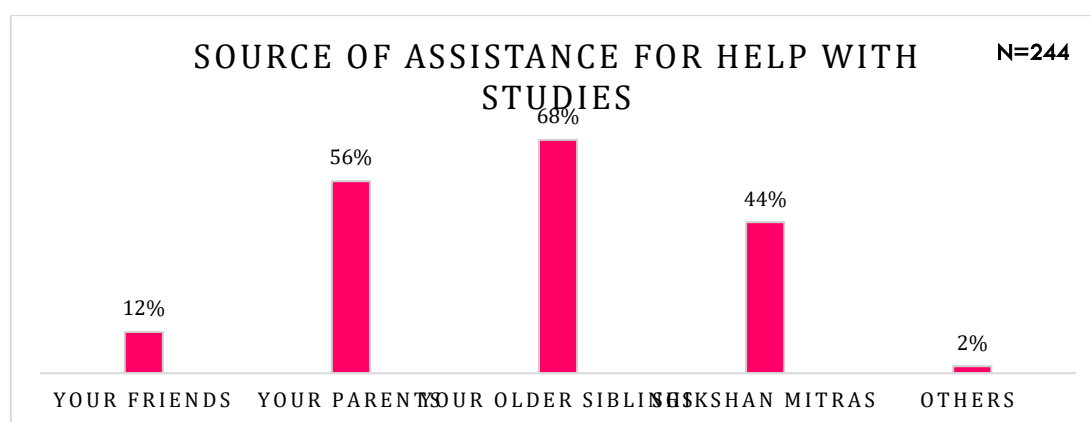


Figure 12: Students' approach to seeking help with academics

Remarkably, despite being of such a young age, **94% (N=229)** of the respondents believed that the Covid-19 pandemic impacted their studies and could potentially have led to learning losses. Pratham Education Foundation, through a study, commented that due to sudden school closures, it is likely that the learning “loss” would be deeper than the usual “summer loss” normally recorded after school breaks in summer¹².

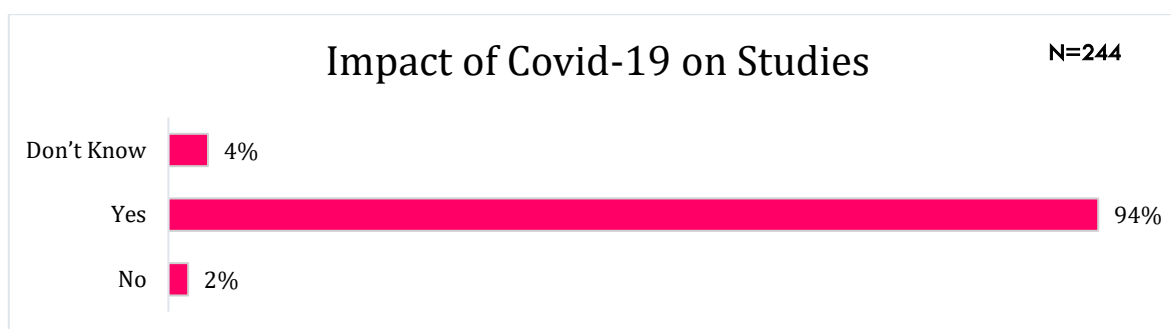


Figure 13: Students' awareness relating to impact of Covid-19 on studies

¹² Banerji, R., & Team, R. I. L. (2020). Learning “loss” and learning “gain” in primary school years: What do we know from India that can help us think forward in the COVID-19 crisis.

6.1.2 Role of Shikshan Mitras

About Shikshan Mitras

Shikshan Mitras are dedicated, conscientious individuals native to the villages where the program was implemented. These educated youth, holding degrees such as B.Ed, B.Sc, B.Com, M.Com, and D.T.Ed among others, shared a deep awareness of the challenges in their communities and a strong desire to bring about positive change. ALLSG's program provided them with the guidance, resources, and tools to effectively channel their ideas and efforts for impactful community development.

During the pandemic, they were required to visit the homes of beneficiary students and carry out educational exercises, academic tasks to keep the learning processes ongoing, enlighten them on healthy & hygienic behaviour as well as interact with the parents & guardians of these students and promote enlightened thinking among them with respect to their instrumental role in their children's education.

In the illustration below, a significant majority of the students (**98%**) stated that Shikshan Mitras helped them cover the academic syllabus or portions of it, which they felt would ideally have been taught in schools, had the schools not been closed. This also shows the instrumental role played by the Shikshan Mitras in preventing learning loss and fostering cognitive and intellectual development of the students.

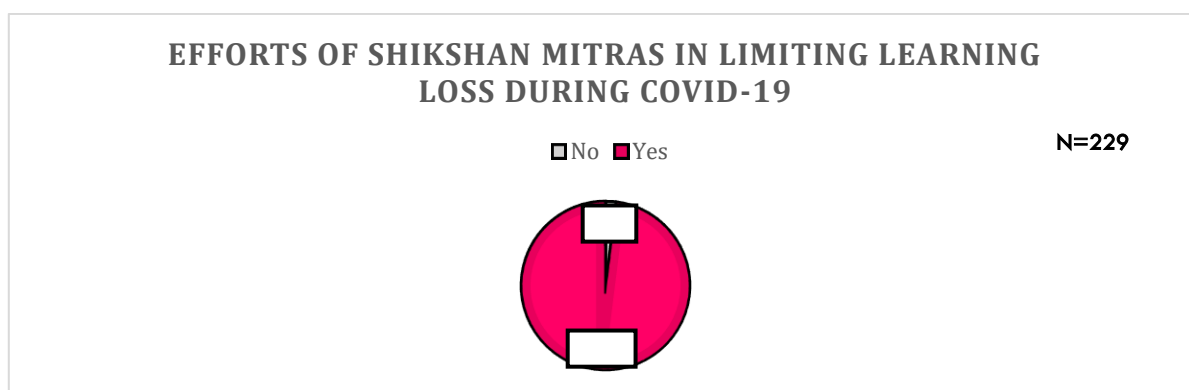


Figure 14: Efforts of Shikshan Mitras in limiting Learning Loss during Covid-19

Furthermore, almost all the respondents (**99%**) who were visited by the Shikshan Mitras, attested to understanding all that which was taught to them by the Shikshan Mitras. This once again reflects how central & critical the Shikshan Mitras were to the entire endeavour through their emphasis on imparting foundational and academic learnings, taught in an entertaining & engaging manner. Studies in Uttar Pradesh (India) have shown that a focussed effort on building foundational skills shows promising improvements even in a short period of time with learning gains that are reasonably durable¹³.

The following chart illustrates the frequency of visits made by Shikshan Mitras, who assist students in their learning process. Nearly half of the students (48%) reported that Shikshan Mitras visited their dwelling on a monthly basis, making it the most common frequency. About a third of the respondents stated that Shikshan Mitras visited them once every week. Additionally,

¹³ Banerji, R., & Team, R. I. L. (2020). Learning "loss" and learning "gain" in primary school years: What do we know from India that can help us think forward in the COVID-19 crisis.

a smaller portion of the beneficiaries, 13%, responded that the designated individuals visited them on a daily basis, reflecting a more intensive, customised approach.

This data indicates that the majority of Shikshan Mitras provide periodic support, with monthly and weekly visits dominating their schedules.

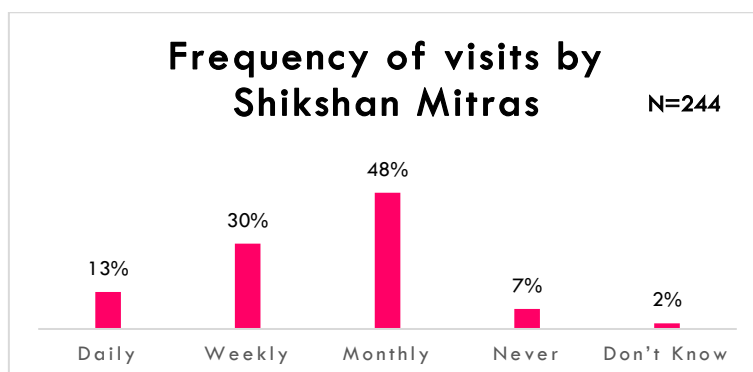


Figure 15: Frequency of visits by Shikshan Mitras

During the pandemic, the regular visits by Shikshan Mitras and the subsequent aggregation of students (post lifting off of restrictions) at the well-established Shikshan Ranjan Kendras (SRKs), appreciably enhanced students' learning and conceptual clarity. These initiatives not only strengthened their academic understanding but also improved their ability to comprehend classroom teachings more effectively. This sentiment was unanimously echoed by all respondents (N=244). Additionally, 98% of the students expressed their enthusiasm for the innovative pedagogy employed by the Shikshan Mitras, highlighting their active participation in collaborative activities (poem reading, story narration, craft workshops, library visits among others) at the SRKs, which fostered a deeper understanding of subjects and concepts.

The chart below lists out the activities that students frequently participate in.

