



Impact Assessment of CSR Projects

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories

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Table of Contents

Section 01

Executive Summary

Section 02

Introduction and Background

Section 03

Approach and Methodology

Section 04

Key Findings from CSR Projects

- 01:** Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya & Junior College
- 02:** School Improvement Programme (SIP) in government schools
- 03:** Dr. K Anji Reddy's CANDO-ETR
- 04:** Youth Skilling
- 05:** Persons With Disability Skilling
- 06:** Healthcare Skilling
- 07:** Making Integrated Transformation through Resourceful Agriculture (MITRA)
- 08:** Community Health Intervention Programme
- 09:** Improving Services by Strengthening Health Infrastructure in Hospitals
- 10:** Action for Climate and Environment (ACE)
- 11:** Integration of Evidence-Based Nutrition
- 12:** Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)



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01

Executive Summary



Executive Summary

Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya (KARV) & Kallam Anji Reddy Vocational Junior College (KARV-JC)

The project aimed to improve access to affordable, quality education and vocational training for children and youth from low-income households. Through an integrated model of schooling and skill development, the initiative focused on strengthening foundational learning, enhancing life skills, and building employability, enabling students to pursue higher education or transition into skilled employment.

01

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024–25

Location
Madenaguda, Telangana

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 8.5 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

120 students from KARV and 42 trainees from KARV-JC

Qualitative:

2 FGDs with students from KARV&JC
5 IDIs (head of school, trainer, parents, alum) from KARV&JC
1 KII with employer from KARV-JC

Key Findings

KARV

Access to affordable quality education

- Enabled affordable access to quality education for low-income households, with 80% reporting no difficulty in paying fees and average annual fee at INR 24,228 (n=120).
- Reduced financial barriers while ensuring access to good infrastructure, academic quality, and holistic development opportunities.

Enhanced student learning and positive academic environment

- Strengthened learning environment through quality teaching and infrastructure, with 97% reporting teachers were knowledgeable and 96% encouraged students to ask questions (n=120).
- Improved participation, confidence, and conceptual clarity through experiential learning, digital tools, and structured academic processes.

KARV-JC

Quality learning infrastructure and practical training environment

- Provided structured vocational training with strong learning support, with over 90% reporting trainers explained concepts clearly, addressed doubts, and provided individual attention (n=42).
- Improved access to affordable vocational education, with 93% reporting the institution was more affordable than other institutes (n=42).

Enhanced income generation and personal empowerment

- Strengthened employability through practical exposure, with 98% participation in OJT and improvements in confidence (88%) and workplace readiness (85%) (n=42).
- Enabled income and career progression, with 35% of placement participants securing job offers and majority reporting expected monthly income above INR 20,000 (n=17).

Key Recommendations

- ❑ **Assist in progression towards higher education:** While students demonstrated awareness of available pathways, field interactions indicate scope for further supporting higher education progression after Grade 10 through structured career counselling, subject selection guidance, bridge learning support, and continued family engagement.
- ❑ **Promote sustained employment and career growth:** Stakeholder consultations highlighted the need to strengthen post-placement support to ensure sustained career progression. It is recommended to establish structured alumni mentorship, strengthen employer engagement, and enhance career counselling and placement tracking systems.

Executive Summary

School Improvement Programme (SIP) in government schools

The project aims to strengthen government schools by improving learning outcomes and creating a safe, supportive environment for holistic student development. The project focuses on building strong **Foundational Literacy, Numeracy and English Language (FLN&EL)** skills, promoting health and WASH awareness, and upgrading essential school infrastructure to enhance the overall quality of education.

02

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Andhra Pradesh, Telangana & Himachal Pradesh

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 4.05 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

210 students from 10 schools from (Andhra Pradesh) and Telangana

Qualitative:

2 FGDs with School Students
2 IDIs with School Principal
2 IDIs with WASH Educator
2 IDIs with FLN&EL Teacher
1 IDI with DRF Team

Key Findings

Strengthened Foundational Literacy and English Proficiency

- Achieved near-universal literacy outcomes, with 100% word and letter recognition and 98% reading fluency and comprehension.
- Built strong language confidence, as 96% of students read English comfortably and 84% actively practiced writing. 95% reporting grade improvement and zero grade decline.

Enhanced Mathematical Foundations and Numerical Competency

- Established strong numeracy skills, with 96–98% accuracy across core arithmetic operations & word problems.
- Enabled high confidence and consistency, reflected in 96% problem-solving confidence and 93% daily math practice.
- Converted learning into results, as 98% of students reported grade improvement alongside high confidence in problem-solving

Enhanced Student Engagement and Holistic Learning Development

- Strengthened learning ownership and motivation, with 100% valuing education and 95% demonstrating critical-thinking application.
- Improved classroom engagement through high attendance, peer collaboration, & independent learning.
- Improved resilience and independence, as 95% managed academic stress effectively and 74% attempted complex tasks independently.

WASH and Infrastructure Impact in Government Schools

- Enabled sustained hygiene and health improvements through behavioural change, sanitation adoption, and safe drinking water access.
- Improved learning environments via bench installations and infrastructure support, leading to better attendance, comfort, and engagement.
- Developed student leadership and peer learning by forming School Health Clubs, where trained student leaders promoted WASH practices and influenced behaviour change across classrooms.

Key Recommendations

- ❑ **Enhanced English Language Support:** Dedicate additional time within the FLN&EL program for English instruction through tailored modules addressing rural learners' needs, including phonics, vocabulary development, and reading comprehension that bridge local dialects with formal English.
- ❑ **Expanded Teaching Learning Materials (TLM):** Provide a wider range of context-specific TLMs aligned with rural realities, including interactive English aids and hands-on math materials, supported by regular teacher training to ensure effective classroom use.
- ❑ **School Teacher Capacity Building:** Train at least one regular teacher per school in FLN&EL methodologies and activity-based learning to build in-house expertise, ensure program continuity, and reduce reliance on external facilitators.

Executive Summary

Dr. K Anji Reddy's CANDO-ETR Grants

Identify and nurture healthcare innovation opportunities that may otherwise lie dormant within the Indian academic ecosystem. Encourage and establish a culture of innovation within academia so that individual investigators become proactive drivers of their ideas in the direction of application, as a social good and/or a solution to a healthcare need.

03

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
PAN India

Implementation partner
Ignite Life Science Foundation

Project outlay
INR 1 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

17 participants of Special Academic Research Cooperatives (SpARC) workshops

Qualitative:

1 IDI with a member of Ignite's Scientific Advisory Board
3 IDIs with scientists (grantees) who received CANDO-ETR grants

Key Findings

Critical financial support for innovative scientific development

- The freedom and flexibility given by Dr. Reddy's Laboratories to use funding across clinical domains allowed Ignite to select academic scientists who were open to collaboration and learning and were flexible in their approach, ensuring high quality and reliability in the knowledge generated.
- For projects in the nascent stages, the grant provided was essential to conduct critical experiments.

Enduring mentorship and expert guidance provided throughout the grant period

- Grantees shared that the mentorship support provided and periodic reviews conducted were the main highlight of CANDO-ETR.
- External committee members, with longstanding experience in both academia and industry, not only provided critical inputs but also leveraged their networks to help the grantees find solutions to their problems.

Greater exposure and collaboration with scientists and industry partners

- Grantees shared that that Ignite actively facilitated interactions between them and experts who could help take research to the next stage.
- The annual investigator meetings, where grantees presented their findings, led to connections with industry partners and joint proposal developments, creating clear pathways for further scientific development post the grant period.
- 88% of respondents who attended SpARC workshops shared that it was highly relevant in terms of enabling networking opportunities with scientists and 59% considered it highly relevant to network with industry partners (n=17).
- SpARC participants shared that these workshops were much better than others they had attended in terms of enabling inter-disciplinary participation (82%) and encouraging cross-sector dialogue (72%) (n=17).

Key Recommendations

- ❑ **Longer duration of mentorship:** While the funding is intended for early translational stage research, the project can consider providing on-going support in the form of continued mentorship, knowledge exchange, collaboration and networking beyond the grant period to help grantees make significant advancements in their research.
- ❑ **Facilitate more workshops:** Considering the widespread recognition of the value of SpARC workshops in enhancing networking and collaboration among academic scientists and with industry partners, the project can support more workshops in different areas of interest.

Executive Summary

Youth skilling programme

The programme aimed to provide industry-aligned, high-quality employability training to unemployed youth from low-income families, ensuring measurable skill development, certified delivery standards, and aspirational job placements that lead to sustainable livelihoods and economic growth.

04

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
PAN India

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 9.7 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

162 sample was covered. 90 Days training (n=136) & 60 Days training (n=26)

Qualitative:

3 IDI with trainees of the programme.
1 IDI with a trainer, implementing partner and a professor from academia.
2 IDI with employers.

Key Findings

Development of a Skilled and Certified Workforce

- 100% of the respondents reported receiving DRF certifications post their successful completion of the course across all the centres and all courses
- With a 100% certification success rate post-trial, it creates a reliable, job-ready talent pipeline for underserved youth and employers alike.

Strengthened Economic Position of Candidates

- Post-training, 100% of participants secured jobs, with average monthly earnings of ₹21,985 (90-day cohort) and ₹14,153 (60-day cohort), marking a major shift from low or irregular pre-programme incomes.
- Earnings continued to rise after placement by 13% for the 90-day cohort (to ₹24,985) and 18% for the 60-day cohort (to ₹16,753) showing that income growth extends beyond initial employment.

Strengthened Soft Skills and Confidence Leading to Sustainable Livelihoods

- 89% of respondents found the programme effective for career advancement, with major gains in skills (67%), job attainment (65%), confidence and problem-solving (61%), and communication (57%), helping trainees tackle interviews and workplace challenges.
- 100% of respondents remain employed post-training; while 70% stayed in their initial roles, 30% successfully moved to better jobs within the same roles, showing the programme builds transferable capabilities that support long-term employment and income growth rather than just immediate financial gains.

Improved Socio-Economic Status via Asset Growth

Increased incomes are being used to enhance living standards meeting household needs, improving food and healthcare access, and enabling asset acquisition, particularly smartphones (58%) signalling greater financial stability, digital connectivity, and early progress toward long-term household well-being.

Key Recommendations

Bridging Classrooms with Careers: The Grow Tech 90 Days Programme has proven effective in enhancing youth skills. To further strengthen its impact, the programme can be strategically expanded through collaborations with engineering colleges, offering it as a weekend training module for final-year computer science students. Embedding the programme within their academic journey will provide structured, industry-relevant learning that complements classroom education while equipping students for career advancement. Such partnerships will bridge the gap between theory and practice, boost employability, and create a strong pipeline of skilled graduates ready to contribute meaningfully to the technology sector.

Executive Summary

Persons with Disabilities (PwD) skilling programme

The programme aimed to mainstream Persons with Disabilities in the workforce by training them on “Core Employability” skills and entrepreneurial skills for youth with locomotor, visual, speech and hearing impairment.

05

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
PAN India

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 6.77 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

159 sample was proposed however to gauge the impact we have covered 170 sample.

Entrepreneurial skills (n=65)
& Employability skills (n=105)

Qualitative:

3 IDI with trainees of the programme.
1 IDI with a trainer, implementing partner and a professor from academia.
2 IDI with employers.

Key Findings

Strengthened Soft Skills and Confidence Leading to Sustainable Livelihoods – PwD Employability skills

- The programme significantly strengthened job-ready skills (70%), job attainment (75%), problem-solving (68%), and confidence (59%), helping participants prepare for interviews and career opportunities, with income gains emerging more gradually (41%).
- Among the 105 respondents, 75% remain employed post-training 98% in the same roles showing lasting employment and stable livelihood outcomes.

Empowered Candidates, Elevated Socio-Economic Status through Asset Growth – PwD Employability skills

- From zero employment pre-training due to lack of awareness and skills, participants secured steady roles post-training (e.g., customer support/BPO), saw a ~12% income increase, earned employer recognition for strong performance, and used additional income to improve living standards (67%), nutrition (18%), and healthcare access (15%).

Enabling candidates to expand or create their own small enterprise – PwD Entrepreneurial skills

- All participants received INR 25,000 in financial support, enabling 12% to start new enterprises, with training and mentorship guiding business decisions; post-training, 80% expanded their customer base through diversified offerings and a more growth-oriented approach outcomes closely aligned with the objectives of the national RAMP initiative to strengthen MSMEs.

Enabling candidates to expand or create their own small enterprise – PwD Entrepreneurial skills

The programme enabled candidates to establish and strengthen small businesses (mainly tailoring and essential goods stores), improve supply chains, and achieve a marked rise in average monthly income from INR 4,000 pre-training to INR 12,200 and later INR 19,200 with savings of INR 8,000–10,000 per month, around 40% of which is reinvested into their businesses, creating a sustainable cycle of growth and income generation.

Key Recommendations

Opportunities for Everyone:

Since this programme primarily focuses on persons with disabilities (PwD), it is recommended that, for employability skills training, they tie up with schools and colleges for specially abled students and deliver the training at these institutions. This will help students build relevant skills, improve their employability, and ensure they are at least job-ready by the time they graduate.

Executive Summary

Healthcare skilling programme

The programme offers certified training to unemployed youth from low-income families, creating a pool of Homecare General Duty Assistants. By equipping them with industry-relevant skills, the initiative promotes sustainable livelihoods and supports long-term economic growth.

06

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Telangana & Andhra Pradesh

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 4.5 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

The total sample size covered 143 individuals

Qualitative:

3 IDI with trainees of the programme.
1 IDI with a trainer, implementing partner and a professor from academia.
2 IDI with employers.

Key Findings

Awareness and Relevance of the Project

- By aligning nationally recognised, industry-relevant GDA training with real-world healthcare roles endorsed by MSDE and HSSC, the programme effectively bridged the gap between skilling and employment, leading to successful placements in hospitals and homecare settings, improved job readiness, enhanced livelihoods, and strengthened the healthcare workforce in support of India's broader economic and community development goals..

Effectiveness of the Training programme

- The training programme followed NSDC–HSSC guidelines and blended theory with practice through a structured 90-day course, complemented by a one-week revision and doubt-clearing module, ensuring comprehensive preparation aligned with national skill standards.
- With around 20 days of hands-on hospital ward training during the GDA programme, trainees gained real-world experience in patient care and clinical support, resulting in improved confidence, workplace readiness.

Development of Skilled and Confident workforce

- The GDA programme delivered strong employment and personal impact, with 85% of trainees showing measurable skill gains, 98% confirming the training met expectations, and 100% securing employment (N=143), alongside significant improvements in communication, confidence (80%), self-respect, and problem-solving abilities (79%), underscoring the programme's effectiveness in building both technical competence and essential soft skills for quality patient care.

Strengthened Economic Position of Candidates

- The project delivered strong livelihood outcomes, increasing employment from 3% pre-training to 94% post-certification (n=143), with average monthly earnings rising from ₹4,000 to ₹18,500 initially and further to ₹20,250 at assessment, contributing to financial independence for individuals and strengthening the healthcare workforce overall.

Key Recommendations

Extending Training: The current 20-day on-site training period within the GDA programme is limited in duration, considering that trainees will spend the majority of their working time directly with clients in real-world settings. To enhance their readiness and confidence, DRF should increase the focus on extending and deepening this on-site training experience as an integral part of the curriculum. By providing longer, structured, and supervised on-site training, trainees can gain more extensive hands-on exposure to patient care, workplace protocols, and client interactions under the mentorship of experienced professionals. This, combined with improved realistic simulation exercises and reflective learning, will better prepare trainees for the actual demands of their roles, bridging the gap between theory and practice, increasing employer satisfaction, and improving job retention and performance outcomes.

Executive Summary

Making Integrated Transformation through Resourceful Agriculture (MITRA)

MITRA initiative aims to develop an impactful, scalable and sustainable Agri-extension delivery platform to empower small and marginal farmers. The objective is to come out with a sustainable Agri-extension delivery channel which can help the small and marginal farmers in the areas of technology transfer, Irrigation and Digital and economic well being.

07

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Samastipur, Bihar

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 4.50 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Mixed Method Approach

Quantitative:

187 farmers across 5+ blocks in Samastipur district, Bihar.

Qualitative:

7 FGDs with beneficiaries across farming awareness initiatives.
1 IDI with KVK Scientists
1 SGD with DRF Project Team

Key Findings

Mushroom Cultivation Emerged as a Viable Livelihood for Landless and Marginal Households

- 74% of farmers began cultivation immediately and 78% reported regular income, despite 76% having no prior exposure to mushroom farming.
- Enterprise scale grew rapidly, with bag numbers up 85% and average earnings of INR 5,015 per cycle over approximately 6 cycles, providing a vital income stream for women and landless families.

Resource-Efficient Cultivation Practices Delivered Significant Cost and Time Savings

- PoP agronomic training improved resource-use efficiency, with 70% of farmers adopting optimized fertilizer use, 65% improving water management, and 60% adopting better plant protection practices, resulting in reduced input use, lower costs, and more efficient farm operations.
- Adoption of ZT and DSR practices jointly improved resource-use efficiency, reducing land preparation time by 47–60%, lowering cultivation costs by 20–45%, and cutting irrigation time by 17–33% in DSR, thereby reducing labour intensity and enabling faster field turnaround across cropping cycles.

Consistent Yield and Income Gains Across All Crop Interventions

- Yields improved across all crops under the interventions, reflecting positive gains from the adoption of improved cultivation practices (12%-56%).
- Net profits increased across all interventions, indicating strong economic gains from improved practices (23%-53%).

Strong Adoption Intent and Behavioural Change Signal Sustainability

- High satisfaction and continuation intent across interventions indicate that improved practices have moved beyond one-time trials toward sustained adoption.
- Behavioral change extended to peer-led diffusion, with 59% of mushroom farmers training other farmers/family members and PoP farmers embedding scientific practices into routine cultivation, reinforcing long-term sustainability.

Key Recommendations

- ❑ **Build market linkages and input supply chains for mushroom enterprises:** Establish structured buyer aggregation, tie-ups with retail and institutional buyers, and reliable spawn procurement through registered vendors or FPOs to convert cultivation capacity into sustainable income-generating enterprises
- ❑ **Strengthen weed management advisory for DSR adopters:** Provide seasonal herbicide application calendars, pre- and post-emergence spray demonstrations, and KVK-led field advisory to address weed management challenges and safeguard the cultivation gains achieved under Dry-DSR.

Executive Summary

Community Health Intervention Programme (CHIP)

The Community Health Intervention Program (CHIP) implemented by NICE Foundation provides primary healthcare directly to rural residents, offering screenings, diagnosis, treatment, follow-ups, and referrals to reduce health disparities and enhance community health outcomes.