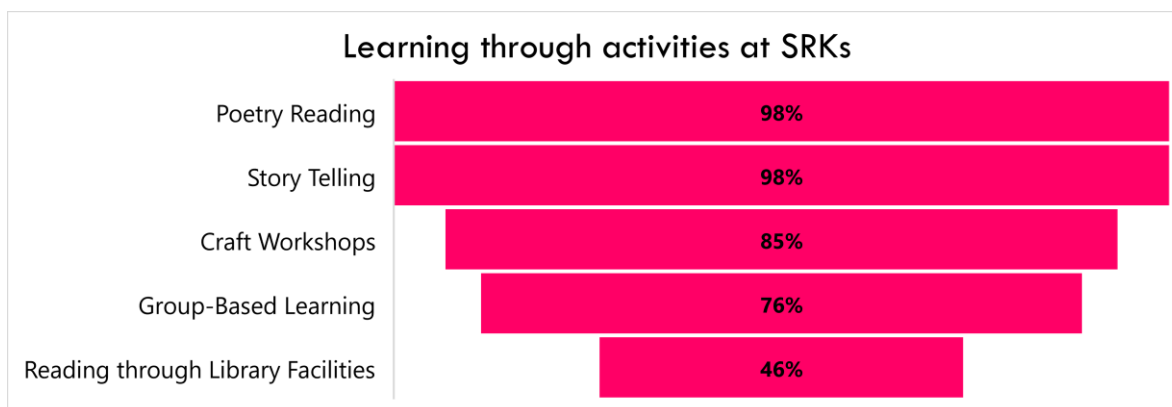


Figure 16: Activities promoting learning at SRKs



Figure 17: Specimen of learnings from Art classes

Through their participation, the students reported learning multiple skills and abilities which can propel their future learnings. These are depicted as in the below chart.

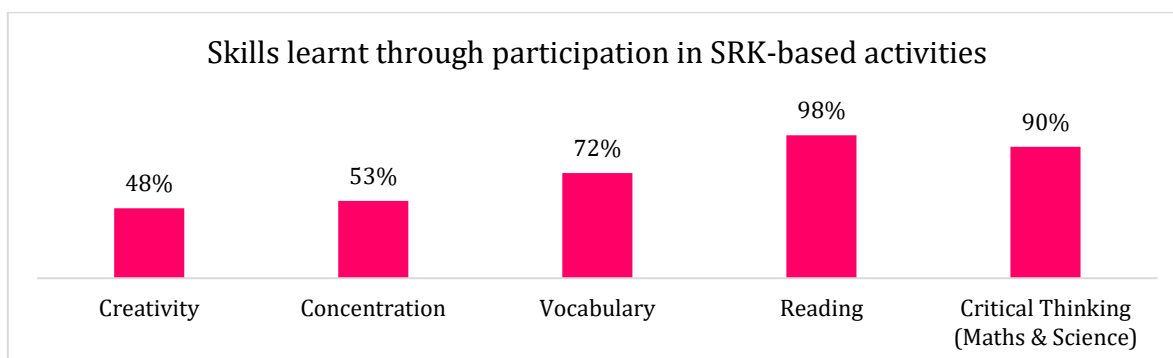


Figure 18: Skills learnt through participation in SRK-based activities

The AIILSG-designed curriculum, implemented through Shikshan Ranjan Kendras, emphasized celebrating national and regional festivals, creating a joyful and engaging learning environment. These celebrations taught students the significance of each festival, the values they embody, and fostered unity by promoting national sentiments. Notably, the Shikshan Ranjan Kendras celebrated local festivals like *Dahi Handi* and *Makar Sankranti*, as well as events honoring the contributions of subaltern figures such as *Savitribai Phule* and *Birsa Munda*, further enriching students' cultural and historical understanding.

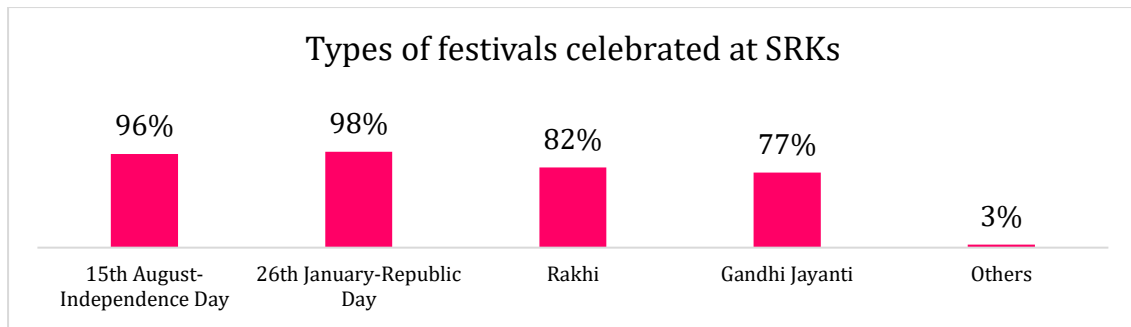


Figure 19: Types of festivals celebrated at SRKs

6.1.3 Promoting Reading Habits

A key component of AIILSG's efforts was encouraging and instilling reading habits among students. In pursuit of this endeavour, libraries were established in every Shikshan Ranjan Kendra, offering a diverse collection of books that encouraged exploration beyond academic subjects.

Such an effort reflected promising results with **82% (N=200)** of the beneficiaries visiting these libraries. 98% of those who visited these libraries stated observing a wide range of books which cultivated an interest in reading.

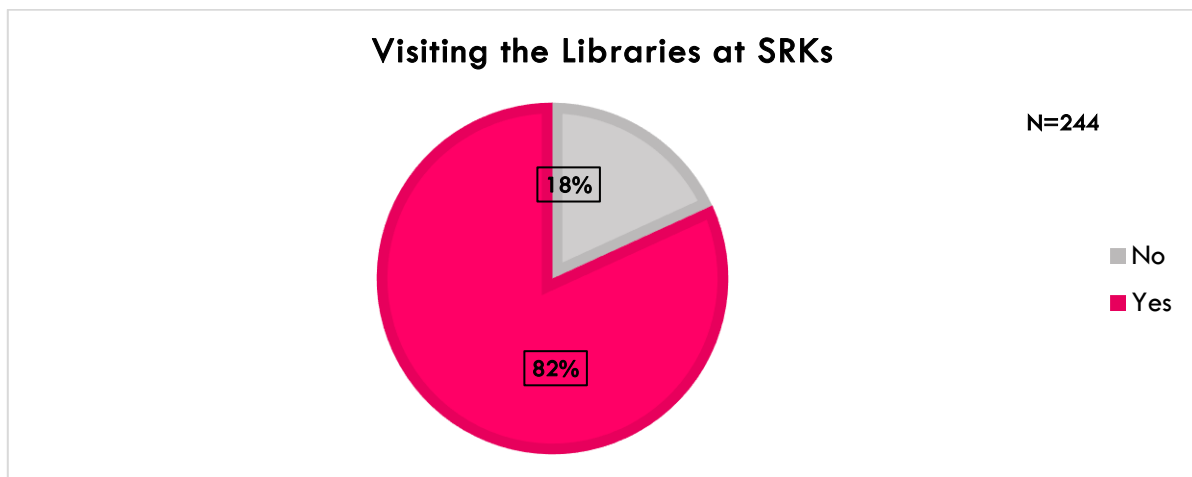


Figure 20: Students visiting the libraries at SRKs

Another feature that gave a fillip to the habit of reading was the presence of a dedicated & demarcated space within the library for the students to read. 91% of the respondents who visited the libraries stated that these libraries housed a separate 'reading corner' which promoted improved reading habits.

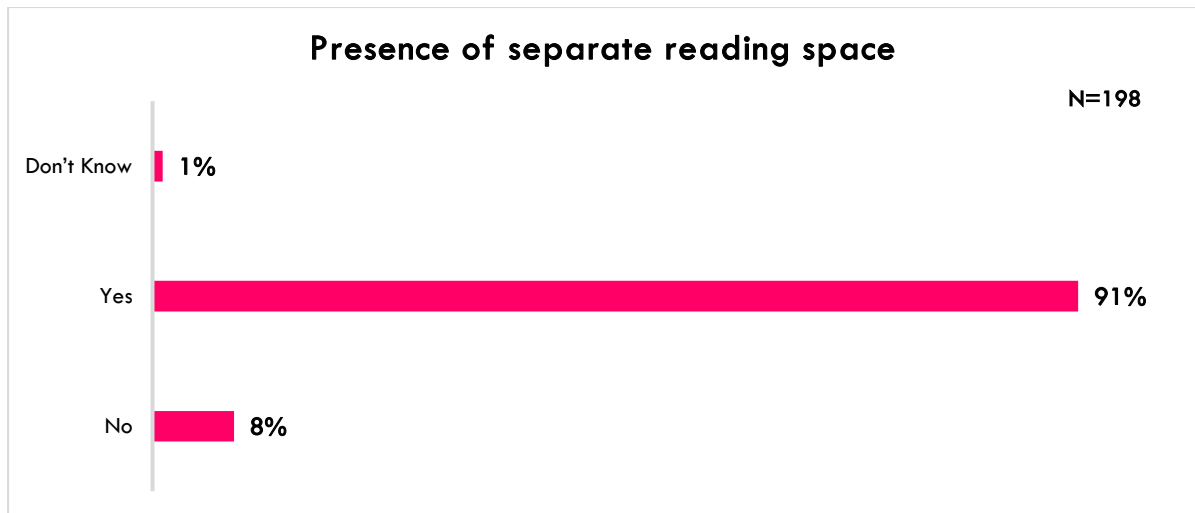


Figure 21: Presence of dedicated reading space fostering reading habit

6.1.4 Sense of Hygiene & WASH Practices

A central focus of the project was to instil strong health and hygiene practices among students. This emphasis became particularly critical in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which underscored the importance of such measures in safeguarding public health.