08

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Srikakulam and Vizianagaram districts
of Andhra Pradesh

Implementation partner
NICE Foundation

Project outlay
INR 1.85 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Qualitative Approach

- 1 FGD with elderly community members
- 1 FGD with pregnant woman and post-natal mothers
- 1 FGD with Fixed Day Health Service team members
- 1 IDI with Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM) worker
- 1 IDI with Head of School
- 1 IDI with NICE Foundation representative

Key Findings

Regular and predictable health care services

- The Fixed Day Health Service (FDHS) team conducted biweekly visits to each village, spending 1 – 1.5 hours per village per visit. On average, they attended to 30-60 community members in the morning session, 15-25 members in the afternoon, and did 10-20 home visits in each village. All services were provided free of charge.
- Community members highlighted that FDHS was regular, even in extreme weather, and timings were convenient, allowing them to pick up routine medication even if they needed to work. None of the community members reported foregoing income to visit the FDHS.

Improved health practices among community members

- Community members pointed out that previously, they were inconsistent with medication due to limited healthcare access. With FDHS in place, they now regularly took prescribed medications and changed their habits
- The Head of School highlighted that CHIP helped address minor health concerns without needing trips to Primary Health Centres (PHCs) or district hospitals. Teachers reported that improved health and immunity enhanced students' classroom focus and activity levels.

Increased knowledge about health and wellbeing

- Participatory Discussion Groups (PDGs) were conducted every fortnight for pregnant women and new mothers, with standardised thematic modules across locations. On average, women attended 4-5 sessions before pregnancy and post delivery.
- Women found that listening to others' experiences and advice made the sessions relatable and boosted their confidence.

Greater convergence contributing to universal health coverage

- NICE Foundation built capacities of PHC and CHC nurses through awareness sessions and gave them medical assessment kits so they could handle referrals easier. FDHS teams involved PHC staff in routine programmes and supported them in implementing national and state health campaigns, thereby reducing their workloads and improving their reach.

Key Recommendations

- ❑ **Building ownership within the community:** The project can consider strengthening community ownership by creating local volunteer members/ groups in each village who support the activities of FDHS – mobilising pregnant women and new mothers, ensuring community members obtain health services and take their medication regularly, communicating with parents about their children's health issues and accompanying elderly patients for referral services.

Executive Summary

Improving Services by Strengthening Health Infrastructure in Hospitals

The project focuses on upgrading rural Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to strengthen public health infrastructure and improve the quality, reach, and efficiency of healthcare services. Its objective is to reduce disease burden, enhance maternal and child health outcomes, and lower financial stress on rural families by modernizing facilities, building staff capacity, and aligning services with National Health Objectives and the UN Sustainable Development Goals..

09

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 7.40 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS - Qualitative Approach

Qualitative:

- 2 FGDs with Beneficiaries
- 1 FGD with pregnant women and post-natal mothers
- 2 IDIs with Chief Medical Officer, PHC
- 1 IDI with DRF Project Team Member

Key Findings

Enhanced Diagnostic & Clinical Capacity

- Project support enabled timely, accurate testing at primary care, closing long-standing laboratory gaps.
- On-site diagnostics eliminated routine referrals, reduced out-of-pocket costs to zero, enabled early detection (e.g., thyroid disorders), and strengthened clinical decision-making.

Strengthened Maternal & Child Care Services

- Improved labour rooms and maternity wards led to a significant rise in normal deliveries (from 1–2 annually to 1–3 monthly), reducing avoidable referrals.
- Enhanced diagnostics, trained staff, and improved privacy increased antenatal/postnatal coverage, early high-risk detection, and patient satisfaction.

From Referral Points to Efficient First-Contact Care Facilities

- OPD footfall increased sharply (30–40 to 90–100 patients/day), reflecting renewed community trust in PHCs as first-contact care centres.
- PHCs now manage a wider range of conditions locally, with faster consultations, reduced waiting times, and consistent availability of essential medicines.

Improved Patient Experience and Reduced Financial Burden

- Local access to diagnostics and services reduced travel to distant facilities, saving time, transport costs, and wage loss, especially for women and elderly patients.
- Cleaner, well-organized facilities and QR-code feedback systems recorded ~90% positive patient feedback, indicating restored confidence and satisfaction.

System Readiness and Emergency Care

- Strengthened infrastructure and staffing enabled 24x7 emergency services, including night-time care and immediate first response.
- PHCs now provide life-saving stabilization for trauma, snake bites, poisoning, reducing mortality risk and distress during critical hours.

Key Recommendations

- **Ensuring Sustainability through Staff Training on Equipment O&M:** To sustain the gains from infrastructure and diagnostic upgrades, continued training of PHC staff on equipment operation, maintenance, and basic troubleshooting is recommended. While clinical use has improved, Medical Officers highlighted the need for structured orientation on routine maintenance, calibration, cold-chain management, and handling of consumables. Regular refresher trainings and integrating O&M responsibilities into daily workflows will help prevent equipment downtime, safeguard project investments, and ensure consistent delivery of quality healthcare services.

Executive Summary

Action for Climate and Environment (ACE)

The project seeks to reduce the environmental footprint of nature based solutions and supporting ecological restoration through agro-forestry, mangroves restoration and bio diversity lead interventions, alongside capacity building of local communities. It aims to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve water use efficiency while enhancing soil health farm productivity and disaster reduction.

10

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 16.05 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Qualitative Approach

Qualitative Interactions:

2 FGDs with Farmer Groups
2 IDIs with Broadcast Farmer/ Lead Farmers
2 KIIs with Govt. stakeholders (KVK scientists and Agriculture Extension Officer)
2 IDIs with DRF representatives

Key Findings

Improved Farm Economics and Resource Efficiency

- The adoption of climate-smart practices, including direct seeded rice and zero tillage, reduced labour, fuel, and establishment costs, enhancing farm profitability. Paddy establishment costs declined by nearly 65%, from ~INR 6,500 to ~INR 2,300 per acre under machine-based sowing.
- Water-efficient cultivation practices further reduced resource intensity. Farmers reported irrigation savings of up to ~30% in paddy systems due to reduced standing water and elimination of puddling operations, contributing to improved operational efficiency and lower production costs.

Enhanced Timeliness, Soil Management, and Productivity Potential

- Precision sowing and reduced tillage enabled timely crop establishment and greater flexibility, with direct seeding advancing crop maturity by ~8–10 days and improving alignment with cropping cycles.
- Zero tillage cut land preparation costs by ~30%, while row sowing improved uniformity and efficiency, with better nutrient decisions supported by soil testing though dependent on weed management.

Ecosystem Restoration and Biodiversity-Led Resilience

- Ecosystem restoration improved sustainability, with residue management and biochar reducing residue burden by ~40–50% and supporting better soil health.
- Biodiversity-led interventions such as beekeeping, intercropping, and mangrove plantations enabled farm-level diversification and ecological balance, reducing dependence on single crops and land-intensive practices.

Strengthened Farmer Capacity and Sustained Adoption

- Training, demonstrations, and advisory support strengthened farmer capacity and confidence, with 60–65% cost savings driving sustained adoption.
- Farmers demonstrated increased ability to assess practices based on economic viability, feasibility, and risk reduction, supporting continued adoption beyond the project period.

Key Recommendations

- ❑ **Structured Market Linkages:** With improved timeliness of cultivation and higher marketable surplus reported under climate-smart practices, the project may further aim to strengthen structured linkages with local traders, millers, and institutional buyers. Stronger market connections would help farmers translate efficiency and cost gains into more consistent price realisation.
- ❑ **Collectivization of farmers:** Scale-up may be supported through collectivised mechanisms such as farmer groups, FPOs, custom-hiring centres, and SHG-based aggregation models. This can improve access to machinery, inputs, and markets, while reducing per-unit costs and supporting wider adoption of climate-smart practices, particularly among smallholders.

Executive Summary

Integration of Evidence-Based Nutrition

The project aimed to train doctors from various specialties and based in different parts of the country and equip them with the skillset to actively advocate for evidence-based nutrition as the primary line of health management and thus facilitate a more sustainable and equitable healthcare system.

11

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2024-25

Location
Pan India

Implementation partner
Ahimsa Trust

Project outlay
INR 1 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Qualitative

- 2 IDIs with physicians who led city chapters (ambassadors)
- 2 IDIs with physicians who conducted training sessions
- 1 IDI with a physician who attended PAN events (network member)
- 1 SGD with medical college students who were part of the journal club
- 1 IDI with a director of PAN

Key Findings

Created multiple platforms to bring physicians together to understand and adopt evidence-based nutrition

- The platforms set up by Physicians Association for Nutrition (PAN) fostered collaboration among physicians from various specialties. Participation on all platforms was free-of-charge and voluntary. About 20 percent of attendees became trainers and ambassadors for evidence-based nutrition.

Equipped physicians to understand the role of nutrition and secured buy-in

- Multiple stakeholders shared that PAN was able to create a positive view around plant-based diets by hosting events where the content presented was thoroughly researched and engaging. During these events, PAN advocated for physicians to empower their patients so that they prioritise diet and lifestyle changes over medication.
- PAN's trainers ensured they were accessible to provide guidance, clear doubts and help physicians navigate challenges during their transition to plant-based diets.
- Medical students gained in-depth knowledge about evidence-based nutrition through journal clubs, which they planned to incorporate into their clinical practice later on.

Developed credible content and expert speakers to facilitate events

- PAN's trainers and those involved in content creation received an honorarium for the time they devoted, the amount being decided on a case-by-case basis. Questions raised and feedback received during sessions were used by trainers to alter content and add new areas of content.

Mainstreamed the discourse and developed sustainability in programming

- Trainers shared that members did not need to be nudged anymore and enthusiastically registered for and attended events when they put up notifications.
- The Mumbai city chapter lead shared that PAN had been recognised by mainstream organisations like the Medical Council of Maharashtra, Indian Medical Association, etc., who accredited their speakers, and invited the chapter to collaborate with them for events.

Key Recommendations

- Tracking impact beyond attendance:** As physicians become more aware about evidence-based nutrition, the project can track how many of those who become network members have clinically integrated evidence-based and plant-based diets and the extent to which they have done so. This will also provide input on more effective ways of changing mindsets and practices.
- Create an open repository with relevant resources:** The project can set up an open-access repository with papers, presentations and links, for anyone interested in exploring links between nutrition and health. They can also create modules that compile data from studies into easy-to-understand capsules, so that doctors could review them at their own convenience.

Executive Summary

Construction of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

Support provision of safe and structured residential education for girls from rural and underserved communities by strengthening school infrastructure and enabling access to secondary education.

12

Project Overview

Review period:
FY 2022–2025

Location
Nalgonda, Telangana

Implementation partner
Dr. Reddy's Foundation

Project outlay
INR 2.4 Cr.

Research Methodology

IRECS – Qualitative Approach

Qualitative:

- 1 FGD with students
- 2 IDIs with teachers
- 1 IDI with head of school
- 1 IDI with parent
- 1 IDI with government representative

Key Findings

Improved access to safe and structured residential education for girls

- Enabled access to residential secondary education for girls from rural areas through dedicated academic and residential infrastructure.
- Increased enrolment from ~170–180 to ~220 students post infrastructure development, with demand exceeding capacity.
- Reduced dropout and early marriage risks by enabling continued education in a safe and accessible environment.

Enhanced safety and security in the school environment

- Strengthened safety through installation of CCTV systems, boundary protection, and context-specific measures.
- Improved parental confidence in sending girls for residential education in a remote location.

Improved infrastructure and living conditions

- Strengthened sanitation and water access with 17 toilet/bath cubicles (earlier 4) and functional water purification and storage systems.
- Enabled hygienic food preparation and improved daily routines through dedicated kitchen and residential facilities.
- Reduced household expenditure on education-related costs such as travel and accommodation.

Strengthened institutional systems and sustainability

- Supported smooth implementation of academic and residential processes, including PTMs, CCE assessments, and supervision.
- Ensured sustainability through continued utilisation of infrastructure and need-based maintenance support post construction.

Key Recommendations

- **Extended maintenance support:** As stakeholders indicated that repair and maintenance support were needed on an ongoing basis post handover, a structured periodic maintenance mechanism may further support sustained functionality of the infrastructure.

02

Introduction and Background



About Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and its CSR Initiatives*

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (hereafter referred to as DRL or the client), established in 1984, is a global pharmaceutical company committed to accelerating access to affordable and innovative medicines to address unmet patient needs. The organisation emphasises creating long-term value for stakeholders while ensuring environmental sustainability and contributing positively to communities. Its core philosophy is anchored in a “people-first” approach, underpinned by deep respect for both people and the planet. The company’s approach to societal impact reflects its commitment to catalysing scalable, sustainable, and innovative solutions for social change. Through its initiatives, DRL aims to promote sustainable community development and foster shared value creation across its areas of operation.



Belief: Accelerate access to affordable and innovative medicines because **Good Health Can't Wait.**

Guiding Principle: contribute to a sustainable community development and facilitating our efforts towards creating shared value

Thematic Focus Areas



Education

Provide affordable high-quality education, improve foundational literacy and numeracy, promote awareness on Water, Sanitation and Hygiene through school health clubs, provide need-based support in government schools and impart employment-oriented vocational skill training.



Skilling and Livelihood

Facilitate skill development initiatives focused on delivering industry-vetted skills that prepare aspirants for careers across sectors, including healthcare. Support small farmers with knowledge on advanced farming practices and use of technology in addition to guidance on generating alternate income through livestock management.



Healthcare

Fortify public health infrastructure, enhancing accessibility and quality of primary healthcare for economically disadvantaged rural households



Environment

Action for Climate and Environment (ACE) program works with farmers, focusing on promoting and implementing climate friendly agriculture practices and increasing resilience to climate change.

Scope of Work

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories engaged Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP ("PWCALLP" or "PW") to carry out impact assessment of CSR Projects. As per the Engagement Letter signed with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, this engagement included review of the Key performance indicators (KPIs) as defined by the Management of the Client under the framework for implementing the Projects for the outputs, outcomes and impact of the Projects. Inclusiveness, Relevance, Efficiency, Convergence, and Sustainability Framework (the 'IRECS') was utilised for all CSR Projects and recommendations were provided on the Projects performance for further evaluation and consideration.

The scope of work included below activities:

- ❑ Understood the scope and boundary of the CSR Projects to be evaluated and the assistance to be provided.
- ❑ Conducted a desk review of the documentation provided by the Company and held consultations with the CSR team and non-government organisation (NGO) partners (implementing partners of Dr. Reddy's). Agreed with the Management on the parameters/indicators to be assessed for the study.
- ❑ Mapped stakeholders to identify key stakeholder groups to be interacted with during the assessment.
- ❑ Finalised the sampling criteria and representative sample for identification of respondents in consultation with the Company.
- ❑ Based on the above, developed qualitative and quantitative questionnaires to be used during the impact assessment study for conducting on-field/virtual surveys, including quantitative interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and meetings with stakeholders and beneficiaries. Physical visits were undertaken, as required.
- ❑ Undertook data collection through virtual and on-field(as relevant) interactions based on the questionnaires developed and discussions conducted..
- ❑ Based on interactions and discussions, analysed the qualitative and quantitative information and assessed the outcomes and impact of the CSR Projects.
- ❑ Developed the report based on overall findings, impact created and provided recommendations for management's consideration.



Assumptions

General assumptions

- The information transmitted, including any attachments, are intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination, copying, paraphrasing, reproduction, or distribution in any manner or form, whether by photocopying, electronically, by internet, within another document or otherwise; or other use of or taking of any action in reliance upon this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient or for purposes other than as stated in the Engagement Letter is prohibited. Further, any quotation, citation, or attribution of this publication, or any extract from it to any third party unless expressly agreed in the Engagement Letter is strictly prohibited.
- The nature of service provided under this engagement does not in any manner constitute provision of legal service or/ advice as the term is generally understood under various laws for the time being in force. The intent of PWCALLP was to provide assistance and support in accomplishing the stated objective of the assignment and as an adjunct activity may have included research of applicable laws, regulatory compliance requirements and an understanding of the process and procedure as per local statutory enactments without in any way rendering any specialist legal advice. Our report is not a substitute for legal advice, that may be provided by a duly qualified independent legal practitioner.
- Our scope of work, including any advice / assistance, was limited to the scope of services specifically defined in the Engagement Letter. We are not responsible for the implementation of our recommendations.
- By giving our consent to the publication of our report and opinion on the Company's website ('your website') we do not accept any duty of care and deny any liability.
- Dr. Reddy's Laboratories is responsible for the controls over and the security of their website and, where applicable, for establishing and controlling the process for electronically distributing Impact Assessment Report. We remind Dr. Reddy's Laboratories that the examination of controls over the maintenance and integrity of the website is beyond the scope of our examination. Accordingly, we accept no responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of the Impact Assessment Report as they appear on Dr. Reddy's Laboratories website.



Projects Under Evaluation

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories partnered with a range of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in FY 2024-25 to implement CSR initiatives aimed at social development, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare, skill-building, etc. Among them, 12 projects have been selected for impact assessment, as outlined below:

Name of Project	Location	Objective of the Project
Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya & Vocational Junior College	Telangana	Improve learning outcomes and provide quality education and vocational training for low-income children and youth through Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya and Vocational Junior College.
School Improvement Programme (SIP) in government schools	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Himachal Pradesh	Support government schools through DRL's School Improvement Program (SIP) by enhancing literacy and numeracy, promoting WASH awareness via school health clubs, and providing infrastructure for holistic student development.
Dr. K Anji Reddy's CANDO-ETR	PAN India	Identify and nurture dormant healthcare innovation opportunities within the Indian academic ecosystem and foster a culture of innovation to drive ideas toward social good and healthcare solutions.
Youth Skilling	Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Odisha, & Madhya Pradesh	Deliver industry-aligned, certified employability training for unemployed youth from low-income families, ensuring skill development and sustainable job placements.
Persons With Disability Skilling	PAN India	Mainstream Persons with Disabilities by providing training in core employability and entrepreneurial skills for youth with locomotor, visual, speech, and hearing impairments.
Healthcare Skilling	Telangana & Andhra Pradesh	Advance healthcare skilling through state-of-the-art labs by providing certified training to unemployed youth from low-income families, creating skilled Homecare General Duty Assistants for sustainable livelihoods and economic growth.
Making Integrated Transformation through Resourceful Agriculture (MITRA)	Bihar	Develop a scalable and sustainable Agri-extension platform under MITRA to empower small and marginal farmers with technology transfer, irrigation support, and digital and financial literacy.
Community Health Intervention Programme	Andhra Pradesh	Implement the Community Health Intervention Program (CHIP) by NICE Foundation to deliver primary healthcare, including screenings, diagnosis, treatment, follow-ups, and referrals, improving rural health outcomes.
Improving Services by Strengthening Health Infrastructure in Hospitals	Andhra Pradesh	Strengthen rural public health by upgrading Primary Health Centres (PHCs) to reduce disease burden, improve outcomes, ease financial strain, and align with National Health and UN SDG goals.
Action for Climate and Environment (ACE)	Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh	Reduce emissions and enhance farm productivity and resilience by promoting climate-smart agricultural practices through targeted field interventions and farmer capacity building.
Integration of evidence-based nutrition	PAN India	Train doctors nationwide to advocate evidence-based nutrition for sustainable and equitable healthcare management.
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)	Telangana	Construct Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) school with academic, residential, sanitation, water, and safety facilities to provide residential education for rural girls.

3

Approach and Methodology



Approach and Methodology

Engagement Kick-Off and Desk Review

- An inception meeting was organised with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories to introduce the PWCALLP engagement team and provide an overview of the roles and responsibilities of the project team members.
- Discussions were also held during the meeting to align on the scope of work and expectations of Dr. Reddy's Laboratories from the impact assessment study, and further, to finalise sample, timelines, and deliverables.
- Basis the meeting, PWCALLP requested documents/information relevant for conducting impact assessment. To develop a deeper understanding of the CSR projects, PWCALLP reviewed project documents and held introductory meetings with implementation partners.

Data Collection and Field Visit

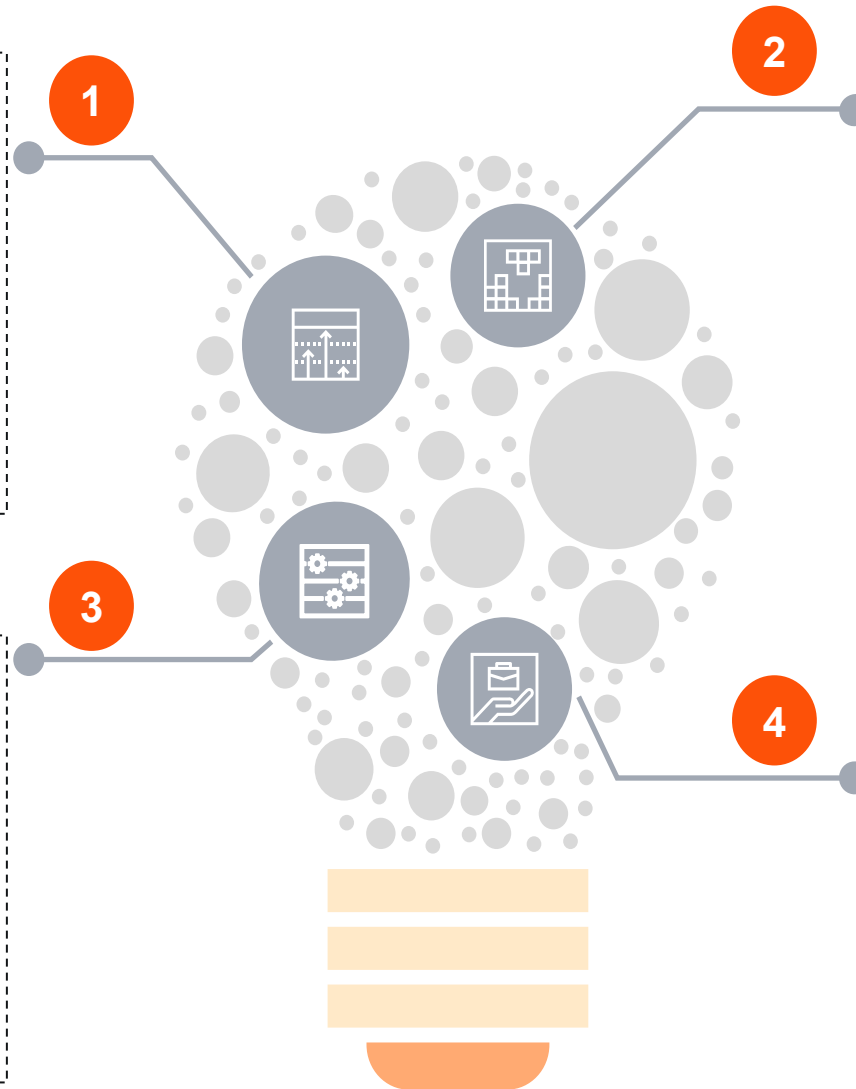
- The field plan was finalised in discussion with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories and its implementing partners.
- Tools were translated in local language (as applicable). The field team was trained to familiarise them with the project activities and the developed tools, to avoid any discrepancies in data collection.
- PWCALLP conducted field visits and stakeholders were mobilised with the help of implementing partners to capture perceptions towards the project activities.
- Surveys, in-depth interviews and focused group discussions were carried out at sample locations as per the finalised sampling framework.

Research Design and Tool Development

- PWCALLP developed the research design using a mixed method or qualitative approach (as appropriate) to undertake the assessment study in consultation with Dr. Reddy's Laboratories for all projects.
- Quantitative research was used to capture the value of the selected indicators relating to various activities whereas qualitative research helped validate the quantitative findings and understand the rationale and reasoning behind them.

Data Analysis and Report Writing

- Post data collection, entry and cleaning, analysis was carried out to arrive at the insightful findings for each of the projects.
- PWCALLP prepared a draft consolidated report detailing the process adopted, results, key findings and recommendations for each project. Simultaneously, the impact of the initiative was assessed using IRECS framework for all projects.
- PWCALLP presented the key findings to Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, obtained their feedback, and incorporated the same in the consolidated report.
- The final report was submitted to Dr. Reddy's Laboratories for the management's consideration.



Project-Specific Sampling Framework

Project Name	Proposed Methodology	Quantitative Sample (95% CI and 7.5% ME)	Qualitative Interactions
1. Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya & Vocational Junior College	Mixed method	162	8
2. School Improvement Programme (SIP) in government schools	Mixed Method	210	10
3. Dr. K Anji Reddy's CANDO-ETR	Mixed method	17	4
4. Youth Skilling	Mixed method	162	8
5. Persons With Disability Skilling	Mixed method	170	11
6. Healthcare Skilling	Mixed method	143	8
7. Making Integrated Transformation through Resourceful Agriculture (MITRA)	Mixed method	187	9
8. Community Health Intervention Programme	Qualitative	-	6
9. Improving Services by Strengthening Health Infrastructure in Hospitals	Qualitative	-	6
10. Action for Climate and Environment (ACE)	Qualitative	-	8
11. Integration of evidence-based nutrition	Qualitative	-	7
12. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)	Qualitative	-	5

IRECS Framework

The impact of the project was assessed using the IRECS framework. IRECS is geared to provide an overall feedback on the efficacy of implementation as well, as its efficiency in terms of achievement of the desired project outputs with reference to inputs. IRECS framework measured the performance of the project on five parameters - Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence and Sustainability.

Inclusiveness

Ability of different stakeholders, particularly poorest and most marginalised to access the benefits of activities

Relevance

Are the services /inputs in the project able to meet community priorities? How was the planning done ? Was it participatory ? How were the success indicators developed? Was the community involved in development of project indicators?

Effectiveness

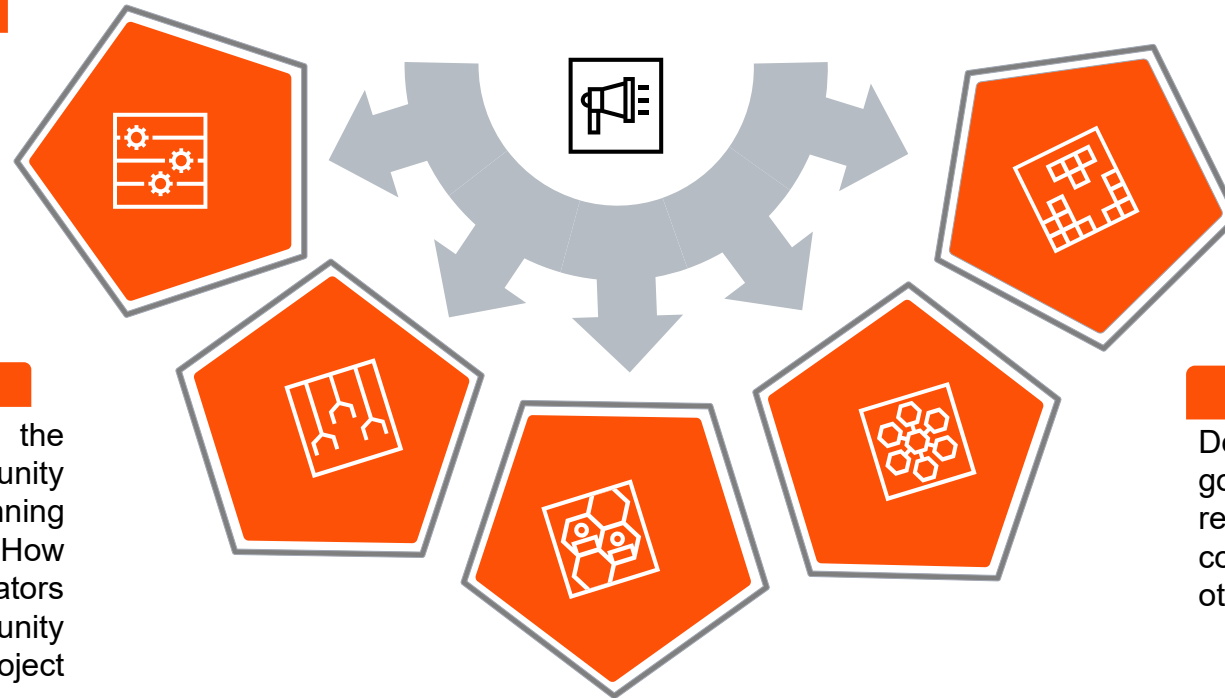
Have the activities been able to effectively address community expectations? How efficiently have the resources been deployed, monitored and utilised?

Sustainability

Do communities feel ownership over the assets created by the activities and/or will the Project initiated community interventions sustain even after the exit of the funding agency. Has an exit strategy been drafted?

Convergence

Degree of convergence with government/other partnerships; relationship between individuals, community, institutions and other stakeholders



4

Key Findings from CSR Projects



Project 1

Kallam Anji Reddy
Vidyalaya (KARV) &
Kallam Anji Reddy
Vocational Junior
College (KARV-JC)

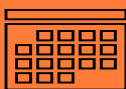


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

The project aimed to improve learning outcomes and expand access to quality education and vocational training for children and youth from low-income households. Through these institutions, the project focused on strengthening foundational learning, enhancing life skills, and building employability, enabling students to pursue higher education or transition into skilled employment..

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Madenaguda,
Telangana



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 8.5 Cr.

Project Activities

KARV:

- Provided affordable quality school education to 2,264 students through Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum with focus on conceptual learning and academic performance
- Strengthened existing infrastructure by integrating digital learning tools, laboratories, and library resources to support experiential learning
- Implemented vocational exposure from middle school, including financial literacy, healthcare awareness, and skill-based modules
- Delivered career counselling, life skills, and personality development sessions to guide students on future pathways

KARV-JC:

- Provided vocational programmes to 827 students offering technical courses, practical training, and industry exposure
- Established placement support systems, including on-the-job training and industry linkages for employability

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

KARV

- 1 Focused Group Discussion with students
- 1 In-Depth Interview with the head of school
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a parent

KARV-JC

- 1 Focused Group Discussion with students
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a trainer
- 1 In-Depth Interview with an alum
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a parent
- 1 Key Informant Interview with an employer

Quantitative Interactions

KARV

- 120 students from Classes 8 to 10

KARV-JC

- 42 trainees from Year 2

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

Prior to the intervention, stakeholders highlighted the following challenges among the target communities:

- **Gaps in access to quality and holistic education:** Children from economically weaker sections had limited access to structured, English-medium education that integrates academic learning with experiential and holistic development. Many existing institutions lacked adequate infrastructure, digital resources, and opportunities for practical learning, affecting overall learning outcomes..
- **Limited parental awareness and engagement in education:** Parents from low-income households often had limited awareness of academic pathways and long-term educational planning. This resulted in low engagement in their child's learning process, affecting continuity of education, motivation, and support at home.
- **Limited exposure to career pathways and skill development:** Students had minimal awareness of career options beyond traditional streams, and lacked early exposure to vocational skills, financial literacy, and industry-relevant competencies.
- **Inadequate focus on communication and life skills:** Despite schooling, students often lacked confidence, communication abilities, and social skills required to navigate higher education and employment environments.
- **Financial constraints affecting continuity of education:** Households with low and unstable incomes faced challenges in affording quality education, leading to risks of discontinuation or limited progression beyond secondary levels.
- **Limited availability of structured vocational education pathways:** Within the project geographies and associated institutions, access to structured vocational training aligned with industry needs was limited, resulting in low exposure to formal skill development opportunities among youth.

Beneficiary profile

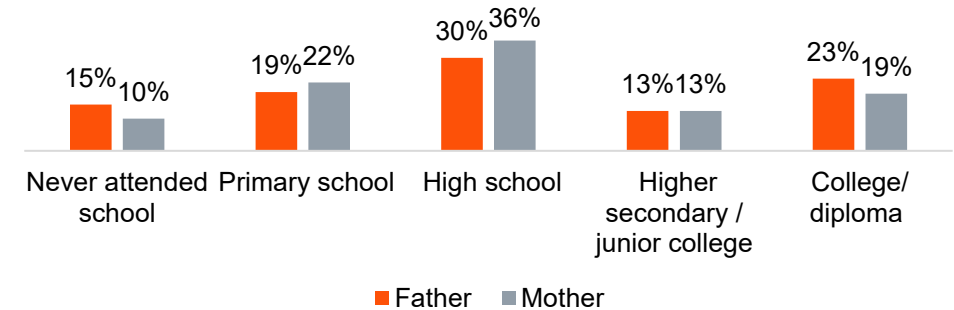


66% (n=162) of the respondents were **girls**



34% (n=162) of the respondents were **boys**

Highest education of parents (n=162)



The average household size was **5 members** (n=162)

Mothers were primarily engaged as **homemakers** (40%), followed by **domestic work** (17%) and daily wage labour (10%), while fathers were engaged in **private sector jobs** (31%), **skilled work** such as plumbing or electrical work (14%), and daily wage labour (13%) (n=162).

This highlights economic vulnerability of households, who were engaged in informal sector jobs.

Analysis and Findings*

Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya (KARV)

Access to affordable quality education

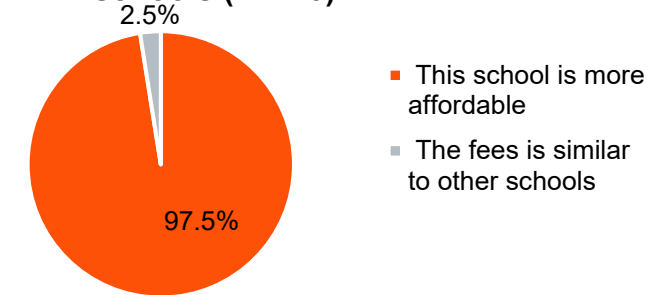
- The project sought to improve access to quality education for children from **low-income households** through an affordable school model supported by academic facilities, structured teaching, and holistic development opportunities.
- **80%** of the respondents reported that their **parents had not faced difficulties** in paying school fee at KARV (n=120)



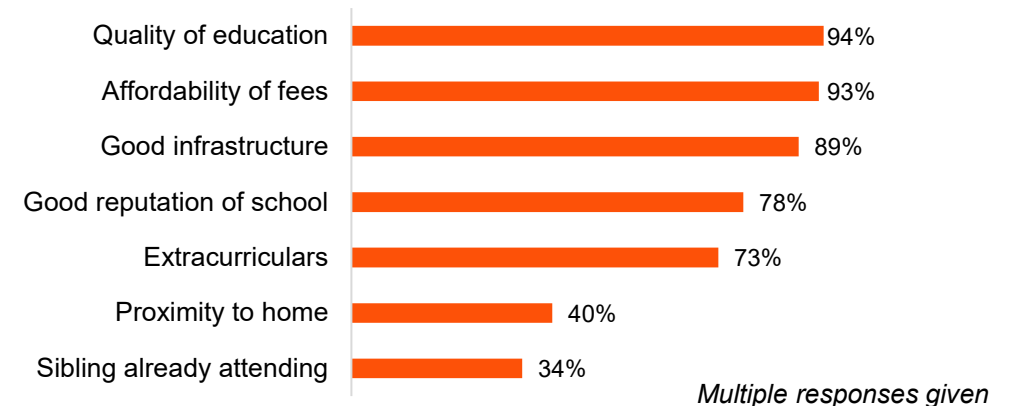
The average annual fee reported by respondents was **INR 24,228** (n=120)

- Qualitative interactions reinforced these findings. A parent shared that institutions offering similar infrastructure and facilities generally charge significantly higher fees, whereas KARV provided quality education, campus facilities, and a positive learning environment at a **comparatively reasonable cost**. Principal also noted that **fee support or concessions** are extended in select cases of financial hardship.
- Students shared that KARV provided access to education for economically disadvantaged students like themselves **without compromising on facilities and learning standards**.
- The Head of School also reported that regular parent school interactions and counselling have **improved parental awareness and engagement**, enabling better support for students' education at home.

Comparison of KARV school fees with other schools (n=120)



Reasons for joining KARV (n=120)



Survey findings reinforce that for nearly all respondents (97.5%), the fees at **KARV was more affordable than other schools** and the main reasons for joining KARV included the **quality** of education (94%), **affordability** (93%) and **infrastructure** (89%) (n=120).

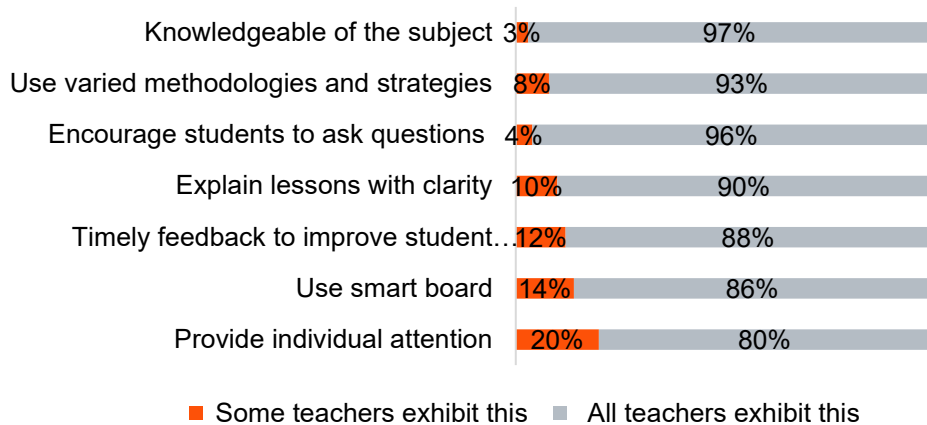
* KARV was established in 2001 and has been running since then with support from DRL. The findings of this report represent are based on activities carried out over a period of time and not specifically in 2024-25.