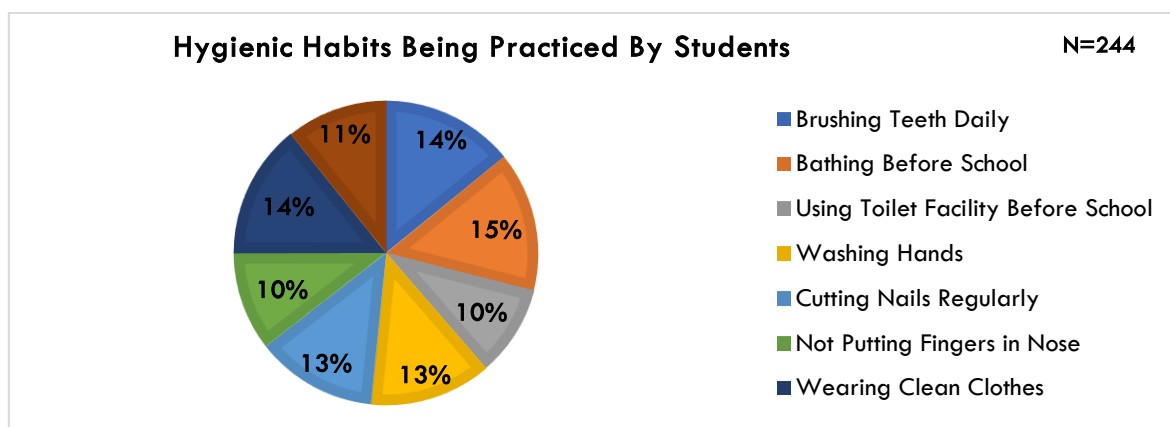


Figure 22: Distribution of Hygienic practices followed by students

An encouraging finding was the fact that all the students (100%) had not only been taught about the above practices but also reported to following them regularly.

6.1.5 Learning Levels of Students

To assess the improvement in the learnings of students, AIILSG had curated a Self-Assessment Planning (SAP) tool. This tool focussed on the Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) of students as well as grade relevant learnings. It comprised of multiple exercises associated with each of the three components – Reading, Writing & Numeracy. The tool aimed at instilling critical and fundamental conceptual learnings related to Reading, Writing & Numeracy, across grades and learning levels.

Sambodhi, during the Impact Assessment, designed an adapted version of the tool to capture grade appropriate learnings and concepts for Grades IV & V. There were 4 exercises each for Reading & Writing for Grades IV & V, followed by 8 and 7 Numeracy centric exercises, respectively. The scoring pattern was the same as that followed by AILSG^{*14}.

The results of the following are presented as below:

Reading Assessment – Grade IV (N=119)				
S. No	Exercise	Red Level	Yellow Level	Green Level
1	Story reading (L-1)	23%	46%	31%
2	Reading a piece of Information (L-3)	25%	45%	30%
3	Reading a news passage (L-7)	30%	46%	24%
4	Read the sentences and identify the nouns (L-5)	12%	19%	69%
Reading Assessment – Grade V (N=125)				
1	Describing a Fun Game (L-1)	4%	57%	39%
2	Reading the Passage (L-6)	22%	38%	41%
3	Reading sayings of Marathi Saints (L-7)	24%	38%	38%
4	Adjective Identification (L-5)	23%	32%	45%

Table 3: Distribution of students for Reading Assessment

The assessment exercises for Grades IV and V encompassed levels 1 through 7, reflecting a progression in complexity. Notably, students in both grades demonstrated commendable performance, even at higher levels. For instance, Grade IV students excelled in tasks such as identifying nouns (69%), while fifth graders showed proficiency in reading texts about Marathi saints (38%).

Going ahead, introducing students to newspapers and informational pamphlets can enhance their reading comprehension and familiarity with public notices. Exposure to varied texts will not only broaden their understanding but also improve their ability to process different writing styles and content.

Similarly, encouraging activities that stimulate imagination can significantly contribute to cognitive development. Placing a concerted thrust on imagination, ability to recall and thereafter articulate one's thoughts can lead to development of lateral thinking and improved problem-solving skills.

¹⁴ Please refer to the Annexure for more details on the different learning levels and the design of the tool.

Writing Assessment – Grade IV (N=119)				
S. No	Exercise	Red Level	Yellow Level	Green Level
1	Writing Pronouns in Sentences (L-2)	29%	17%	54%
2	Writing Plurals of Words (L-2)	8%	20%	71%
3	Writing Collective Nouns (L-2)	12%	33%	55%
4	Creating Proverbs Based on Words (L-6)	28%	32%	40%
Writing Assessment – Grade IV (N=125)				
1	Writing Tenses in Sentences (L-1)	23%	46%	31%
2	Identifying Grains and Pulses (Crossword) (L-3)	25%	45%	30%
3	Adding Appropriate Punctuation (L-4)	12%	19%	69%
4	Rewriting a poem in one's own words (L-7)	30%	46%	24%

Table 4: Distribution of students for Writing Assessment

The writing exercises for Grades IV and V spanned levels 1 through 7, indicating increasing complexity. Students in both grades performed admirably, even at advanced levels. A majority of the students of Grade IV (40%) must be appreciated for recalling prior and concurrent lessons, learnt either in classrooms and elsewhere, and applying appropriate proverbs in their writing. Similarly, Grade V students (69%) demonstrated a clear understanding of intended messages by using correct punctuation in sentences.

For the future, enhancing creativity, fostering lateral thinking, and improving articulation in Grade V students are pivotal for their cognitive development and ability to tackle complex tasks such as rewriting poems or stories in their own words.

Numeracy Assessment – Grade IV (N=119)				
S. No	Exercise	Red Indicator	Yellow Indicator	Green Indicator
1	Writing Three-Digit Numbers	7%	8%	86%
2	Solving Division	7%	11%	82%
3	Solving Multiplication	16%	34%	50%
4	Subtracting 5-Digit Numbers	24%	32%	46%
5	Problems related to Coins/Notes	25%	29%	45%
6	Identifying Fractions	3%	13%	84%
7	Writing Fractions from Figures	7%	30%	63%
8	Identify the missing pattern	16%	18%	66%
Numeracy Assessment – Grade V (N=125)				

1	Drawing figures depicting angles	25%	35%	39%
2	Identifying the Time	13%	26%	62%
3	Measurement statements	43%	35%	22%
4	Writing Roman Numerals	18%	40%	42%
5	Labelling parts of circle	25%	45%	30%
6	Decimals	13%	27%	60%
7	Identifying the missing number	63%	25%	12%

Table 5: Distribution of students for Numeracy Assessment

With respect to Numeracy Assessment, the students in Grade IV gave a good demonstration of their abilities and critical thinking. A substantial majority adeptly solved arithmetic problems, including subtraction, multiplication, and division. Their numeracy competence was further demonstrated through successful resolution of fraction related questions and word problems involving currency, covering both coins and notes.

In the 5th grade, there has been a noticeable decline in student performance, indicating challenges in managing more advanced and complex material. A significant number of students are currently '*caught in the middle*' – or at an intermediate proficiency level, suggesting they are at a critical juncture where focused support could elevate them to advanced proficiency. To achieve this, it is essential for fifth-grade educators to prioritize enhancing students' understanding of numerical concepts and problem-solving skills.



Figure 23: SAP Tool assessment exercise underway

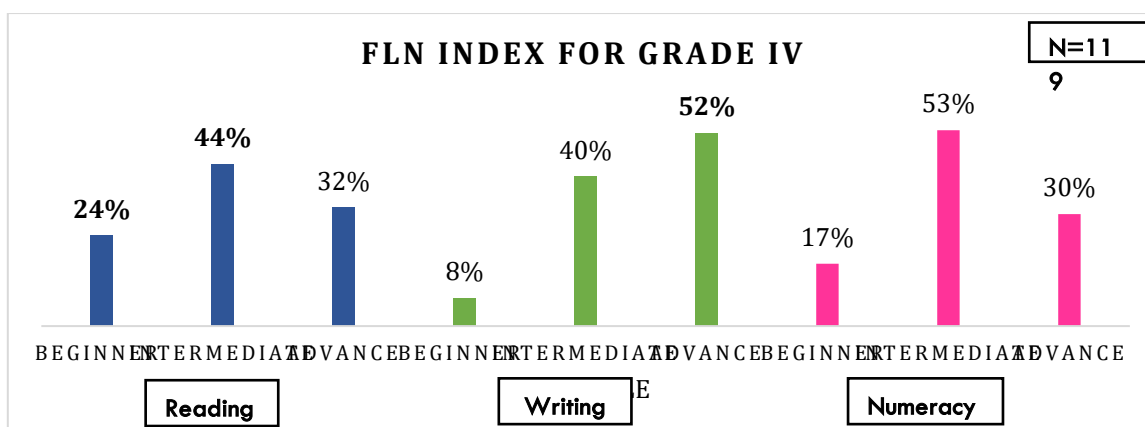


Figure 24: FLN Index for Grade IV

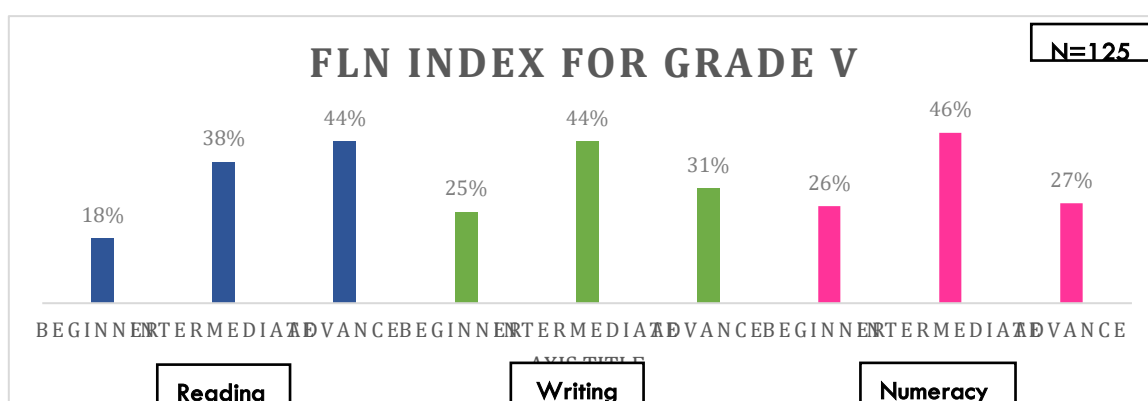


Figure 25: FLN Index for Grade V

The Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) Index prepared by Sambodhi evaluates the proficiency of children in essential reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.

FLN is a key component of the program's objective to ensure a sound bedrock to build the present competencies of students and shape their future learnings. This component has gained increased focus ever since the emergence of the National Education Policy 2020 and the project strives to align its goals with the vision of the policy. The Ministry of Education, Government of India, has launched the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN Bharat) Mission, aiming to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy by 2026-27.

The key results emerging from the above indices are as follows:

- In terms of the **learning abilities** across the components of Reading, Writing & Numeracy in the Self-Assessment Planning (SAP) tool – progressing between Grade IV and Grade V – **students performed ably on the parameter of Reading; registering a 12% growth** despite the enhanced complexity of the texts.
- With respect to **Numeracy**, **53% and 46%** of the students in Grade IV and Grade V respectively, were located in the **"Intermediate category"**. These students are at a **pivotal point in their learning** where targeted and tailored interventions could help them reach the Advanced level.

c) A significant proportion of **Grade IV (40%) and Grade V (44%) students** are categorized as **"Intermediate" in writing abilities**. These students are encountering challenges with the increased complexity of writing exercises, transitioning from **objective questions in Grade IV to assessments that now incorporate subjectivity**. Addressing their needs through tailored strategies that enhance **creativity**, promote **deeper learning**, and foster **independent problem-solving** could be the means to improving their ability to express themselves through written words.

It is important that while initiatives such as NIPUN Bharat, are aiming to address the foundational learning gaps among students, concurrently, adaptive strategies and enhancing community involvement, are essential to ensure that all children acquire the foundational skills necessary for their educational and personal development.

6.2 Training Participation and Components

The data on training participation under the **project** highlights strong engagement among the teachers, with **90%** of respondents having attended the sessions. This high participation rate demonstrates the project's success in reaching its primary stakeholders and providing them with valuable capacity-building opportunities. Only a small fraction of teachers, about **10%**, reported not attending any training sessions, indicating minimal gaps in outreach and program implementation.

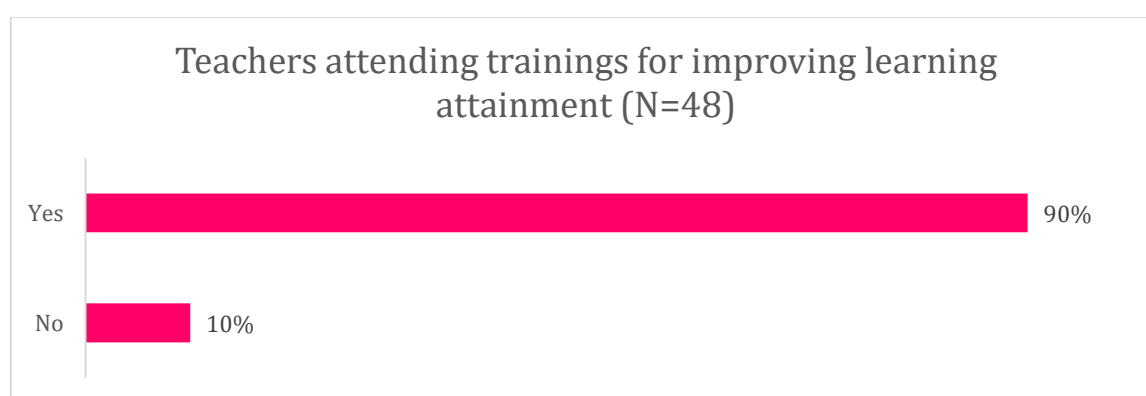


Figure 26: Teachers attending training for improving learning attainment

6.2.1 Learnings from Training Applied

Learnings from Training Applied data provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of the training program and its application by participants. The **Teaching Methods** learning was the most universally applied, with 100% of cases reporting its use, emphasizing its foundational importance in the participants' practice. This suggests that the training's core focus on improving teaching strategies resonated strongly with the educators. Additionally, **Making the Curriculum More Relevant for Children** and **Use of Innovative Materials** were applied by 93% and 91% of respondents, respectively, highlighting that tailoring content to the specific needs of students and incorporating creative teaching materials are key priorities for participants.

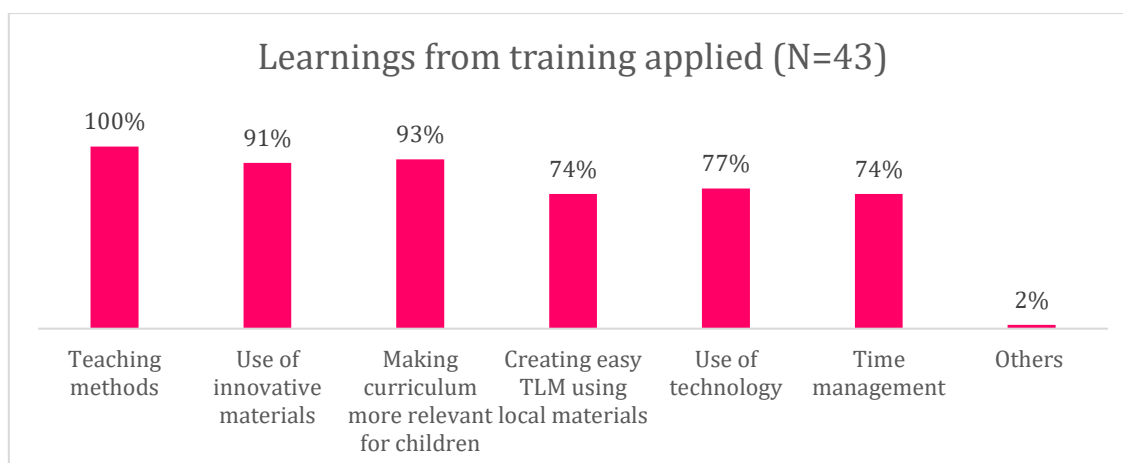


Figure 27: Learnings from the training applied

The adoption of **Creating Easy TLM Using Local Materials** and **Time Management** was reported by 74% of respondents, indicating that while these areas were applied, there may still be challenges or opportunities for deeper focus. This could suggest the need for further support in effectively utilizing local resources and managing classroom time efficiently, particularly in more complex or resource-constrained environments.

While **Technology Use** was implemented by 77% of participants, its slightly lower adoption rate compared to other learnings points to potential barriers such as limited access to technology or a lack of confidence in its use. This could be an area where future training programs can offer more targeted resources or technical support to help educators fully integrate technology into their teaching methods.

In conclusion, while the training was largely successful in enhancing participants' teaching practices, there are opportunities to focus on specific areas like **time management**, **local resource utilization**, and **technology integration**. Addressing these areas could further improve the overall impact of future training initiatives, ensuring that educators are equipped with the tools they need to succeed in dynamic classroom environments.

6.2.2 Application of Learnings in the Teaching Methods

The analysis of the responses reveals a very positive outcome from the training program. **98%** of participants reported being able to apply the learnings from the training to their teaching, suggesting that the training was both relevant and practical for educators in their teaching environments. Only **2%** were unable to apply the learnings, which could indicate specific challenges or unique circumstances faced by a very small group, but this is a negligible proportion in the context of the overall positive response.

98% of teachers believe that using the methods learned in the training makes it easier for children to understand the content. This strong majority indicates that the teaching strategies and techniques introduced in the training are perceived as highly effective in enhancing students' comprehension and learning experience. The **2%** who disagreed may represent educators who face specific challenges in applying these methods, such as constraints in resources, class size, or other contextual factors. However, the overwhelming positive response suggests that the methods are widely seen as beneficial in improving student understanding, reinforcing the overall effectiveness of the training program.

Teachers noted that the training led to a significant shift in teaching methods, transitioning from a traditional teacher-centered approach to a more student-centered model. This shift placed greater emphasis on student involvement and activity-based learning. Additionally, the training equipped teachers with practical techniques to enhance lesson delivery. One key method was the use of **group dynamics**. Teachers employed group activities not only to facilitate better classroom management but also to ensure that all students, regardless of ability, could actively participate. Furthermore, teachers extensively used a variety of materials, such as **flashcards**, **color-coded items**, and **shapes**, to break down complex concepts and make learning more interactive.

6.2.3 Effectiveness of the Training

100% of teachers confirmed that the training made their teaching more effective. This unanimous response highlights the strong impact the training had on improving teaching quality. It suggests that the participants not only gained valuable insights and skills but were also able to

“Students have become more confident in giving speeches and presenting to the class, which was facilitated by activities like puppet shows, songs, and role-playing” – Teacher, Mokhda

see tangible improvements in their teaching effectiveness as a result of applying what they learned.

The training was well-received overall, and teachers showed enthusiasm for the new teaching strategies, particularly the increased use of **materials**, **student-led activities**, and **practical exercises**. The impact of the program suggests that a **student-centered, interactive approach** has the potential to improve learning outcomes significantly.