Analysis and Findings

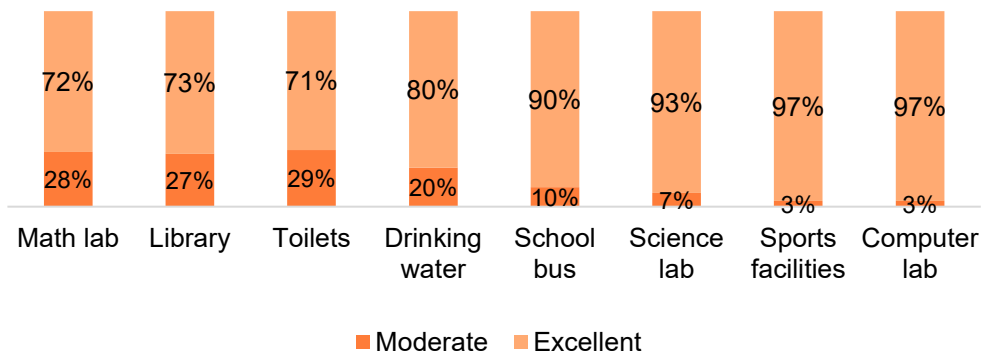
Enhanced student learning and positive academic environment

Supported by DRL, KARV has created a positive learning environment through a combination of quality teaching practices and access to functional school infrastructure. Together, these inputs have supported student learning, engagement, and overall school experience.

Perception of teacher quality and classroom practices (n=120)



Rating of school facilities (n=120)



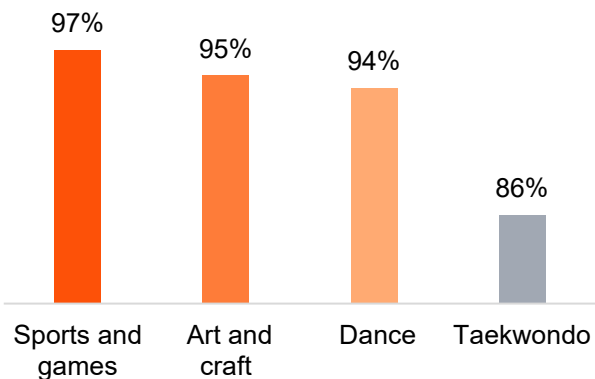
- Survey findings show that **97% respondents found all teachers were knowledgeable about the subject, 93% found all used varying teaching methods and 96% felt they encouraged students to ask questions** (n=120).
- Majority of the respondents rated **school facilities as excellent – 97% for computer labs and sports facilities, 93% for science labs and 90% for the school bus** (n=120).
- Student feedback indicates that learning facilities such as libraries and laboratories are **actively utilised**, supporting revision, practice, and experiential learning. Access to computer-enabled infrastructure enabled **digital learning, research-based tasks**, and skill-oriented activities.
- Interactions with students also revealed that that improved teacher engagement and strengthened infrastructure contributed to **higher student participation and more active classroom engagement**. Students appeared more confident in asking questions and interacting during sessions, supporting better concept clarity.
- A parent shared that students received **strong academic guidance and were interested in studies** due to the attention provided by teachers and access to better facilities.
- The head of school also indicated that structured academic processes such as **bridge courses, continuous assessments, and differentiated teaching approaches** are used to address varied learning levels, ensuring that students are able to keep pace and improve learning outcomes.

Analysis and Findings

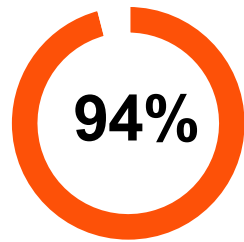
Holistic student development in an inclusive and safe environment

- The school has adopted a **broad development approach** beyond academics, focusing on students' personal growth, participation, wellbeing, and equal access to opportunities. Respondents reported high **participation in extracurricular activities** such as sports and games (97%), art and craft (95%), dance (94%), and Taekwondo (86%), reflecting a **participative learning environment** (n=120).
- **94% reported the school focuses on holistic development**, while **96% reported that it motivates them to attend regularly** (n=120).
- These opportunities have helped with **personality development**, contributing to improved teamwork (96%), creativity (94%) and communication skills (91%), among students (n=120).
- All respondents shared the school environment was **safe, inclusive, and supportive for students from different backgrounds and needs**. Facilities such as **lift access, separate toilets for girls and boys and well-maintained infrastructure, and assistive arrangements for students requiring additional assistance** reflected efforts to make the campus accessible and student-friendly.
- Availability of sanitation, handwashing, and drinking water facilities further appeared to strengthen student **comfort, hygiene, and wellbeing** during school hours. According to the head of school, these reduced absenteeism and created a conducive environment for learning and participation.

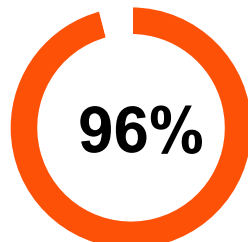
Participation in extracurricular activities at KARV (n=120)



Multiple responses given

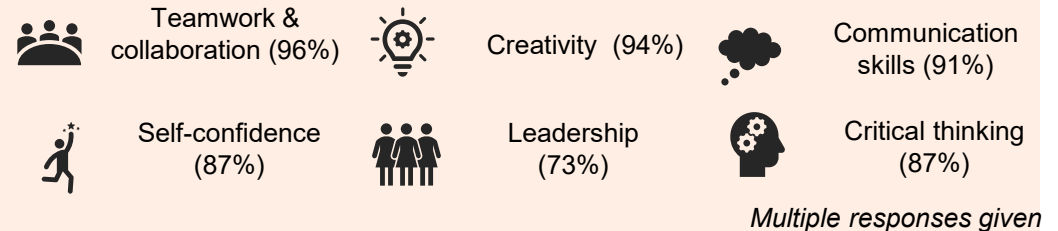


Respondents agreed that KARV focused on holistic development. (n=120)



Respondents agreed that KARV motivated them to attend regularly and study well. (n=120)

Improvements in soft skills from attending KARV (n=120)



95% of respondents reported that the school offered sufficient extracurricular activities (n=120)



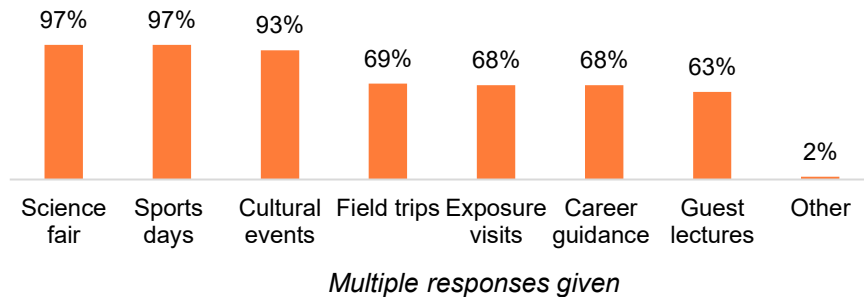
100% of respondents agreed that the school created an inclusive, equitable, safe, and secure environment. (n=120)

Analysis and Findings

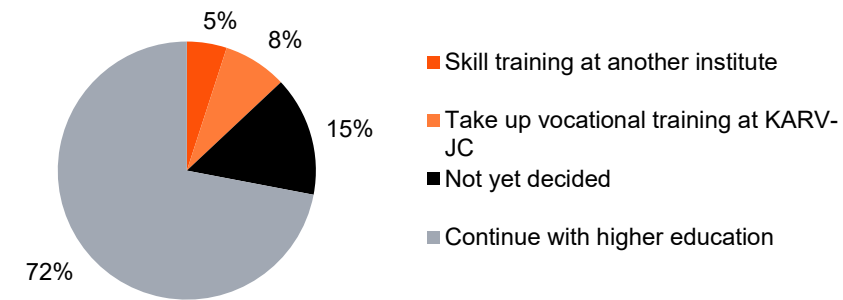
Building future readiness and sustaining impact

- Field interactions indicated that the **school has undertaken multiple** efforts to prepare students for future education and career pathways while strengthening systems for sustained impact. Through structured guidance, counselling sessions, and skill-oriented exposure, students were supported in both academic progression and informed decision-making.
- Respondents reported exposure beyond the classroom through **science fairs and sports days (97%), cultural events (93%) and field trips (69%)** helped them better understand education and career pathways after Class 10 (n=120).
- 72% of the respondents planned to continue with higher education post class 10** and 13% planned to take up skill training at KARV-JC or elsewhere (n=120)

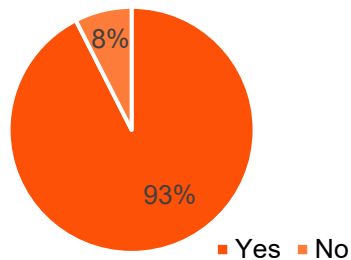
Student exposure through enrichment activities (n=120)



Plans post Class 10 (n=120)



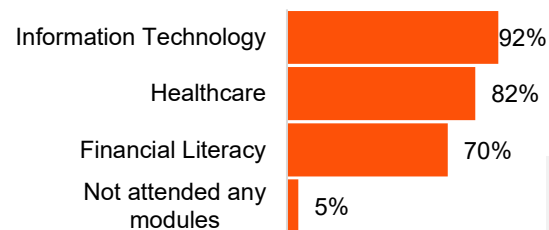
Whether counselling was provided (n=120)



96%

Respondents reported that counselling sessions helped them think about and plan their future education (n=120)

Participation in future-oriented skill modules (n=120)



Multiple responses given



99%

Respondents stated that vocational sessions helped them understand different career options (n=120)

- 93%** of the respondents affirmed that **counselling** was provided by the school. Further, multiple **future-oriented skill modules** were offered to students, with **95%** having completed one in **information technology** and 82% in healthcare (n=120).
- Parents noted that their **children were increasingly discussing future education and career plans** and the head of school emphasised supporting student progression while maintaining quality systems.
- The continuation of **regular school operations**, staffing support, and maintenance of facilities suggests that these improvements are being sustained over time, with systems embedded in the school's functioning.

Analysis and Findings

Kallam Anji Reddy Vocational Junior College

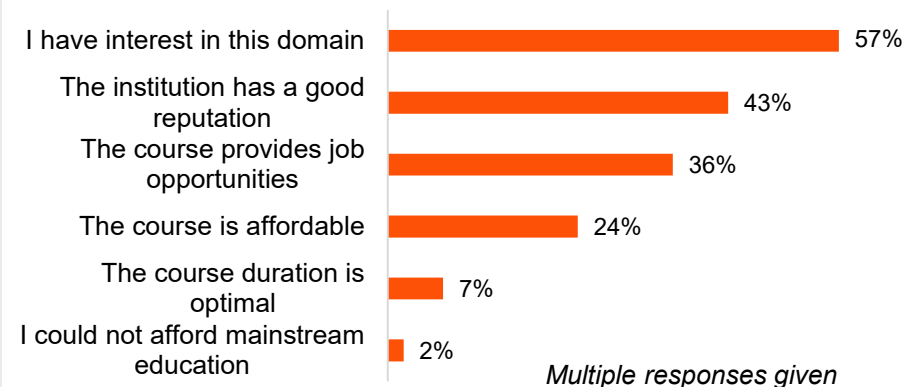
Quality learning infrastructure and practical training environment

- Stakeholder interactions indicated that KARV-JC, affiliated with the **Telangana Government vocational education system**, provides recognised vocational pathways combining classroom learning, technical instruction, practical exposure, and soft skills development for students after Grade 10.
- Respondents shared that enrolment decisions were influenced by **interest in chosen domains (57%)**, the **institution's reputation (43%)**, and employment prospects (36%), reflecting strong demand for accessible vocational education (n=42).
- Students reported that trainers provided clear explanations, timely feedback, fair treatment, and individual attention. Survey findings support this, with over **90%** of respondents reporting that **trainers explained concepts clearly, addressed doubts effectively, and provided individual attention, indicating a supportive learning environment (n=42)**. Students also shared the programme contributed to **broader skill development, particularly communication, teamwork, confidence, leadership, and workplace readiness**.
- Respondents **rated most facilities as excellent**, including classrooms, labs and equipment (88%) (n=42).
- The trainer highlighted that **subsidised education, fee concessions**, bridge classes, counselling, and mentoring support had enabled participation of orphaned children, economically vulnerable students, and first-generation learners. The **continued enrolment demand and varied course offerings across vocational streams**, suggesting that the model remained relevant and institutionally embedded over time.



Respondents reported an average annual fee payment of **INR 16,667** (n=42). **93%** considered KARV-JC **more affordable than other vocational institutes**, indicating reduced financial barriers to their continued education (n=42)

Key reasons for enrolment in KARV-JC (n=42)



Respondent rating of facilities and learning infrastructure (n=42)


Facility	Moderate	Excellent
Classrooms	12%	88%
Labs and equipment	10%	88%
Computer lab	17%	81%
Study spaces	21%	79%
Library	31%	67%

Analysis and Findings

Enhanced income generation and personal empowerment

- The institution integrated On-the-Job Training (OJT), placement support, guest lectures, and industry engagement into the vocational model, helping **students transition more smoothly from education to employment**.
- Students also reported multiple future pathways after course completion, including salaried employment, higher education, and advanced skill development, indicating expanded **livelihood and progression opportunities**
- Among respondents (n=42) who participated in the placement process (n=17), **35% had already received job offers**. Among those who received job offers, expected monthly salaries ranged from INR 10,001 to above INR 20,000, with a majority **reporting earnings in the higher bracket**. This reflects encouraging income potential and is higher than typical entry-level earnings in informal or low-skilled roles, as highlighted by employer.
- Not all students secured placements; many non-placed students have pursued further education, including B.Sc. Nursing, hotel management, tourism, and other undergraduate courses, reflecting continued engagement in education and skill development.
- The trainer shared that several students from low-income households had secured placements in hospitals, pharmaceutical companies, technical services, and other formal sector roles. Some alumni were also reported to **have moved to better-paying opportunities after gaining experience**.
- One alum highlighted that placement systems, industry linkages, counselling support, and alumni tracking had continued over time, suggesting **sustainability of employability support mechanisms**.

The programme appears to have **strengthened students' ability to earn independently**, support their families, and build confidence in shaping a stable future.

 **98%** said they would recommend the institution to others, and **95%** reported overall satisfaction with the programme (N=42).

 **98%**

Respondents reported participation in OJT with strong feedback on confidence building, practical skill enhancement, workplace understanding, and job readiness (n=42)

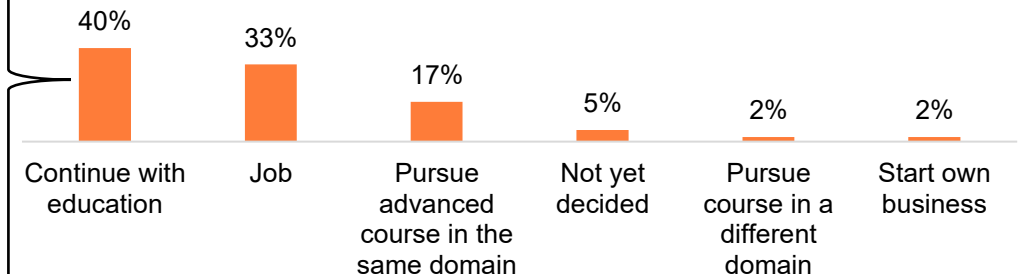


88% reported improved confidence through OJT (n=42).



85% reported improved skills and workplace readiness (n=42).

Students' plans after completing the course (n=42)



Multiple responses given

Average Monthly income (n=17*)



98% agreed that attending the institution had helped them believe they could create a good future for themselves.

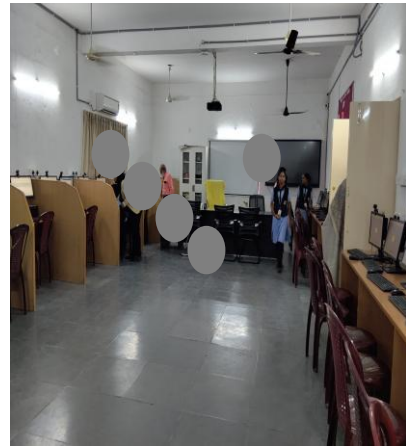
Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field

Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya



Digital library



Computer lab



Digital classroom



Math lab



Science lab

Kallam Anji Reddy Vocational Junior College



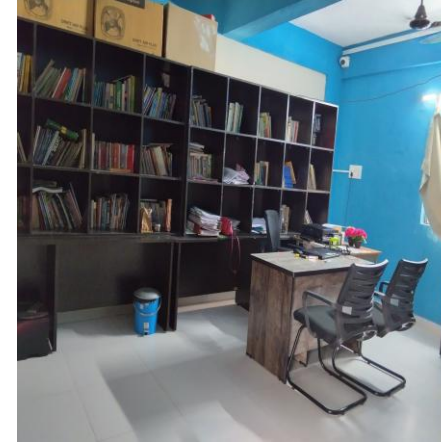
Physiotherapy class



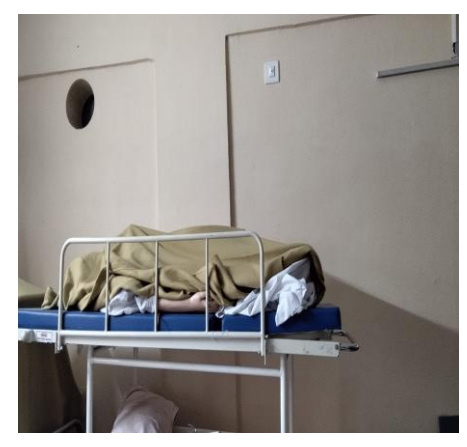
Classroom



Placement cell



Library



Healthcare practical room

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project was inclusive by expanding access to quality school and vocational training for students from low-income households, who were first-generation learners, through affordable fees.
- Inclusive infrastructure such as lift access and separate sanitation facilities further enabled equitable learning opportunities for students with diverse needs.

R

Relevance

- The project addressed key challenges faced by low-income students, including limited access to quality and affordable education, low parental engagement, lack of career awareness, gaps in communication and life skills, and limited access to structured vocational training. It responded to these gaps through an integrated model of schooling, skill development, and career guidance.

E

Effectiveness

- The school improved learning and engagement, with 94% of respondents reporting a focus on holistic development and 96% stating that the school motivated regular attendance.
- KARV JC strengthened employability, with 98% participation in OJT. Among students who participated in placements, some secured job with most reporting expected salaries above INR 20,000, while others pursued higher education.

C

Convergence

- KARV School, following the CBSE curriculum, aligned with national education standards, supporting holistic learning and academic progression.
- KARV-JC, aligned with the Telangana Government's vocational education framework, led to strong convergence with state priorities on skill development and employability, strengthening pathways to employment and higher education.

S

Sustainability

- Continued support for school operations and well-maintained infrastructure indicate that the project generated sustained long-term educational benefits.
- Continued, placement support, and industry linkages suggest that the project not only creates job opportunities, but enables sustained employability, regular income generation, and continued progression over time.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project strengthens access to affordable and quality education through improved learning environments, inclusive schooling, experiential pedagogy, career guidance, and vocational pathways that support lifelong learning and future readiness among children and youth from low-income communities.