6.3 Efficiency of the Intervention

Teachers shared that the training had a profound and positive impact on both their teaching methods and student outcomes. They highlighted how it introduced new **teaching strategies**, such as using **visual aids**, **real-life examples**, and incorporating **technology** like **computers and mobile devices** to make lessons more interactive and accessible. These tools helped increase **student engagement**, especially for those who struggled with traditional methods. Teachers also noticed a significant improvement in **student confidence**, with students becoming more willing to participate in classroom activities, such as **public speaking** and **cultural events**, something they had not done before. This shift in student behavior not only boosted their self-esteem but also improved their overall academic performance.

*Some teachers observed that students who had difficulty with foundational skills like **multiplication** were now able to solve problems confidently.*

Moreover, teachers appreciated that the training equipped them with **practical strategies** for addressing diverse learning needs and adapting to different student capabilities. While the training was deemed effective, some teachers suggested **more frequent sessions** or **extended durations** to allow for deeper exploration of these methods and to address ongoing challenges, such as **classroom management** and dealing with difficult student behaviors. Overall, the training was seen as a valuable tool for improving both teaching practices and student outcomes, but there was a clear call for continued support and development.

Parents emphasized the efficiency of the Shiksha Ranjan Education Center, particularly **in utilizing available resources**. They noted that the center maximizes the use of local materials and community participation, which enhances the program's cost-effectiveness and contextual relevance. However, parents also pointed out certain limitations, **particularly regarding physical infrastructure and the absence of advanced technological tools**. While teachers were praised for their dedication and resourcefulness, some parents expressed concerns about the lack of specialized training, particularly in child psychology and advanced pedagogy, which could impact the center's ability to meet the diverse needs of students, especially those facing learning challenges. On a positive note, parents acknowledged the **effective communication mechanisms** in place, such as regular Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), which help keep them informed about their children's progress and allow for timely adjustments to the program. Overall, while the program is considered efficient, parents suggested that enhancing teacher training and integrating more technological resources could further improve its effectiveness.

6.4 Relevance of the Intervention

The analysis of the responses highlights the strategies educators use to ensure that teaching is accessible and relatable for students. **Using local examples** and **explaining in the local language** were both employed by 100% of respondents, indicating that these methods are considered fundamental in making lessons more relevant and understandable to students. These approaches help bridge the gap between academic content and students' lived experiences, fostering better comprehension and engagement.

Additionally, **taking students for experiments in the field or outside the school** was used by 88% of respondents, suggesting that hands-on, experiential learning is also a key strategy. This method allows students to connect theory with practice, enhancing their learning by engaging them in real-world applications.

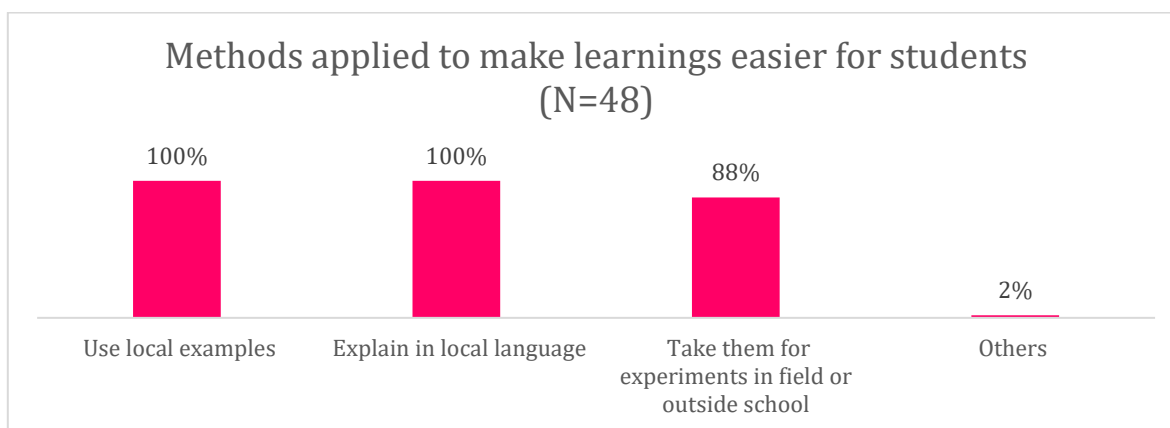


Figure 28: Methods applied to make learnings easier for students

The data reveals that teachers prioritize contextual, relatable, and experiential teaching methods, ensuring that students not only comprehend the material but also recognize its relevance to their daily lives. These strategies are essential in fostering an effective and engaging learning environment.

Teachers reported that the program has significantly **improved students' academic performance**, particularly in subjects such as mathematics and intelligence, which are critical for competitive exams like the Navodaya exams. A key strength of the program is **its integration of activity-based learning**, which simplifies complex subjects and enhances student engagement. This hands-on approach facilitates better understanding and retention by allowing students to grasp abstract concepts through practical application.

The program also fosters the **development of critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, equipping students with essential skills for future challenges**. Furthermore, the program's focus on holistic development, including personal hygiene and discipline, contributes to students' overall growth, promoting responsible and well-rounded individuals. The emphasis on community involvement has also strengthened parental engagement, leading to higher school attendance and greater support for education within the local community.

6.5 Convergence

6.5.1 Parent-Teacher Interaction

The analysis of the responses reveals valuable insights into the nature of Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings and parental engagement in education.

Firstly, regarding the frequency of these meetings, the majority of educators, **65%**, conduct PTA meetings **once a month**, demonstrating a strong commitment to regular communication with parents. **35%** conduct them **once every two months**, indicating that while communication remains a priority, it occurs less frequently for some educators.

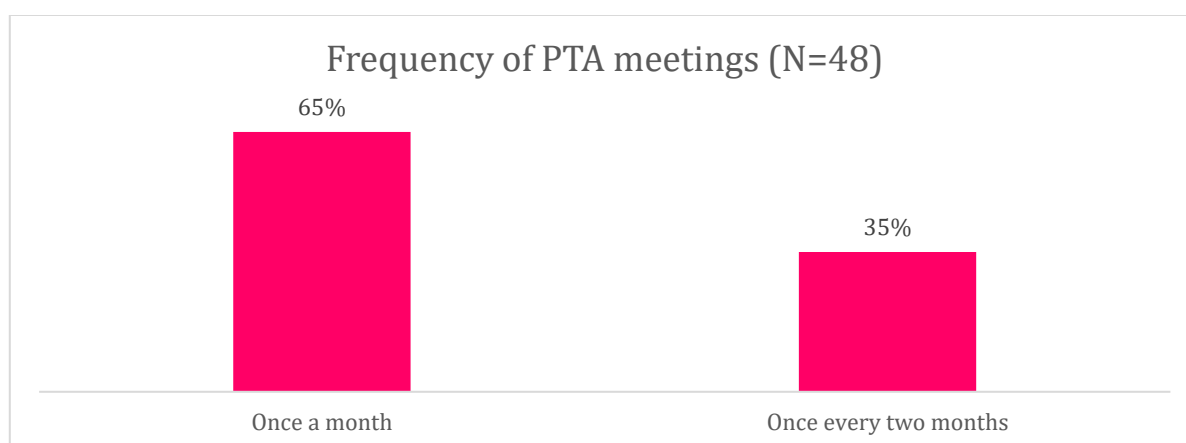


Figure 29: Frequency of PTA meetings

In terms of parental attendance, **52%** of respondents reported that **more than half** of the parents attend the PTMs, which shows moderate engagement. However, **42%** observed that **less than half** of parents attend, suggesting challenges in achieving full parental participation. Only **6%** of respondents reported **all parents** attending, highlighting the difficulties in achieving full parental involvement across all students.

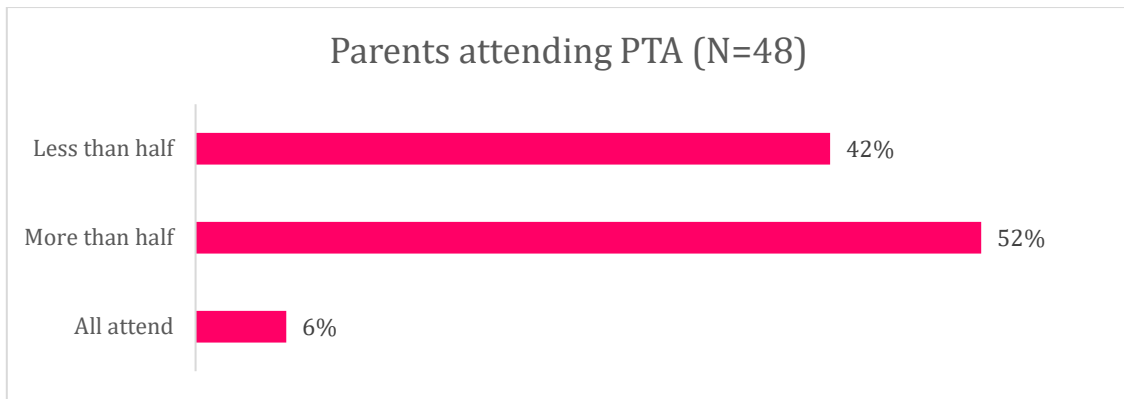


Figure 30: Parents attending PTA

During the PTMs, the key issues discussed with parents were primarily centered around student progress and school development. **100%** of educators discussed **attendance issues**, emphasizing its significance in the overall academic experience. **98%** of educators engaged with parents on **student learning behavior** and **homework completion**, indicating a strong focus on academic engagement and responsibility. Additionally, **92%** of educators included **school development plans** in their discussions, signaling an effort to involve parents in broader school improvement conversations.

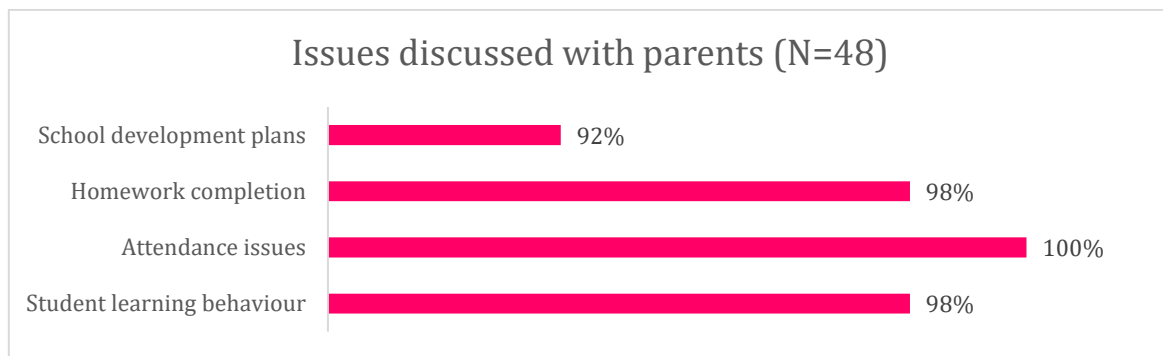


Figure 31: Issues discussed with parents during PTA

The data suggests that while educators are dedicated to frequent and meaningful communication with parents, there is a need for improvement in overall parental attendance at these meetings. The topics discussed reflect a holistic approach to student development, focusing on both academic performance and school-wide initiatives, fostering a collaborative environment to support students' success.

Teachers acknowledged the importance of Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) in fostering communication and collaboration between parents and educators, which ultimately benefits students' academic progress and personal development. They emphasized that these meetings provide a platform to share students' strengths and weaknesses, discuss strategies for improvement, and build a supportive relationship between home and school. Many teachers noted that after PTMs, they observed improvements in student **attendance** and **engagement**, with some students showing increased **self-confidence**, particularly in extracurricular activities like cultural programs and public speaking.

However, teachers also identified several challenges that limit the effectiveness of PTMs. One major concern was the **limited time** available during meetings, which often resulted in rushed

conversations and left some issues unaddressed. Additionally, **communication barriers** such as parents' **unavailability** due to work commitments, language differences, and **missing contact details** made it difficult to engage with all families. Teachers also pointed out that some parents held **unrealistic expectations**, which could lead to misunderstandings or frustration during discussions about their child's performance. Despite these challenges, many teachers expressed the need for more **flexible scheduling** to accommodate parents' busy schedules and ensure that all families could participate.

Parents emphasized the **active role of the community**, highlighting that the program has fostered **strong parental involvement** through **regular Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs)**, where they are updated on their children's progress and provided with guidance on how to support their children's learning at home. This continuous communication between parents and teachers helps maintain a **strong connection** between the **home and the education center**, ensuring that children receive consistent support from both fronts.

6.6 Short-term Changes

The data highlights a strong focus on both **traditional and continuous assessment methods** for evaluating student progress. The most prevalent method, **reviewing students' homework**, was used by 100% of respondents, underscoring the importance of homework as a key tool for gauging student performance. **Annual or semi-annual exams** were also widely utilized, with 96% of participants relying on them, emphasizing the significance of **formal, standardized assessments**.

In addition to these formal assessments, **94% of respondents employed small in-class quizzes**, reflecting a preference for **frequent, low-stakes evaluations** to monitor ongoing student understanding. **Classroom observations** were used by 92% of teachers, highlighting the value of **informal, qualitative methods** for tracking student behavior, engagement, and learning processes. Furthermore, **88% of participants conducted weekly tests**, showcasing the role of **regular assessments** in reinforcing learning and tracking progress consistently.

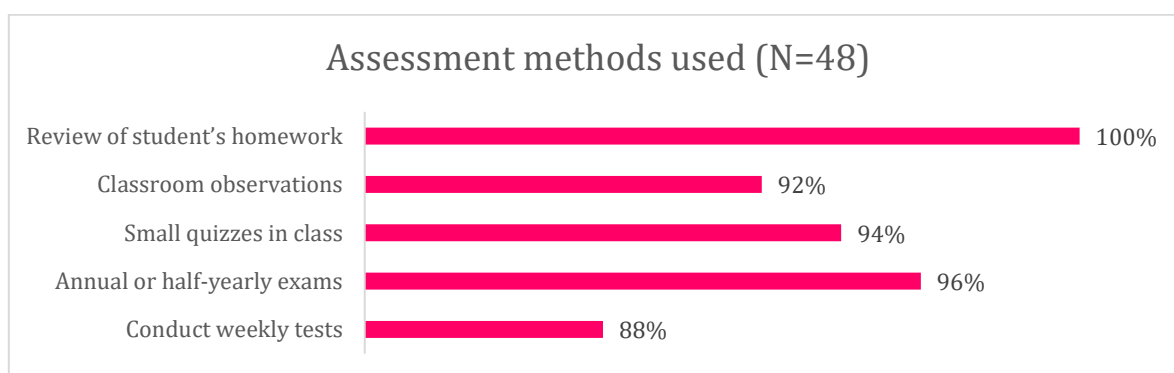


Figure 32: Assessment method used

Teachers viewed assessment as a **critical tool for monitoring student progress** and refining instructional practices to meet individual learning needs. They emphasized the importance of both **formal and informal assessments**—ranging from written tests to oral evaluations and classroom observations—to gain a **holistic understanding** of student performance. These assessments enabled teachers to **identify areas where students required additional support** and adjust their teaching methods accordingly.

The timely provision of **constructive feedback** was also highlighted as a crucial aspect of assessment, helping students recognize their strengths and weaknesses while promoting **continuous improvement**. Despite challenges, such as **time constraints** limiting detailed feedback and the inability of **standardized tests** to capture a student's full range of abilities (especially in areas like creativity and problem-solving), teachers emphasized that assessments are essential for both **evaluating student progress** and **guiding future lesson planning** to enhance overall educational outcomes.

Overall, the data reflects a **well-rounded approach to student assessment**, combining formal evaluations with frequent informal assessments. This strategy allows educators to **monitor student development comprehensively**, address academic needs in a timely manner, and ensure **effective learning progress**.

6.7 Long Term Impact

When asked about change in student confidence or willingness to participate, **98%** of teachers observed improvements in student confidence and willingness to participate. This suggests that the methods introduced in the training are not only effective in enhancing understanding but also in creating a more inclusive and engaging classroom environment. The high percentage of educators witnessing these changes points to the ability of the training to foster an atmosphere where students feel more comfortable and motivated to participate actively, which is crucial for their overall academic and personal development.

100% of respondents have observed positive changes in grade-level progression among their students. This unanimous response indicates that the methods and strategies implemented in the classroom have effectively supported students' academic growth and advancement. It suggests that the teaching approaches used are helping students meet grade-level expectations and are contributing to their overall academic success. This strong result highlights the effectiveness of the educators' efforts in fostering continuous learning and development.

A central element of the “Shikshan Ranjan Kendra” program, as emphasized by the teachers, is its **significant impact on students' personal hygiene and grooming**. By encouraging essential hygiene practices like washing hands before meals and ensuring students dress neatly, the program helps establish habits that contribute to improved health and well-being. More importantly, students come to understand the value of cleanliness and personal care, which boosts their **self-esteem and enhances their social interactions**. These practices not only foster a sense of responsibility but also promote discipline, equipping students with important life skills that will benefit them beyond their academic experiences. The program's comprehensive approach to hygiene enhances physical health while reinforcing the importance of self-respect and respect for others.

In addition to hygiene, the program has led to notable **improvements in discipline and school readiness**. Students have developed a stronger sense of responsibility, consistently arriving at school on time, well-prepared, and ready to engage in the day's activities. By focusing on life skills like wearing clean clothes, grooming hair, and maintaining punctuality, the program has cultivated a disciplined environment where students appreciate the importance of structure and routine. These behavioral, hygiene, and personal discipline improvements are visible both at school and at home. The structured approach of the program has helped students develop lasting

habits that go beyond academic achievement, fostering holistic growth and preparing them for future success in both their personal and academic lives.

The parents' feedback highlights the **significant and multifaceted impact** of the **Shiksha Ranjan Education Center** on both **children's academic growth** and their **holistic development**. The most notable aspect was the **improvement in children's reading and writing skills**, which parents described as a direct result of the **interactive teaching methods** and **individualized attention** provided by the teachers. Parents expressed that the children are not only learning better, but they are also developing greater self-confidence and independence in their academic work, which they attributed to the center's innovative teaching approach that includes games, group activities, and practical learning methods.

Moreover, the program's focus on **health and hygiene education** is seen as a major advantage, with parents reporting that their children are now better informed about essential hygiene practices, such as **handwashing, teeth brushing, and personal cleanliness**. This is expected to have a **long-term impact** on the health of the children and the broader community, fostering habits that contribute to overall well-being.

The center has not only improved **educational outcomes** but has also helped to build a sense of **community ownership** of education. The parents expressed a strong sense of pride and responsibility toward the program, with many seeing it as a valuable resource for both **academic improvement** and **social cohesion**. They also noted the program's role in **bridging gaps in education access**, particularly in light of the **disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic**, where many children struggled due to the closure of schools.

6.8 Sustainability of the Intervention

Regarding applying learning after the project ends, **95%** of participants plan to continue using the learnings from the training even after the project concludes. This strong majority reflects the long-term value and relevance of the training, suggesting that the skills and methods introduced were not only effective but also adaptable to future teaching contexts. Educators feel confident that the tools and strategies provided will continue to enhance their teaching practices and benefit their students over time.