Through vocational, the project promotes decent work and economic growth by providing industry-aligned vocational training, practical exposure, placement support, and employability skills that enhance job readiness, income opportunities, and sustainable livelihoods for youth.

Recommendations



Assist in progression towards higher education: While students demonstrated awareness of available pathways, field interactions indicate scope for further supporting higher education progression after Grade 10 through structured career counselling, subject selection guidance, bridge learning support, and continued family engagement.



Promote sustained employment and career growth: Stakeholder consultations highlighted the need to strengthen post-placement support to ensure sustained career progression. It is recommended to establish structured alumni mentorship, strengthen employer engagement, and enhance career counselling and placement tracking systems.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Fee waiver support enabled continuation of education



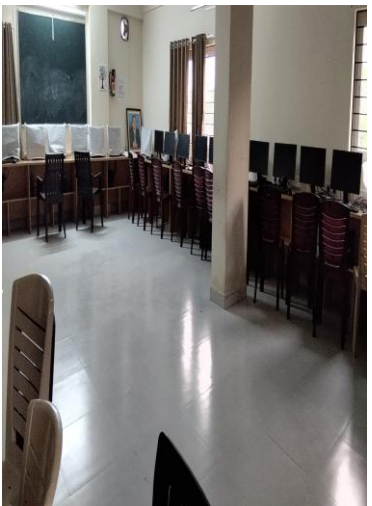
Supriya, a Class 10 student at KARV, faced a major personal setback after the loss of her father during the academic year. With the family's income disrupted, continuing her education became financially difficult and there was a risk of discontinuation.

Recognising the situation, KARV administration waived her fees and provided continued academic support so that she could remain enrolled without additional burden on the family. Teachers also encouraged her regularly and ensured that her learning progress was maintained.

Despite her challenges, Supriya continued to perform well in academics and remained engaged in school activities. Her journey reflects how timely fee concessions and a supportive school environment can help vulnerable students continue their education with confidence and dignity.

02

Training led to early employment



Ravi enrolled at KARV-JC with the aspiration of securing stable employment and supporting his household. Coming from a modest background, he required a practical pathway that could lead to early income generation.

During the course, Ravi received technical training, soft-skills development, and on-the-job exposure that strengthened his confidence and workplace readiness. Placement support from the institution helped him prepare for interviews and connect with employers.

After completing the course, Ravi secured employment in a healthcare-related role with a monthly salary of approximately INR 14,000. Earning a regular income enabled him to contribute to household expenses and improve financial stability at home. Ravi's journey highlights how KARV-JC was able to help youth transition into formal employment and build a stronger future through industry-linked skilling pathways



Project 2

School Improvement Programme (SIP) in government schools

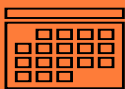


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

DRL's School Improvement Program (SIP) supports Government schools in various academic and non-academic projects, such as improving Foundational Literacy, Numeracy and English Language (FLN&EL) skills, promoting awareness on WASH through school health clubs, and providing need based infra support for holistic student development.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Andhra Pradesh,
Telangana and Himachal
Pradesh



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 4.05 Cr.

Project Activities

- **Foundational Literacy, Numeracy and English Language (FLN&EL) Intervention** – Implementation of comprehensive FLN&EL programs for 6th and 7th grade students across 100 government schools (88 schools in Andhra Pradesh (AP) and 12 schools in Telangana (TS)) to enable foundational learning among 5,524 children.
- **Integration of WASH activities in AP & TS** – Promote Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) activities through formation and strengthening of School Health Clubs, benefiting 38,724 students and installation of RO in 17 schools of AP & TS of select schools
- **Strengthening Quality Education in Government Schools** – Enhancing quality education delivery in 7 government schools at Baddi (Himachal Pradesh) by providing need-based infrastructure support including 230 desk benches and other targeted facility upgrades, directly benefiting 460 students.

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 2 Focused Group Discussion with **School Students**
- 2 In-Depth Interview with **School Principal / Teacher**
- 2 In-Depth Interview with **WASH Educator**
- 2 In-Depth Interview with **FLN&EL Teacher**
- 2 In-Depth Interview with **DRF Team**

Quantitative Interactions

210 students from 10 schools - 8 in Srikakulam, Vizianagaram & Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) and 2 in Medhchal Malkajgiri (Telangana)

*Source: As per documents (Memorandum of Understanding , Addendum signed between Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Dr. Reddy's Foundation, Annual Programme Reports, Beneficiary Data) shared by DRL and DRF, drreddysfoundation.org/education/

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

The following challenges were observed from discussions with various stakeholders including teachers, school administrators, students:



Foundational Skills Gap: Government primary and middle schools exhibited significant deficiencies in students' core academic competencies, particularly in reading, writing, and mathematical concepts. Children were unable to perform age-appropriate tasks, creating substantial barriers to curriculum comprehension and academic progression. This foundational learning crisis threatened to compound over time, leaving students increasingly disconnected from educational objectives and future learning opportunities.



Inadequate Instructional Capacity: Educational delivery in government schools was constrained by disproportionate student-to-teacher ratios, resulting in overcrowded learning environments. Teachers struggled to address individual learning requirements, leaving students without necessary academic support. The absence of differentiated instruction and remedial assistance created a cycle where academically vulnerable students continued to lag behind their peers, widening achievement disparities.



Limited Awareness of WASH Practices: Students demonstrated insufficient knowledge and practice of Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) protocols, leading to poor health outcomes and increased absenteeism. Many students lacked understanding of basic hygiene practices such as proper handwashing, sanitation maintenance, and clean water usage. This deficiency not only affected individual student health but also contributed to the spread of preventable diseases within the school community, creating an environment unsuitable for effective learning.



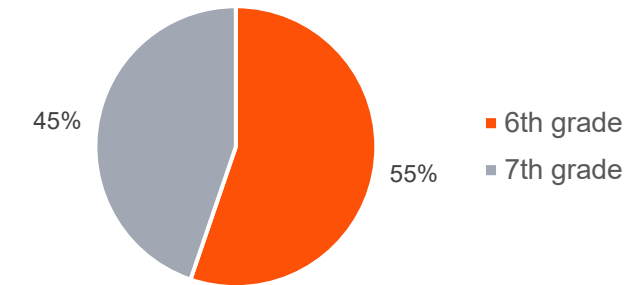
Critical Infrastructure Deficits: Government schools faced severe infrastructure challenges with essential facilities either in deteriorated condition or completely absent. Critical amenities such as clean drinking water systems (RO units), adequate seating arrangements (functional desks and benches), proper sanitation facilities, and basic classroom infrastructure were either non-functional or missing entirely. These deficits created an environment that hindered effective teaching and learning, impacting student attendance, comfort, and overall educational outcomes.

Profile of the Beneficiaries Sampled

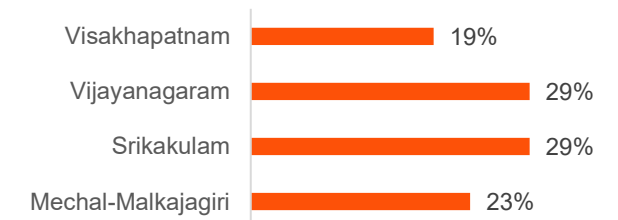
Gender Distribution of the Respondents (n= 210)



Grade Distribution of the Respondents (n= 210)



Distribution of Respondents by Location (n=210)



Analysis and Findings

Strengthened Foundational Literacy and English Proficiency (1/2)

- The project strategically focused on enhancing foundational literacy and English proficiency among students in 6th and 7th standards through targeted pedagogical interventions. Dedicated **FLN&EL teacher was deployed at every two schools** participating to work intensively with students, emphasising critical skills development in phonics, reading comprehension, and language fluency. Total 50 teachers were deployed for 100 schools in both AP & TS.
- During the project students underwent systematic assessment based on reading speed, word recognition, and blending capabilities under structured teacher guidance. Based on individual assessment outcomes, personalised learning support was provided to address specific skill gaps and accelerate learning progress according to each student's unique requirements and learning pace.

To assess proficiency levels, students were evaluated through four progressive assessments: **reading individual letters, identifying words, comprehending short sentences, and reading a complete short story in English.**

English Proficiency Levels of Respondents (n=210)

100% Successfully demonstrated letter identification

100% Achieved accurate word reading

98% Read sentences with fluency

98% Read and comprehended complete story content

Students were also asked about their engagement levels with English, revealing the following findings:



Exceptional Reading Confidence: 96% of students reported being very comfortable with reading English texts, while only 4% expressed some discomfort. This demonstrates that the vast majority of students have developed strong confidence and competency in English reading comprehension.



Strong Writing Engagement: 84% of students frequently engage in English essay and paragraph writing, with 13% practicing occasionally and minimal students (3%) rarely practicing. This high frequency of writing practice indicates active competency building and regular application of English language abilities.



Advanced Comprehension Skills: 90% of students can easily summarize texts in their own words, with only 10% experiencing some difficulty. This strong performance reflects well-developed critical thinking and comprehension skills that enable effective text analysis and interpretation.

Analysis and Findings

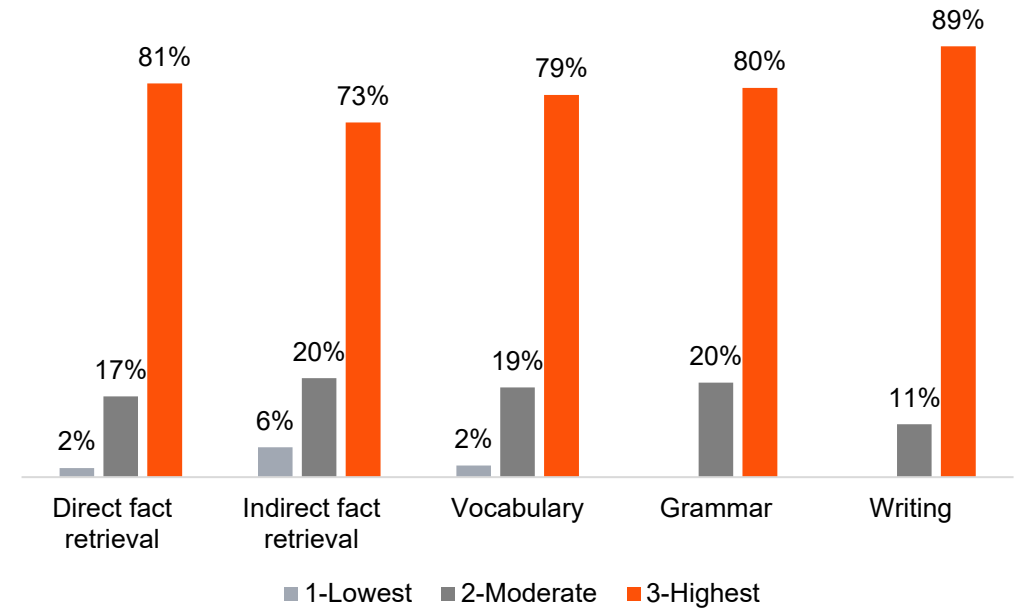
Strengthened Foundational Literacy and English Proficiency (2/2)

- Students showed confidence across all English language skills, with **writing being their strongest area** (89% highest rating) followed by grammar (80%) and direct fact retrieval (81%). The high performance in these areas suggests that students have developed **solid foundational skills in English language learning**.
- Notably, students found direct fact retrieval easier than indirect fact retrieval (81% vs 73%), indicating they are better at finding obvious information rather than understanding hidden meanings in texts. This shows that while students can read and identify clear information well, they **may need more practice with reading between the lines and making inferences**.
- The very low percentage of students rating themselves poorly (only 0-6% across all skills) demonstrates that the **interventions have been successful in building basic competencies**. However, the presence of moderate ratings (11-20% in most skills) suggests there is still room for improvement.
- Overall, these results indicate that students have, **gained confidence in English but would benefit from continued support** especially in developing deeper comprehension and analytical thinking skills.



The intervention delivered **strong academic outcomes with 95% of students reporting grade improvements** - 77% significantly and 18% slightly. Remarkably, no students experienced grade decline (0%), while only 5% showed no change. These results demonstrate the project's effectiveness in translating **foundational literacy interventions into measurable academic gains**

Assessment of English Language Performance Across Key Skills of the Respondents (n= 210)



"The Teaching Learning Materials provided during training have been incredibly valuable. Students now understand multiplication through engaging activity-based learning rather than rote memorization. The group-based teaching approach has been particularly effective in supporting weaker students, as peer learning helps them grasp concepts better while enhancing overall learning levels across the classroom."

— As narrated by FLN&EL teacher from Andhra Pradesh

Analysis and Findings

Enhanced Mathematical Foundations and Numerical Competency (1/2)

- The project also built robust mathematical foundations for grades 6-7 students through focused educational approaches. Specialized mathematics instructors provided concentrated support in **numerical literacy, arithmetic operations, and logical reasoning**.
- Students frequently underwent assessments of calculation proficiency and analytical thinking, with customized instructional support provided to bridge knowledge gaps and advance mathematical capabilities according to individual learning needs..

To evaluate mathematical competency, students were assessed through five fundamental operations: **basic addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and practical word problem application involving real-world scenarios**.

Maths Proficiency Levels of Respondents (n=210)

98%	Correctly solved addition problems
96%	Correctly solved subtraction problems
96%	Correctly solved multiplication problems
98%	Correctly solved division problems
97%	solved word problems with accurate application

Students were also asked about their confidence and engagement levels with mathematics, revealing the following findings:



Enhanced Problem-Solving Confidence: 96% of students reported being very confident in solving word problems in mathematics, while only 4% expressed some uncertainty. This demonstrates that the vast majority of students have developed strong confidence and competency in mathematical problem-solving and application skills.



Consistent Mathematical Practice: 93% of students practice math problems daily outside school hours, with an additional 7% practicing few times weekly and no students reporting rare practice (0%). This demonstrates exceptional commitment to mathematical learning beyond classroom instruction and indicates strong intrinsic motivation for skill development.

Analysis and Findings

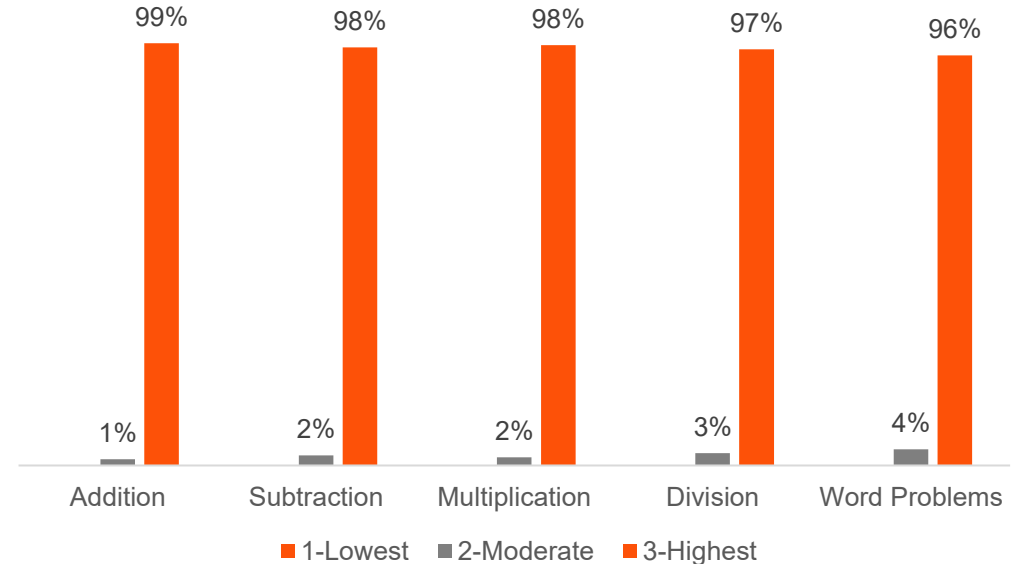
Enhanced Mathematical Foundations and Numerical Competency (2/2)

- Students demonstrated confidence in their mathematical performance, with **consistently high self-ratings ranging from 96-99% at the highest performance level**. Addition showed the strongest self-assessed performance (99% highest rating), followed closely by subtraction and multiplication (98% each), while division (97%) and word problems (96%) showed slightly lower but still excellent ratings.
- The data **reveals remarkable consistency with minimal students rating their performance at moderate levels** (1-4% across operations) and **complete absence of low-performance ratings**.
- Given these excellent results, moderate-performing students still represent **opportunities for focused instructional interventions** to achieve uniform excellence across all mathematical domains.
- Overall, these results demonstrate the project's **success in developing robust foundational numeracy skills and strong student confidence** across all mathematical operations..



The intervention delivered **strong academic outcomes with 98% of students reporting grade improvements** post the project implementation.- 80% significantly and 18% slightly. Remarkably, no students experienced grade decline (0%), while only 2% showed no change. These results demonstrate the project's effectiveness in translating **foundational numeracy interventions into measurable academic gains**.

Assessment of Mathematical Performance Across Core Operations of the Respondents (n= 210)



The transformation in students has been remarkable - they now confidently read passages, identify symbols, and handle mathematical operations like borrowing and carrying forward. Seven out of ten students read 50 words per minute, six exceed 90 words per minute, and 100% can do comprehensions independently. Most encouraging is seeing our learning levels jump from 26% at baseline to 79% currently, which reflects the tremendous impact of enhanced learning environment on student confidence and capabilities.

— As narrated by FLN&EL teacher

Analysis and Impact Findings

Enhanced Student Engagement and Holistic Learning Development

- The foundational literacy and numeracy interventions have yielded substantial improvements in student academic performance. To comprehensively evaluate the broader impact beyond test scores, students were assessed on various dimensions including **critical thinking application, learning motivation, peer collaboration, and overall educational environment**. The following findings demonstrate the holistic transformation in student engagement and learning experiences.



The project has led to enhanced students' intrinsic motivation, critical thinking abilities, and self-directed learning behaviours, demonstrating comprehensive transformation in individual academic attitudes and capabilities.



The project has also led to strengthened collaborative culture, institutional support systems, and conducive learning environments that facilitate sustained academic engagement and peer-to-peer learning, reflecting enhancement in educational infrastructure and community-based learning approaches.

100%

Recognize education as crucial for their future success

95%

Consistently apply critical thinking in schoolwork (84% always, 11% often)

95%

Demonstrate high motivation for learning new subjects since intervention

95%

Effectively manage academic stress and challenges (73% very well, 22% well)

74%

Actively attempt challenging problems independently post-intervention

97%

Receive consistent structured guidance and resources from teachers

95%

Experience learning environments that encourage academic growth

92%

Maintain regular school attendance

87%

Frequently engage in peer collaboration on academic projects with only 10% collaborating sometimes and 3% rarely

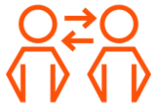
76%

Actively participate in classroom group discussions with remaining 24% participating sometimes

Analysis and Impact Findings

Integrated WASH and Infrastructure Enhancement Component

- Beyond enhancing students' Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) skills, the programme **strategically integrated Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) practices into daily school routines** while providing critical infrastructure improvements including **enhanced classrooms and RO water plants** at select locations.
- The initiative employed Health Educators who established, trained, and mentored **student-led health clubs in each school**, creating a sustainable framework for peer education that promotes **responsibility and long-term behavioural change**, ensuring academic improvement occurs alongside health awareness and infrastructure development.