The remaining **5%** who do not plan to apply the learnings may face specific challenges, such as changes in their teaching environment, resources, or personal circumstances, which could hinder the continued use of these strategies. However, the overall response indicates that the training has made a lasting impact, with most participants recognizing its ongoing utility in improving their teaching and supporting student development even after the project's end.

The sustainability of the "Shikshan Ranjan Kendra" program is reinforced through **regular home visits and active parental involvement**. By maintaining close relationships with parents, the program ensures that the positive changes in students' academic performance and personal habits are upheld beyond the classroom. This ongoing engagement helps create a support network that encourages the continued growth and development of students, fostering a long-term commitment to their educational success.

Additionally, the program benefits from **strong community support**. Parents and local community members play an increasingly active role in ensuring that students attend school regularly and receive the necessary support. This shared responsibility not only strengthens the

program's foundation but also enhances its sustainability. The collective involvement of the community helps to ensure that the program remains resilient and effective over time. Furthermore, teachers at "Shikshan Ranjan Kendra" are accessible and engaged, offering continuous support to students, which helps to maintain academic momentum and reinforces the lasting impact of the program on students' educational journeys.

The parents emphasized that the **Shiksha Ranjan Education Center** has the potential to be **scaled** and **replicated** in other rural areas facing similar educational challenges. They highlighted that **community participation**—including the active involvement of parents, teachers, and local leaders—is a crucial factor in the **sustainability** of the program. According to the parents, as the program continues to demonstrate **positive outcomes**, it could attract additional support from **NGOs, government agencies, and corporate partners**, thereby ensuring its long-term viability.

Parents also noted that the program has become deeply integrated into the **local community**, and its continued success will be largely dependent on the **sense of ownership** fostered within the community. The more embedded the program becomes, the more likely it is to remain operational without reliance on external intervention. Furthermore, the parents suggested that the **success of the Shiksha Ranjan Education Center** could potentially inform **educational policy** at both local and national levels, encouraging the adoption of **community-based learning** models and an increased focus on **life skills education**. This could drive wider reform in rural education systems, improving access and quality for children in similar regions.



Figure 33: Poster depicting focus on Government's "Sampoornata Abhiyan" ¹⁵

¹⁵ The **Sampoornata Abhiyaan** is a visionary initiative that underscores India's commitment to accelerating progress in its most underdeveloped regions. By focusing on key indicators, this campaign aims to deliver rapid and tangible improvements. These efforts are crucial for fostering sustainable development, enhancing the quality of life, and creating opportunities for economic growth.

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6.9 Overall Quality of Intervention

In terms of **quality**, the intervention was rated largely unfavorably, with **54%** of respondents describing it as **Poor** and **4%** rating it as **Very Poor**. Only **21%** found the intervention to be **Acceptable**, and another **21%** rated it as **Good**, indicating a significant gap between the expected and actual outcomes.

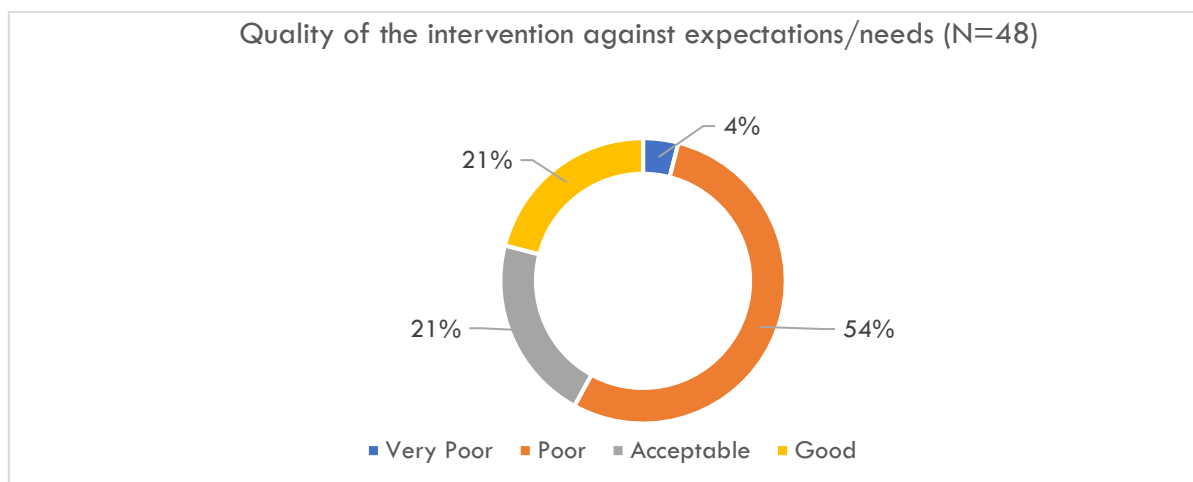


Figure 34: Quality of intervention against expectations/needs

However, when assessing the **importance** of the intervention provided by HDFC Bank CSR, the perception was much more positive. **73%** of respondents considered the intervention to be **Good**, highlighting a strong belief in its significance. **19%** saw it as **Acceptable**, and only **8%** felt it was **Poor**, suggesting that while the intervention may have fallen short in terms of quality, it was still viewed as valuable and important by the majority of participants.

7 Strengths and Challenges

7.1 Strengths

- **Holistic Approach to Education:** The project effectively combined academic support with life skills training, such as hygiene practices and behavioral discipline. This comprehensive approach addressed the educational, health, and social needs of children, fostering well-rounded development.
- **Effective Use of Shikshan Mitras:** The Shikshan Mitras played a crucial role in bridging learning gaps, especially during the pandemic. Their regular visits, customized learning sessions, and engaging pedagogy helped limit learning loss, ensuring that students continued their education despite the challenges posed by school closures.
- **Parental and Community Engagement:** A key strength of the project was its emphasis on involving parents and the local community. Parental participation in regular meetings and support for their children's education created a supportive environment for students' academic and personal growth.
- **Focus on Foundational Skills:** The project's focus on improving foundational literacy and numeracy was crucial, particularly in the context of the National Education Policy 2020. The personalized interventions helped students develop essential skills, which were evidenced by improved academic performance, particularly in reading and numeracy assessments.

- **Sustainability through Teacher and Community Engagement:** The training provided to teachers and the involvement of community members have laid a strong foundation for sustaining the project's impact. Teachers' commitment to continuing the innovative teaching methods and parents' continued engagement suggest that the benefits of the project will extend beyond its official timeline.
- **Promotion of Reading and Cultural Awareness:** The establishment of libraries and emphasis on fostering a love for reading among students contributed to their intellectual growth. The celebration of national and regional festivals further enriched students' cultural and historical understanding, fostering a sense of identity and unity.
- **Health and Hygiene Awareness:** Given the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the focus on hygiene and health practices was timely and necessary. The widespread adoption of good hygiene habits among students not only improved their health but also contributed to the community's overall well-being.

7.2 Challenges and Areas for Improvement

- **Quality of Intervention Delivery:** Despite the positive outcomes, over half of the survey respondents rated the quality of the intervention as "Poor." This indicates that the delivery of the program was inconsistent, with potential issues related to infrastructure, resource allocation, or execution. Improving the consistency and quality of interventions will be essential for future success.
- **Student Performance Variability:** While the project led to notable improvements in many students' literacy and numeracy skills, challenges remained, especially with Grade V students. A significant number of these students struggled with more advanced material, indicating a need for focused and targeted interventions to address specific gaps in learning.
- **Teacher Capacity and Support:** While teachers were trained and supported, the varying levels of teacher preparedness and capacity to implement the new methodologies might have affected the program's effectiveness. Continuous and more comprehensive teacher training is essential to ensure the long-term success of the project.
- **Access to Resources:** Limited access to resources such as teaching materials, infrastructure, and technology in some areas may have hindered the full potential of the program. Strengthening the provision of resources, especially in remote and underserved areas, would improve the overall effectiveness of the interventions.
- **Impact of COVID-19 on Learning:** Although the Shikshan Mitras played an instrumental role in mitigating learning loss during the pandemic, the long-term effects of COVID-19 on students' academic progress remain a challenge. Continued efforts are needed to address the learning deficits caused by extended school closures.
- **Sustainability of Resources:** While the involvement of Shikshan Mitras and community members has ensured some degree of sustainability, continued financial support and resource mobilization are crucial to maintaining the quality and reach of the program. Ensuring that the program is financially self-sustaining in the long term is a key challenge.

8 Key Learnings and Way Forward

1. **Holistic Approach to Education:** The program successfully combined academic support with life skills education, including hygiene, personal grooming, and discipline, which contributed to a more well-rounded student development. However, there were challenges with ensuring uniformity in delivery and sustainability of life skills education after the program's end. Future initiatives should make life skills a core part of the

curriculum, ensuring its consistent delivery across all phases of the program. Teacher training should emphasize the integration of life skills with academics. Furthermore, to ensure sustainability, life skills should be incorporated into community-driven programs or local educational policies, reinforcing their importance even after the project concludes.

2. **Teacher Capacity and Consistency in Program Delivery:** While teacher training was crucial, the varying levels of teacher preparedness and capacity to implement new teaching methods were identified as challenges. Inconsistent implementation impacted the overall effectiveness of the program. More comprehensive and continuous professional development should be offered to teachers, with an emphasis on practical implementation. A mentorship model where experienced teachers support newer ones, along with regular check-ins, could help ensure consistency in delivery. Additionally, greater focus on improving teachers' access to teaching resources and ongoing support in classrooms is essential for long-term success.
3. **Importance of Adaptable Strategies:** The program's adaptability in response to challenges, such as school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, was crucial. The use of Shikshan Mitras helped mitigate learning losses by providing personalized education to students, whether in person or remotely. This adaptability ensured that the program could continue even in the face of unexpected challenges. Future projects should incorporate flexible teaching methods that can be quickly adapted to changing circumstances. This could include blended learning models that combine in-person teaching with digital resources, ensuring that learning can continue in both traditional and non-traditional environments. Investment in digital tools, platforms, and training for teachers and students will be essential to maintain continuity in education, especially during emergencies like pandemics.
4. **Sustainability through Community Ownership:** The program's success was significantly bolstered by the strong sense of ownership and involvement from the community. Parents, local leaders, and community members actively supported the program, which helped ensure its sustainability. The continuous involvement of parents in their children's learning reinforced the importance of education and motivated students to perform better. The sustainability of future projects will depend on fostering strong community ownership. It is essential to build deeper relationships with local stakeholders, ensuring that they feel personally invested in the success of the program. Regular community engagement activities, such as workshops or awareness campaigns, can strengthen this bond. Furthermore, establishing a local leadership model within communities can help sustain and scale up educational initiatives, reducing reliance on external resources.
5. **Student Performance Variability:** While the program led to significant improvements in many students' literacy and numeracy skills, there were still challenges with student performance, particularly among Grade V students who struggled with advanced material. To address this issue, future programs should implement differentiated instruction tailored to the diverse learning levels within a classroom. Teachers should be equipped with strategies for identifying and supporting struggling students early on. Additional support such as after-school tutoring, peer learning groups, or targeted classroom interventions can help students progress at their own pace, ensuring that no student is left behind.

9. Annexure

9.1 About SAP Assessment Tool

In order to assess the learning levels of students, Sambodhi adopted an adapted version of the SAP tool developed by AIILSG. Owing to the limited time available at hand, to **conduct both an assessment exercise** to ascertain the learning abilities of students **as well as carry out a compact survey** to understand the perception of students of Grade IV & Grade V surrounding the key elements of the program, we tried to **capture the key concepts taught in each of the grades** through a select few exercises.

We arrived at the below components for each of the modules through multiple rounds of discussions and deliberations with our thematic expert as well as the program partners to adequately capture & indicate the progress made by the sampled students.

- a. In the aspect of Numeracy, we covered all the learning outcomes** provided in the SAP tools for Grades IV & Grade V comprising components like Division, Multiplication, Subtraction, Sense of Time, Idea of Currency, Fractions, etc.

We administered all the questions, however the items listed within such questions were reduced. As reiterated before, this was done taking into cognizance the limited time available to conduct both an evaluative assessment as well as carry out the structured survey tool with the students (shared earlier). It reflected prudence, taking into account the attention span that children as young as those enrolled in Grade IV & Grade V possess, in order to successfully carry out both the exercises.

With respect to the specific questions, **we assessed the sampled child on selected 3 to 4 items** – to reflect both varying levels of difficulty as well as capture a majority of the items listed in these questions (out of 7).

We graded them as follows:

1. Green Indicator – 3 to 4 items correct
2. Yellow Indicator – 1 to 2 correct
3. Red Indicator – None correct

- b. With regards to the aspect of Reading, we covered the various learning outcomes** provided in the SAP tools associated with components like reading passages, description of festivals, biographical accounts, *abhangas* recited by saints and newspaper clippings.

We administered the above selected modules, **following the assessment framework prepared by AIILSG** and based on our discussions with the concerned program and implementing partner(s).

Grade	Reading/Speaking Module	Assessment Framework
	1) गोष्ट वाचा (Reading a story)	1. Green Indicator – Able to read 7 sentences and above 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to read 3 to 6 sentence 3. Red Indicator – Able to read 1 to 2 sentences

Grade IV	2) माहिती वाचा (Reading the information)	1. Green Indicator – Able to read 7 sentences and above 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to read 3 to 6 sentences 3. Red Indicator – Able to read 1 to 2 sentences
	3) वाक्य वाचा आणि नाम ओळखा (Identifying the nouns)	1. Green Indicator – Able to identify 7 nouns 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to identify 3 to 6 nouns 3. Red Indicator – Able to identify 1 to 2 nouns
	4) वर्तमानपत्रातिल कोणतीही एक माहिती वाचा (Reading the news passage)	1. Green Indicator – Able to read 7 sentences and above 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to read 3 to 6 sentences 3. Red Indicator – Able to read 1 to 2 sentences
Grade V	1) कोणताही खेल खेलत अस्ताना मित्र-मैत्रीणी बरोबर आलेली माझा सांगा (Describing a fun game)	1. Green Indicator – Able to speak 7 sentences and above 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to speak 3 to 6 sentences 3. Red Indicator – Able to speak 1 to 2 sentences
	2) खालील वाक्य वाचा व विशेषण सांग (Adjective identification)	1. Green Indicator – Able to identify 7 adjectives 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to identify 3 to 6 adjectives 3. Red Indicator – Able to identify 1 to 2 adjectives
	3) उतारा वाचा (Read the passage)	1. Green Indicator – Able to read 7 lines 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to read 3 to 6 lines 3. Red Indicator – Able to read 1 to 2 lines
	4) अभंग वाचा (Read sayings of Marathi Saints)	1. Green Indicator – Able to read 7 sentences and above 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to read 3 to 6 sentences 3. Red Indicator – Able to read 1 to 2 sentences

C. In the case of Writing, we covered the learning outcomes associated with identification of nouns & pronouns, ability to write punctuation marks, correct usage of tenses, ability to write sentences using idioms & phrases as well as focus on the child's proficiency in solving crosswords and writing paragraphs through description & self-imagination.

Again, we administered the above selected modules, keeping in mind **the assessment framework followed by AILSG.**

Grade	Writing Module	Assessment Framework
	1) खालील वाक्यातील सर्वनाम लिहा (Write the pronouns in the following sentences)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 pronouns 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 pronouns 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 pronouns

Grade IV	2) खालील शब्दाचे अनेकवचन लिहा (Write the plurals of the following words)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 plural words 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 plural words 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 plural words
	3) समूह दर्शक शब्दाचे लेखन करा (Write the collective nouns)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 nouns 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 nouns 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 nouns
	4) दिलेल्या शब्दावरून म्हणी तयार करा (Create proverbs based on the following words)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 proverbs 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 proverbs 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 proverbs
Grade V	1) खालील वाक्यातील काळ लिहा (write the tenses in the following)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 tenses 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 tenses 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 tenses
	2) धान्ये व कडधान्ये शोधा (Write/Mark the grains & pulses in the crossword)	1. Green Indicator – Able to identify 7 or more grains & pulses (together) 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to identify 3 to 6 grains & pulses (together) 3. Red Indicator – Able to identify 1 to 2 grains & pulses (together)
	3) योग्य त्या ठिकाणी विरामचिन्हे देऊन वाक्ये पुनर्लिखित करा (Rewrite the Sentences by Adding Appropriate Punctuation)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 punctuations 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 punctuations 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 punctuations
	4) खालील कविता वाचा आणि शब्दात लिहा (Read the Poem and Write it in Your Own Words)	1. Green Indicator – Able to write 7 lines describing the poem 2. Yellow Indicator – Able to write 3 to 6 describing the poem 3. Red Indicator – Able to write 1 to 2 describing the poem

Based on this framework, the **results have been presented in Section 6.1.5**

The results of our survey should be viewed in isolation and should not be compared with previous assessments carried out by AIILSG due to the fact that:

- a) AIILSG carried out their surveys incorporating all the 2000 students under their purview, while our sample encompasses only selected students of Grade IV & V (N=244) owing to the concerted focus on the FLN component.
- b) Variability in assessment format, whereby AIILSG conducted the survey of all children in batches with not more than 10 children in each batch, whereas our enumerators carried out each of the exercises individually to ensure accurate assessment of all components, especially reading.

9.2 Preparation of FLN Index

An index was created for each assessment component—**Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**—for both Grade 4 and Class 5 students, based on the **assessment tool designed by the implementing partner, AIILSG**. These indices were constructed using a **simple aggregation method**, under the **assumption** that **all questions within each component are equally important** and measured on the same scale.

The process followed is detailed as below:

- i. For each component, the indices for Grade 4 and Class 5 were calculated by **summing the scores assigned to responses** (Red = 1, Yellow = 2, Green = 3) across all relevant questions.
- ii. This involved aggregating each student's total **score separately for reading, writing, and mathematics**.
- iii. These indices were subsequently **categorized into defined ranges** to facilitate the analysis and interpretation of students' learning levels for each assessment component.

Assessment Details and Index Ranges

i. Reading and Writing Components:

Four (4) questions were administered for both Reading and Writing components to students in Class 4 and Class 5. The indices for these components are categorized as follows:

- **4–6: Beginner Level (Red)**
- **7–9: Intermediate Level (Yellow)**
- **10–12: Advanced Level (Green)**

ii. Mathematics Component:

The number of questions administered for Mathematics differed between Class 4 and Class 5, with eight (8) administered in Grade IV and seven (7) administered in Grade V, resulting in different index ranges:

Class 4: Eight (8) questions were administered. The index ranges are:

- **8–12: Beginner Level (Red)**
- **13–19: Intermediate Level (Yellow)**
- **20–24: Advanced Level (Green)**

Class 5: Seven (7) questions were administered. The index ranges are:

- **7–12: Beginner Level (Red)**

- **13-17: Intermediate Level (Yellow)**
- **18-21: Advanced Level (Green)**

These categorizations provide a clear framework for analyzing student performance in each class and across the three assessment components.