Strategic Deployment of Health Educators: Health Educators were strategically deployed with **one educator assigned to every two schools** to ensure comprehensive coverage and support. These Health Educators were carefully selected from qualified public health professionals including ANM, GNM, and B.Sc. Nursing graduates who possess specialized knowledge and understanding of WASH practices, ensuring expert guidance in implementing effective health and hygiene interventions within the school environment.



Comprehensive Training for Health Educators: Health Educators underwent intensive **4-day WASH training** covering water quality standards, sanitation protocols, and personal hygiene maintenance. The program equipped educators with communication skills, and healthy habit promotion strategies, ensuring effective delivery of health education and sustainable WASH practices in schools.



Student-Led Health Club Structure: Health clubs were established in each school with three specialized leaders identified from the students: **a) Water & Sanitation Leader, b) Personal Hygiene Leader, and c) Health & Hygiene Leader**, each supported by a team of three students creating a comprehensive peer support system. Students participate in WASH pledge ceremonies twice weekly during assemblies, publicly affirming their **commitment to healthy habits and maintaining hygiene standards** throughout the school community.

4 Steps of Integrating WASH component in schools

1

Introduction to WASH Component of the programme and identification of Health Leaders

2

Formation of Health Clubs and Training of Health Leaders- Health Leaders are appointed from each section

3

Demonstration on WASH related aspects- done by Health Educator for all students during assembly

4

Behaviour Change- Adoption of healthy habits by students and peer learning

Infrastructure Enhancement in Schools



Reverse Osmosis (RO) water plants installed in 17 schools for access to clean drinking water in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana



230 Benches were provided with a seating capacity of 2 students each in 7 schools of Baddi, Himachal Pradesh

Analysis and Findings

Measuring Wash Impact In Government Schools

Beyond foundational learning improvements, the project implemented strategic WASH practices and critical infrastructure enhancements to create holistic educational environments. These complementary interventions addressed fundamental health and comfort barriers, enabling students to achieve their full academic potential.

Behavioural Change and Healthy Habit Adoption:

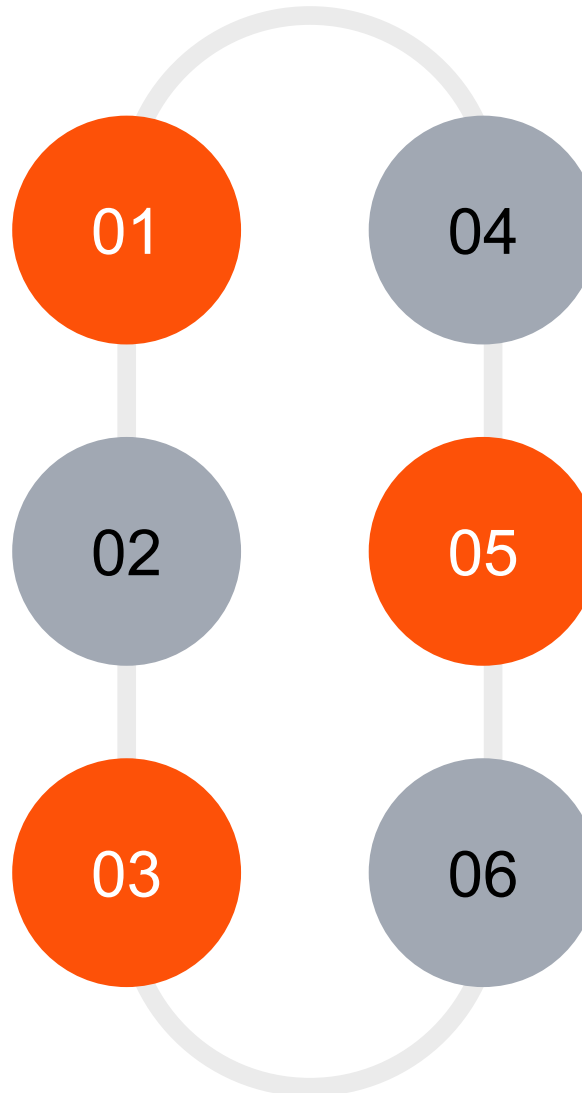
Students **eliminated water wastage practices**, adopted **personal water bottles achieving zero waste**, and maintained proper hygiene including nail care and handwashing protocols. Student leaders now promote WASH practices through health club meetings, creating lasting **behavioural change and environmental consciousness** that extends beyond the classroom to community level.

Enhanced School Sanitation and Waste Management Practices:

Students successfully adopted proper **waste disposal using classroom dustbins** and improved **menstrual hygiene management with appropriate pad disposal** in designated washroom facilities. These developments demonstrate effective waste management protocols and commitment to maintaining clean, hygienic learning environments.

Improved Health Awareness and Disease Prevention:

Health clubs enhanced student awareness about waterborne diseases & water quality standards. These initiatives yielded **measurable health improvements with notable reductions in anaemia, typhoid, and dengue cases**, creating a foundation for informed health decision-making and long-term preventive care practices among students.



Enhanced Seating Arrangements:

The provision of benches in schools **improved comfort and learning conditions**, particularly during harsh winters when students previously struggled sitting on cold floors. This enhancement contributed to **better attendance rates, increased classroom engagement**, and improved learning outcomes by creating a conducive environment that allows students to focus on academics.

Safe Drinking Water Access:

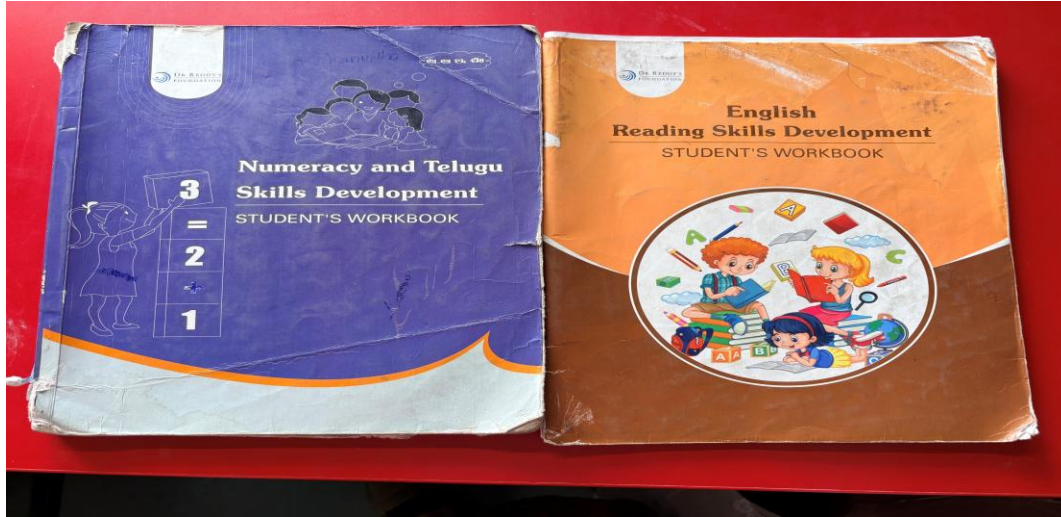
The installation of RO water plants transformed **access to safe drinking water** enabled students to understand water **quality parameters through practical experience with clean water access**, reinforcing their education about TDS levels and safe drinking standards while creating a **healthier school environment conducive** to academic success.

Overall Transformational Impact:

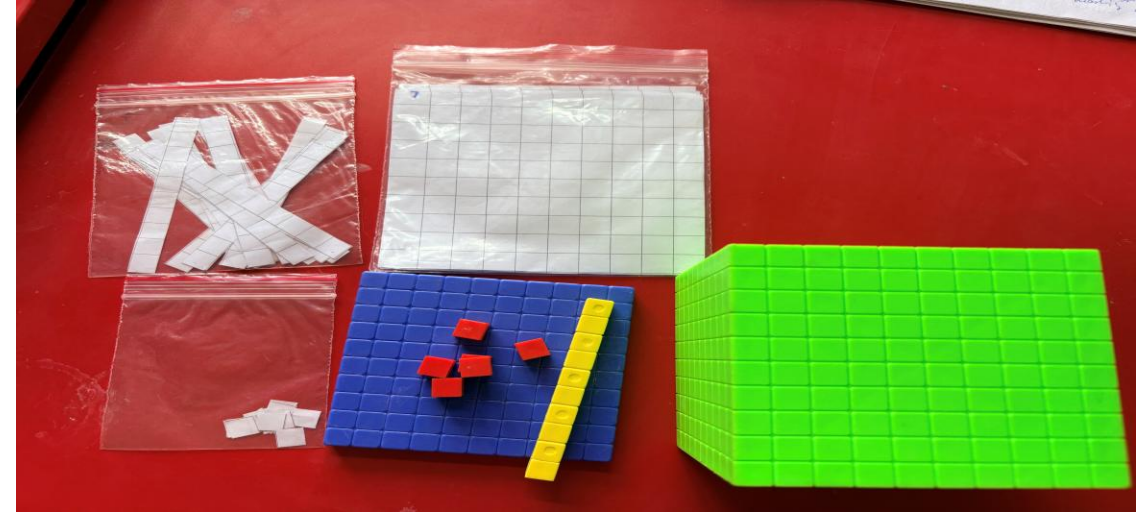
The integrated WASH & infrastructure interventions have created **comprehensive transformation**, with improved health outcomes directly translating to **enhanced educational performance**. This holistic approach demonstrates how addressing basic health and infrastructure needs simultaneously **creates sustainable improvements in student well-being**.

Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field



Workbooks used by FLN&EL Teachers



TLM Material Used by FLN&EL teacher provided during training



RO Water plant provided to the school



Renovated drinking water station



Material used for Personal Hygiene by Health Club members during demonstration

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project was inclusive in nature as it was implemented in government schools strengthening Foundational skills and ensuring equitable access to WASH facilities for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, particularly benefiting marginalized communities, with comprehensive coverage of both girls and boys through gender-sensitive interventions including dedicated menstrual hygiene facilities and equal participation in health clubs and leadership roles.

R

Relevance

- Project directly addresses critical foundational learning gaps (Language & Numeracy) and inadequate WASH infrastructure in government schools by creating conducive learning environments that resulted in measurable academic improvements while simultaneously tackling health challenges including poor hygiene practices and high disease burden that were causing significant absenteeism and unsuitable learning conditions for marginalized communities.

E

Effectiveness

- 96% of students reported being very comfortable with reading English texts and 84% of students frequently engage in English essay and paragraph writing.
- Students found direct fact retrieval easier than indirect fact retrieval (81% vs 73%), indicating they are better at finding obvious information rather than understanding hidden meanings in texts
- Demonstrated measurable outcomes including transformation from 10-12 daily absences to full attendance rates.

C

Convergence

- The project practices convergence by aligning with National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's foundational literacy & numeracy focus and Swachh Bharat Mission by creating improved learning environments that enhance primary students' academic performance while implementing comprehensive WASH practices and infrastructure improvements, complementing government educational & health initiatives through measurable behavioural change.

S

Sustainability

- Student leadership model with weekly meetings making is sustainable and ensures continuity and peer-to-peer knowledge transfer beyond project duration, while behavioural changes extend to families and communities through student advocates, creating lasting community ownership and self-sustaining WASH practices that persist independently of external support.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project has achieved significant health improvements through health clubs, which reduced waterborne diseases including anaemia, nutritional anaemia, typhoid, and dengue. Our focus on personal hygiene standards, proper handwashing protocols, and nutrition awareness has created a healthier student population.






Our project has significantly advanced foundational learning by creating conducive learning environments that directly impacted educational outcomes. Improved school environment supported better reading and writing abilities aligning with FLN objectives of building strong foundational skills in primary education.



The project directly contributes to this goal by educating students on water quality parameters, implementing water conservation practices that eliminated waste, and establishing proper waste disposal systems including menstrual hygiene management facilities in every classroom and washroom.

Recommendations

-  • **Enhanced English Language Support:** Allocate additional dedicated time for English instruction within the FLN&EL aspect, developing specialized modules to address rural students' unique language barriers including phonics training, vocabulary building, and comprehension skills that bridge local dialects with formal English instruction.
-  • **Expanded Teaching Learning Materials (TLM):** Increase provision of diverse Teaching Learning Materials including context-specific TLMs that resonate with rural experiences, interactive English learning aids, and hands-on mathematical materials, complemented by regular TLM training for teachers to maximize effective utilization.
-  • **School Teacher Capacity Building:** Provide training to at least one regular school teacher in FLN&EL methodologies and activity-based learning approaches, as suggested by school principals, to ensure program sustainability and continuity beyond external facilitator presence. This would create internal expertise and reduce dependency on external resources while maintaining quality instruction.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

A School's Journey to Holistic Transformation



Government Primary School, Bahadurpally initially faced severe infrastructure challenges with non-functional water systems, deteriorated sanitation facilities, absent waste management protocols, and chronic health issues including typhoid and dengue that resulted in 10-12 students absent daily from each class, creating unsuitable learning conditions. Through comprehensive WASH interventions including functional water systems with TDS monitoring, dustbins in every classroom, dedicated menstrual hygiene facilities, and health clubs educating students about hygiene practices, the school witnessed remarkable transformation with full attendance replacing previous absenteeism patterns, significantly reduced health problems, and students developing leadership skills through weekly health club meetings while becoming community ambassadors of WASH practices, extending positive behavioural changes to families and creating a conducive learning environment that supports academic excellence.

02

A Student's Path from Academic Struggle to Community Leadership

Ravi (name change due to anonymity), a Grade 6 student, initially struggled with age-inappropriate reading and mathematical concepts due to poor foundational skills, irregular attendance caused by frequent waterborne illnesses, and difficulty concentrating in unhygienic, overcrowded classroom conditions that left him academically vulnerable and disconnected from learning objectives. Through enhanced WASH facilities that created a healthier learning environment, improved his attendance dramatically, and enabled better focus on foundational literacy and numeracy classes, Ravi achieved significant transformation with 15-20% improvement in Mathematics and English performance, substantial development in reading and writing skills enabling age-appropriate task completion, and evolution into a confident health leader who educates family members about WASH practices and water quality standards, demonstrating how integrated WASH and educational interventions can transform a struggling, frequently absent student into a confident learner and community health advocate.

Project 3

Dr. K Anji Reddy's
CANDO-ETR Grants

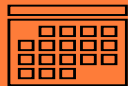


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objectives

Identify and nurture healthcare innovation opportunities that may otherwise lie dormant within the Indian academic ecosystem. Encourage and establish a culture of innovation within academia so that individual investigators become proactive drivers of their ideas in the direction of application, as a social good and/or a solution to a healthcare need.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY2024-25



Location:
PAN India



Implementing partner:
Ignite Life Science
Foundation (Ignite)



Project outlay:
INR 1 Cr.

Project Activities

Under the **Catalysing Academic New Discovery Opportunities - Early Translational Research (CANDO-ETR)** project, the following activities were undertaken:

- Through an open call to academics, 5 early translational research opportunities were selected and funded from multiple proposals submitted.
- Monitored and incrementally funded the 5 selected projects to completion along with attempts to take the projects towards application through appropriate mechanisms that included industry partners or investors.
- Conducted quarterly meetings of the selected academic investigators where guidance, training and direction were provided.
- Organised 2 Special Academic Research Cooperatives (SpARCs) workshops with 46 participants in total. SpARC workshops were interdisciplinary meetings where small groups of scientists were brought together to engage in brainstorming sessions in a particular area of science.

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 1 In-Depth Interview with a member of Ignite's Scientific Advisory Board
- 3 In-Depth Interviews with scientists (grantees) who received CANDO-ETR grants in 2024-25

Quantitative Interactions

- **17 participants** of SpARC workshops

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

The stakeholders interacted with shared the following challenges prior to the project:

Lack of funding for early-stage scientific research:



There is a lack of financial support to early-stage scientific projects, which may have potential to be commercialised at a future time. Projects that require the setting up of new lab facilities or the generation of data needed to explore the viability of new ideas struggle to get funding support. A scientist shared that only a small fraction (0.5%) of India's GDP is allocated to scientific research, compared to 5-10% in other countries, leaving many areas unexplored and underdeveloped. Funding tends to be reactive rather than anticipatory in nature. Further, most funding is tagged to specific areas or outcomes, restricting flexible exploration and hindering the development of break through ideas. While government departments have large grant allocations, the approval process takes many months. CSR funding towards scientific research tends to be limited and short-term.

Lack of connect between academia and industry



Research efforts in India are spread thin due to the small number of scientists in academia working in a given field. The absence of a critical mass hinders academia-industry partnerships from developing. This limits insight among academics on what the industry is lacking and currently requires. While academics working on early-stage projects have knowledge on drug discovery, they often do not have a solid grasp of the fundamentals of drug development, which industry experts possess, hampering their progress.

Lack of mentorship and critical insights for scientists



Academic scientists are not trained in drug development and hence need significant inputs to design and execute studies so that their findings lead to the stage where investors or industry take interest. In most cases, project reviews happen at the time of completion or closure, where the feedback given cannot be applied. Without periodic review meetings, they struggle to achieve their objectives or adapt their research based on findings that develop during the research process.

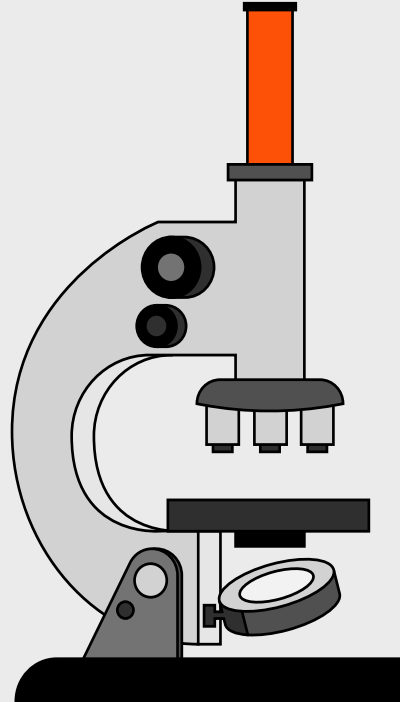
Lack of collaboration and sharing in the field of science and research



A major problem in the Indian context is the lack of collaboration among academic scientists and between academia and industry partners. Conferences tend to be regional rather than national and are infrequent in nature. Scientists work in silos and tend to protect their ideas, rather than share it widely. They are unaware of others working in the same field and this hinders the visibility of their research areas, which in turn hinders funding support to that field/sector.

Analysis and Findings

Critical financial support for innovative scientific development



- According to the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) member of Ignite, the CANDO-ETR project identified 5 early-stage projects which have potential and provided funding support for approximately 2 years*. This enabled them to do the **critical experiments needed** to assess the **value of the intellectual property created** and determine whether the research should be taken forward. The goal was to strengthen knowledge ecosystems in India.
 - **Rigorous criteria were applied** by Ignite in the selection process, where the originality of the proposed work, clarity of the proposal, feasibility of methodology, potential impact, collaborative possibilities and prior track record were considered in the shortlisting process. The SAB member highlighted the **freedom and flexibility given by Dr. Reddy's Laboratories to use funding across clinical domains** – which was not common among donors, who tend to restrict funding to specific areas. This allowed Ignite to **select academic scientists who were open to collaboration and learning** and were flexible in their approach, ensuring **high quality and reliability** in the knowledge generated^.
 - The grantees, in turn, shared that the flexibility offered by the grant meant that rather than engaging in incremental research, they could consider **challenging areas** where outputs could lead to **potential breakthroughs**.
 - For projects in the nascent stages, the grant provided was **essential to conduct critical experiments**. One grantee highlighted that the grant helped set up a **complex patch clamp electrophysiology lab**, one of four in India. Without this, his research would have slowed down by at least two years. Another shared that the seed grant was vital in taking up **research in a fundamental area of biology**, providing preliminary data needed to explore its viability.
 - While appreciating the uniqueness of the grant in supporting early-stage research, grantees also shared that the **duration of funding could have been longer** to allow for planning of the approach, appointment of resources, ordering and receiving of consumables, conducting experiments and working around constraints that arose during the research study. One grantee worked around this by securing additional funding from other sources to run the project effectively.

* Out of the five projects supported, two projects were closed in FY 2024-25 were not included in the impact assessment. The grantees from the remaining three projects were involved in qualitative interactions for impact assessment.

^ As per the Call for Proposals, eligibility was restricted to full-time faculty members affiliated with government research institutions or universities in India

Analysis and Findings

Quick turnaround time ensuring efficiency in operations

- Comparing their operations to a start-up, the SAB member of Ignite shared that in this project, the turnaround time was quick, and **grantees had direct access to the CEO of Ignite**, enabling **rapid decision making**.
- Grantees shared that unlike other grants, especially those funded by the government, **the application process was fast**, with hardly 2-3 months between proposal submission and project initiation. In fact, they pointed out that the highlight of CANDO-ETR was that **Ignite frequently inquired into whether the next tranche of funding was required** to move things ahead and **completed transfers within a short duration**, which kept research developments moving at a smooth pace.
- The SAB representative pointed out that **frequent interaction with the grantees** helped them recognise issues that arose and **deal with them promptly**. Ignite used their networks to **get immediate support** from other scientists and industry partners to overcome constraints faced during research. This **dynamic environment**, according to one grantee helped **improve the quality of their data** and produce robust results. Getting critical feedback from Ignite and external reviewers every quarter helped them **course correct effectively** and made it a rewarding experience overall.



Enduring mentorship and expert guidance provided throughout the grant period

- Alongside the grant itself, grantees shared that the **mentorship support provided** and **periodic reviews conducted** were the main highlight of CANDO-ETR, directly impacting how much they could accomplish in two years. During quarterly reviews, grantees were **quizzed by external committee members, who had longstanding experience** in both academia and industry. They not only **provided critical inputs** but also **leveraged their networks to help the grantees find solutions** to their problems.
- In addition to the reviews, Ignite also sent **frequent communication** sharing the **latest literature** in their area of research. This kind of backing, **unique to this project**, helped grantees understanding what was missing, **streamline their workflow** and **think deeper** about how to take their research in the right direction. It also gave them the **freedom to modify experiments** and improve the resulting outcomes.
- The grantees in turn **provided training and mentorship to research scholars** as part of this project, through which these resources developed experience One grantee shared that **15 individuals were trained and utilised** through the project and another shared that his co-workers benefitted from the review meetings which helped **hone their research design skills**.



Analysis and Findings

Enabled exposure and collaborations with scientists and industry partners

- Collaboration and sharing were essential in the CANDO-ETR project. As scientists work in silos and are small in number in most areas of research, the SAB representative emphasised the need to **create more conduits among individual scientists and with industry partners**.
- Grantees shared that that Ignite **actively facilitated interactions** between them and those who could help **take research to the next stage**. One example shared was when the investigation required male mice for in vivo studies, which were hard to obtain, Ignite connected the grantee to others in India who could source male mice for them.
- Additionally, the **annual investigator meetings** where grantees presented their findings led to **connections with industry partners** and **joint proposal developments**, creating **clear pathways for further scientific development** post the grant period.
- The initial agreement was to set up a **database of all scientific developments** and innovations in India – a platform that did not exist, but which could act as a central repository for showcasing and collaboration. However, the SAB representative pointed out that this was a challenge due to the time and effort needed to populate it comprehensively and the small number of scientists working in a particular field.
- Ignite decided instead to **focus efforts on setting up smaller communities** by running **Special Academic Research Cooperative (SpARC) workshops**, bringing in researchers from across the country as well as industry representatives, to listen to talks from academics on their developments.
- Showcasing innovations in an **interactive, discussion-based format** helped academic scientists understand what industry partners were looking for and which areas they need to develop their research. According to the SAB representative, SpARC workshops led to **4 proposals being developed** for funding support through Ignite – thus bringing **sustainability** into the project.

Participant Profile

With support from Dr. Reddy's Laboratories, two SpARC workshops were held in FY 2024-25:

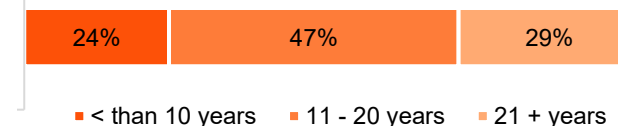
- **Computational Systems Biology** at IIT Madras in July 2024 – 25 participants
- **RNA Technology** in October 2024 at Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru – 21 participants

An online survey was floated with all participants, of whom **17 responded**. The details are shared below:

Gender of the respondents (n=17)



Years of research experience (n=17)








SpARC workshop attended (n=17)



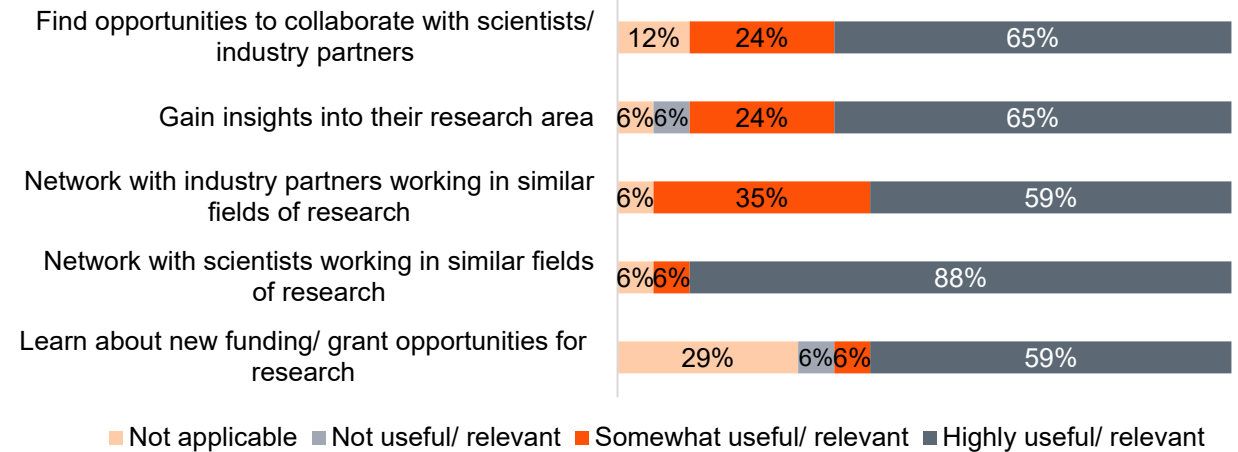
- Computational Systems Biology (12-13 July 2024 IIT Madras)
- RNA Technology (25-26 October 2024 IISc Bengaluru)

Analysis and Findings

Participant rating of workshop structure (n=17)

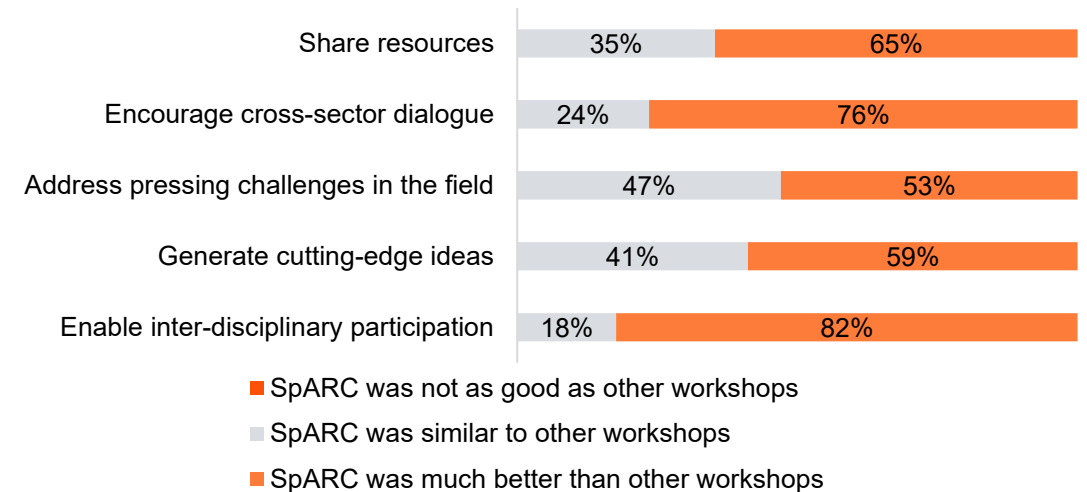
Overall structure/ format of the workshop and sessions		2.82/ 3
Duration of the workshop		2.82/ 3
Duration of each session		2.88/ 3
Level of interaction during the workshop		2.65/ 3
Accommodation, meal, travel arrangements		2.94/ 3

Participants rating of workshop relevance (n=17)



- Participants rated the **structure and duration of the workshop highly** (2.82 /3 on average). While most found the level of interaction sufficient (2.65 / 3), some participants shared that there could have been more time for interaction, Q&A sessions post-presentation and longer presentation time (n=17).
- **88%** considered SpARC workshops highly relevant to **enable networking opportunities with scientists** and 59% considered it highly relevant to network with industry partners (n=17). **65%** rated it as highly relevant to **find new opportunities to collaborate** and **gain new insights in their field of research** (n=17).
- Comparing SpARC to other workshops they have attended, participants shared that SpARC was much better than other workshops in terms of **enabling inter-disciplinary participation** (82%) and **encouraging cross-sector dialogue** (72%) (n=17).

Comparison of SpARC to other workshops attended (n=17)

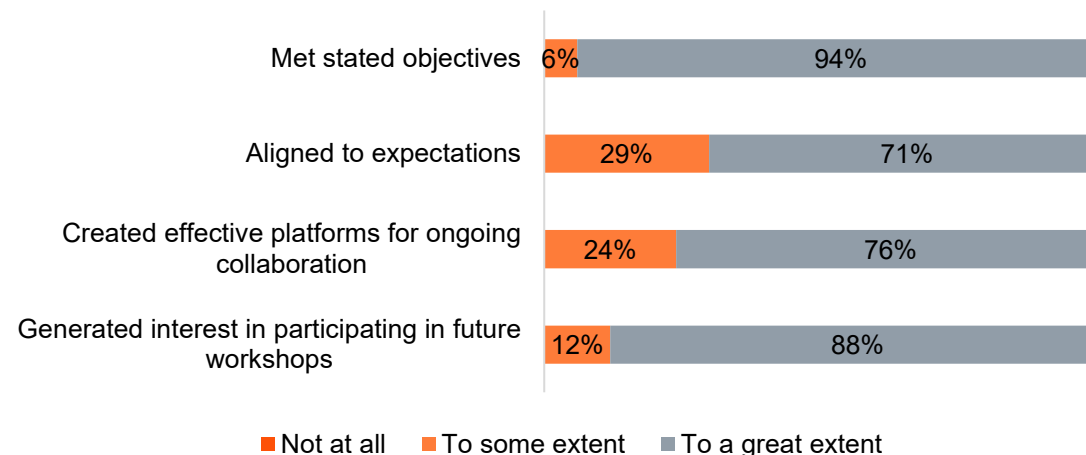


Analysis and Findings

Built sustainable outcomes for scientific development

- From the participant's viewpoint the workshop was highly successful in **meeting its stated objectives (94%)** and **generating interest and enthusiasm for future workshops (88%)**.
- Many participants shared that they hoped more such workshops would be held **at regular intervals** to facilitate collaborations and breakthroughs.
- Although **76%** of the participants found the workshop **effective in enabling collaborations**, some shared that **post-workshop engagement on group platforms set up by Ignite was low**. Only **24%** stated that they used the online platform set up by Ignite (JOGL.IO) to stay connected with other participants post-workshop (n=17).

Participant perceptions of workshop outcomes (n=17)



SCIENTIFIC OUTCOMES ACHIEVED BY CANDO-ETR GRANTEES*

GRANTEE # 1

- Identified a potential lead compound that inhibits ion channels and ameliorates neuroinflammation in animal models
- Two papers published in high impact journals
- Patent filed on novel compound identified and Investigational New Drug Application (IND) filing studies being taken up
- Potential to benefit the Indian population by reducing chronic pain through non addictive means in the future

GRANTEE # 2

- Developed data to target alternative splicing of RNA-binding proteins preventing cancer-induced cardiac cachexia.
- Results published in the Journal of Molecular and Cellular Cardiology and disseminated to the broader community
- Detailed study of protein function in heart being taken up
- Potential to benefit cachexia patients in the future

GRANTEE # 3

- Invented a novel small molecule for treating iron-dependent cell death (ferroptosis) that underlies a range of neurodegenerative conditions seen in stroke, Alzheimer's and Parkinson's and renal disease.
- Paper published in scientific journal, patent filed and pilot experimentation on animal models to commence
- Potential to help those with neurodegenerative diseases in the future

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project was inclusive and open to researchers working across clinical domains
- Selection was through an open call for proposals, allowing all researchers to submit proposals for consideration
- SpARC workshops were based on invitation, bringing together a wide cross section of partners from academia and industry

R

Relevance

- The project was relevant in the Indian context, where there is limited funding for early-stage research and lack of connection between industry and academia.
- As a result of funding support, grantees were able to advance their research to the next step.
- 88% of SpARC workshop participants shared it was highly relevant in enabling networking with other scientists (n=17).

E

Effectiveness

- The promptness of support provided helped grantees take their research forward through publishing papers, filing patents, commencing animal studies and finding industry partners to collaborate, making the project effective.
- Some grantees pointed out that the duration of support was insufficient to fully meet all objectives.
- 94% of the SpARC participants said the workshop met its stated objectives (n=17)

C

Convergence

- The project supported full-time researchers working in government institutions and universities, enabling convergence with scientists working public institutions
- Stakeholders repeatedly highlighted that the project strengthened collaboration with academia and industry partners
- 76% of the participants believed SpARC encouraged cross-sector dialogue and 82% said it enabled inter-disciplinary participation

S

Sustainability

- By providing grant support to academic scientists, the project was able to create outcomes that have the potential to benefit health and wellbeing in the long-term.
- Workshops, annual conferences and other modes of sharing and networking created sustainable pathways for collaboration, leading to robust research outcomes in the long run.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project directly contributes to SDG Goal 3 by supporting innovations and scientific advancements aimed at improving health outcomes and developing new treatments, thus enhancing human wellbeing.



The CANDO-ETR grant enhances scientific research, encourages innovation and fosters domestic technological advancements that can improve health outcomes.



By facilitating collaboration between different sectors, including academia, industry, and government, to achieve health-related objectives, the project contributes towards SDG Goal 17

Recommendations



Longer duration of mentorship: While the funding is intended for early translational stage research, the project can consider providing on-going support in the form of continued mentorship, knowledge exchange, collaboration and networking beyond the grant period to help grantees make significant advancements in their research.



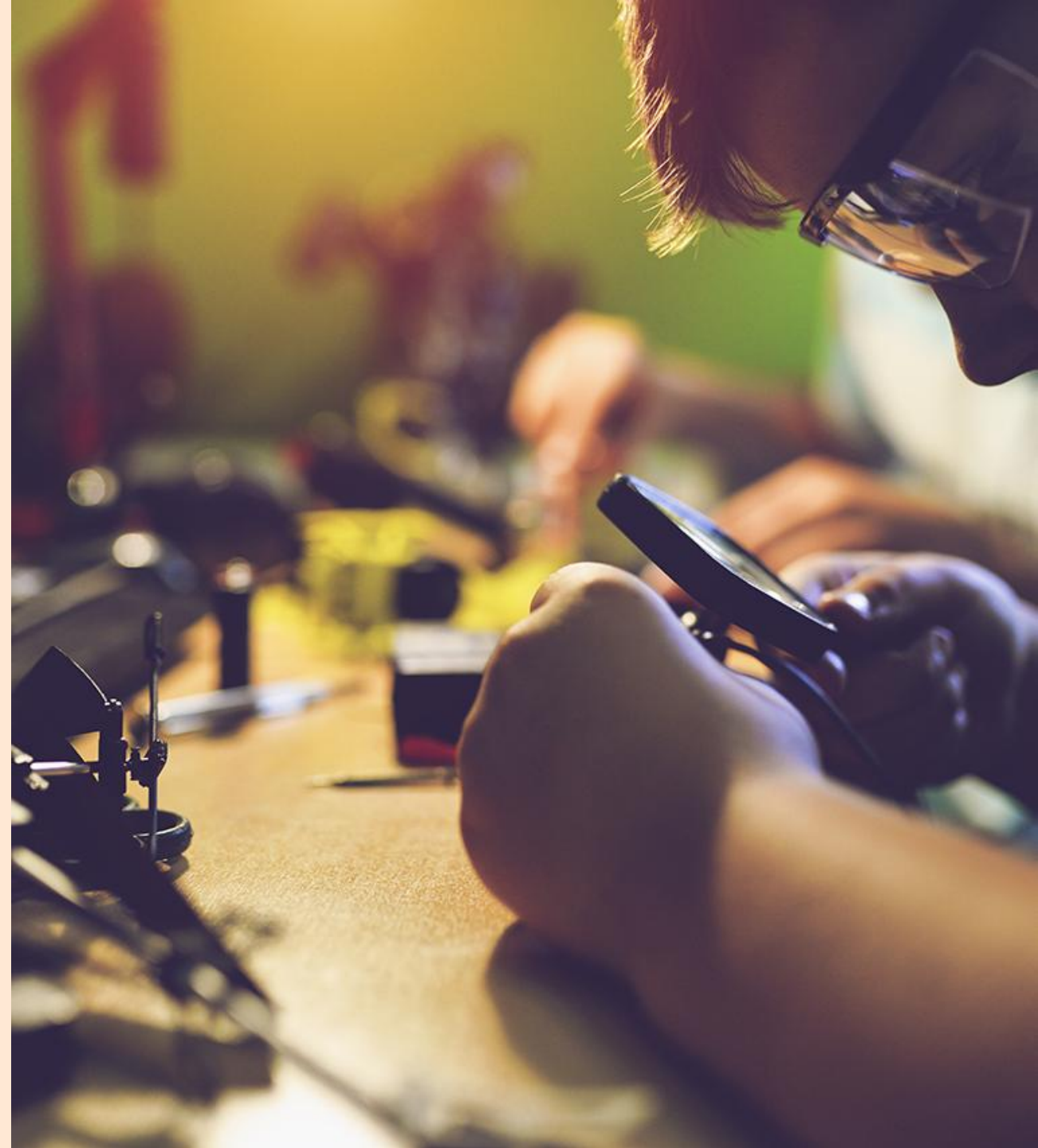
Facilitate more workshops: Considering the widespread recognition of the value of SpARC workshops in enhancing networking and collaboration among academic scientists and with industry partners, the project can support more workshops in different areas of interest.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Project 4

Youth Skilling Programme

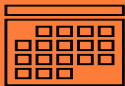


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

Dr. Reddy's Limited partnered with Dr. Reddy's foundation to provide industry-aligned, high-quality employability training to unemployed youth from low-income families, ensuring measurable skill development, certified delivery standards, and aspirational job placements that lead to sustainable livelihoods and economic growth.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:

Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Telangana, Odisha, & Madhya Pradesh



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 9.7 Cr.

Project Activities

- ❑ Mobilisation and enrolment of candidates
 - ❑ Identifying, counselling and enrolling candidates for the youth skilling programme.
 - ❑ Approaching companies and mobilising understanding their workforce requirement.
 - ❑ Approaching academic institutions and mobilising students to develop awareness about the courses and their benefits.
- ❑ To conduct structured **60-day computer Aided course** and **90-day (grow green - EV service technician, Solar panel Installation & grow tech full state data analytics, Artificial Intelligence - AI & Machine Learning- ML)** training and upskilling programmes at Dr. Reddy's Foundation centres for youth, equipping them with industry aligned employability skills, enhancing their career readiness, and providing certification upon successful completion of assessments to enable access to quality entry-level jobs.
- ❑ Provide job placement to unemployed youth.
- ❑ The project has reached out to 2,150 youth

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 3 In-Depth Interviews with **trainees of the programme.**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **a trainer.**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a **professor from academia.**
- 2 In-depth interview with **employers.**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **the implementing partner.**

Quantitative Interactions

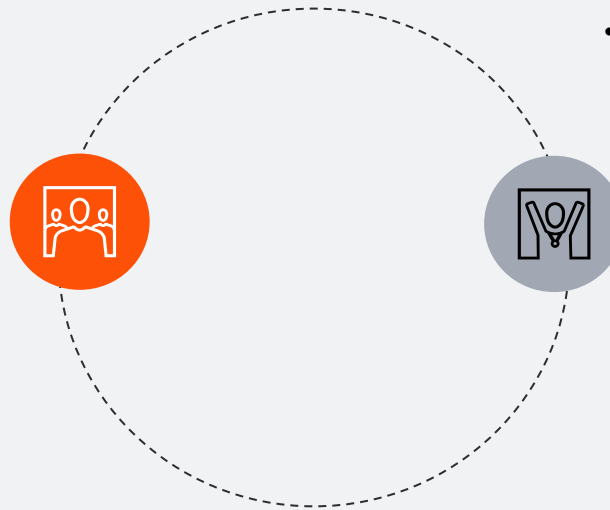
- 162 sample was covered against an original proposed sample of 161.
- Sample from 60 Days training - 26 & sample from 90 Days training -136.

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

Prior to the programme, the following challenges were shared by various stakeholders:

- **Lack of Industry-Aligned course in colleges –** Most colleges and institutes still lack industry-aligned courses. As a result, many graduates from engineering and diploma programs complete their studies with a curriculum that does not reflect current industry needs. Instead, they are taught broad, generic modules that fail to equip them with the practical, job-ready skills required in the workplace. This leaves a large section of youth unprepared for real roles and responsibilities in their careers.

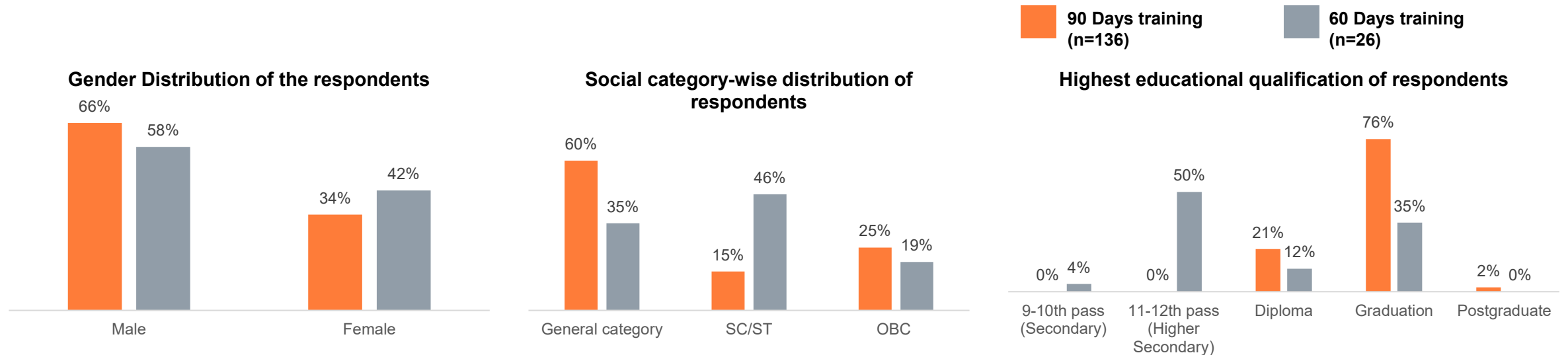


- **Youth Struggles Amid Limited Livelihood Opportunities :** The youth in targeted locations face significant challenges due to limited livelihood opportunities and a lack of industrial knowledge. With few industries or enterprises operating locally, unemployment and underemployment are widespread, pushing many young people into low-paying, unstable informal work that offers little long-term growth. This scarcity of opportunities often compels them to migrate to urban centres, where they risk exploitation and poor living conditions. give me a heading

Analysis and Findings

Socio-Demographic Profile of the respondents

The respondent's profile, as depicted below, reflects the programme's reach **across diverse population segments**. The distributions indicate **meaningful engagement of youth with marginalised communities**, while capturing perspectives from households with largely moderate educational attainment.



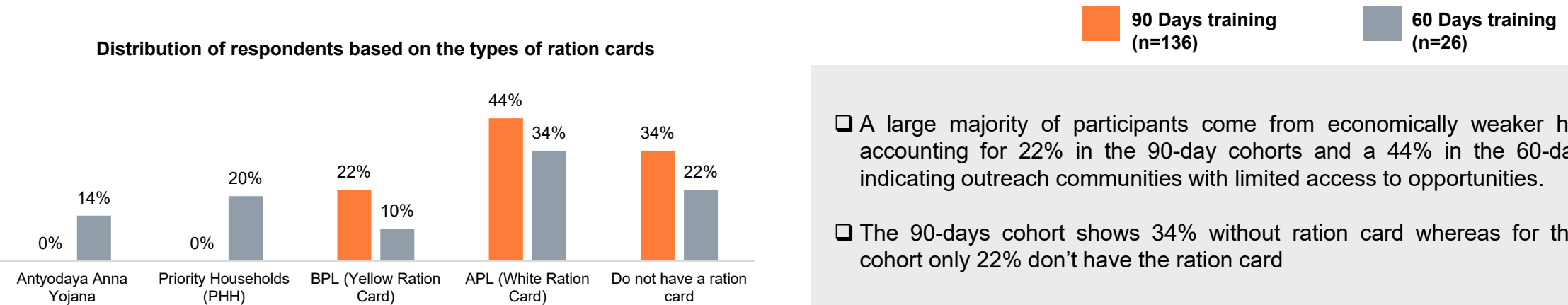
- ❑ Females constitute **32% of the 90-day cohort (n=136) and 42% of the 60 days group (n=26)**, while males account for 66% and 58% respectively. This distribution **indicates substantial participation of women** in the programme.
- ❑ The average age of respondents across both groups **was 24 years, perfectly matching the programme's intended targeted youth**
- ❑ In the 90-day cohort, 60% respondents belong to the General category, 25% OBC, and 15% SC/ST; the 60-day cohort comprises 35% General, 19% OBC, and 46% SC/ST respondents. The **presence of respondents from SC/ST or OBC social categories in the cohort** points to engagement with marginalised communities.
- ❑ Among the 90-day cohort, 76% of participants hold a higher-education background, reflecting that the programme primarily attracts youth with foundational knowledge in computer science and engineering. This is because the courses offered such as **(grow green - EV service technician, Solar panel Installation & grow tech full state data analytics, AI ML)**, require prior technical expertise. In contrast, the 60-day cohort has a larger proportion of youth with higher-secondary education (50%), as its courses focus on practical skills like communication and MS Office.

Analysis and Findings

Socio-Economic Profile of the respondents

The socio-economic profile of the respondents, as depicted below, reflects **engagement of the programme with households facing food security dependence, limited income participation, and low pre-intervention earnings.**

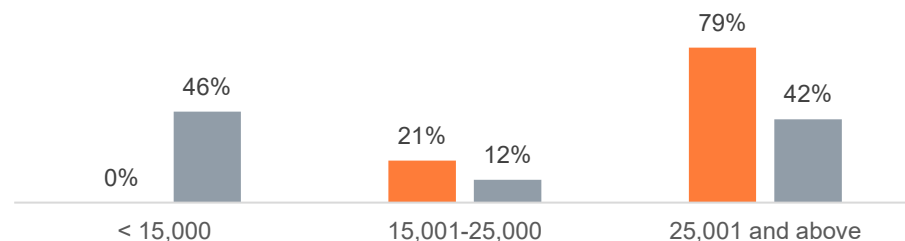
Distribution of respondents based on the types of ration cards



29% (n=136) of the respondents from the 90 days cohort were **earning prior to the programme implementation period**

15% (n=26) of the respondents from the 60 days cohort were **earning prior to the programme implementation period**

Average monthly income of the family in INR



- ❑ A large majority of participants come from economically weaker households, accounting for 22% in the 90-day cohorts and a 44% in the 60-day cohorts, indicating outreach communities with limited access to opportunities.
- ❑ The 90-days cohort shows 34% without ration card whereas for the 60 days cohort only 22% don't have the ration card
- ❑ Only 15%- 29% of respondents across both cohorts reported earning an income prior to programme implementation. This **low baseline earning participation** highlights the programme's **relevance for communities with limited access to opportunities.**
- ❑ A large share of the program's beneficiaries come from households with limited financial means, with many **families earning less than ₹25,000 per month.** This reflects the initiative's strong commitment to supporting youth from weaker sections of the society who lacked financial stability before intervention. On average, families comprise about 4.7 ~ 5 members, **with roughly two individuals contributing to the household income,** underscoring the importance of targeted support for these communities.

Analysis and Findings

Development of a Skilled and Certified Workforce

The programme **translates skilling inputs into tangible workforce readiness outcomes**. This reflects the programme's role in **enabling certification, improving job-market credibility**, and supporting the transition of youth from vulnerable backgrounds into structured employment pathways.

100% of the respondents reported **receiving DRF certifications post their successful completion of the course** across all the centres and all courses

Most trainees in the current batch come from low-income backgrounds and have faced difficulties securing stable employment after completing their education, which has motivated them to enrol in the programme as a way to upskill and enhance their employability in today's job market.

❑ The programme offers a unique one-week, no-obligation trial period, giving trainees the chance to evaluate the course's relevance before making a full commitment. This self-selection process has **kept post-induction dropouts to around 10%, resulting in cohorts** that are more focused, motivated, and better positioned to complete the training.

❑ By the end of the programme, every trainee who advanced beyond the initial one-week phase successfully cleared the final assessment and earned DRF certification. With zero dropouts and a **100% success rate**, the programme stands out as a powerful model of transforming youth into a fully certified, job-ready workforce while demonstrating effectiveness in both retention and outcomes.



❑ Many trainees enter the programme **after facing difficulties in finding stable jobs due to limited skills** but through structured training and peer support, they are able to transform into skilled, certified, and dependable workers.

❑ The programme's structured approach, combining screening, training, and certification creates a **reliable talent pipeline** rather than a one-off intervention. This consistency is especially valuable in underserved regions, where employers often face uncertainty about the skill levels and job readiness of first-time workers.

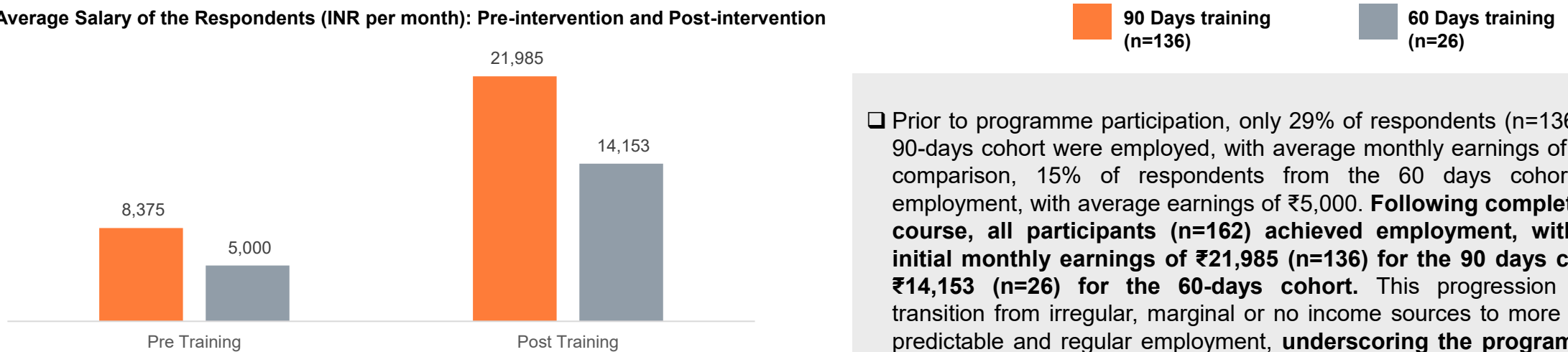
* These are the 90 days Cohort courses

Analysis and Findings

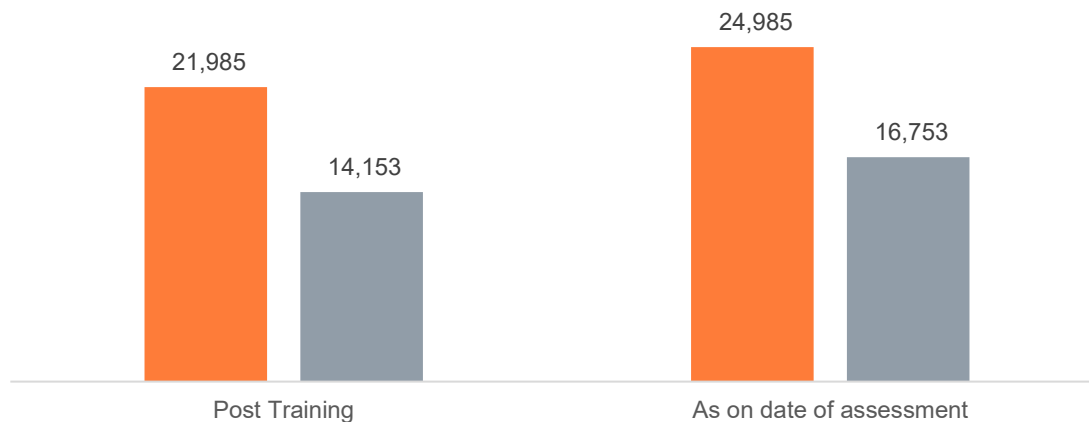
Strengthened Economic Position of Candidates

The programme has **facilitated a shift from low or irregular earnings to more stable and higher-value income opportunities**, underscoring how the training translate into sustained economic gains for youth from vulnerable backgrounds.

Average Salary of the Respondents (INR per month): Pre-intervention and Post-intervention



Average Salary of the Respondents (INR per month): Post-intervention and As on date of the assessment



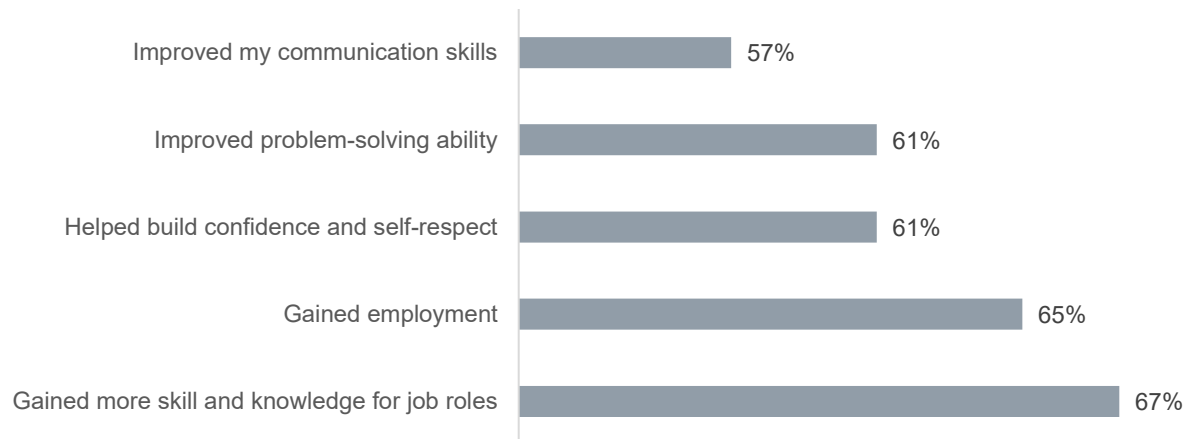
- ❑ Prior to programme participation, only 29% of respondents (n=136) from the 90-days cohort were employed, with average monthly earnings of ₹8,375. In comparison, 15% of respondents from the 60 days cohort reported employment, with average earnings of ₹5,000. **Following completion of the course, all participants (n=162) achieved employment, with average initial monthly earnings of ₹21,985 (n=136) for the 90 days cohort and ₹14,153 (n=26) for the 60-days cohort.** This progression reflects a transition from irregular, marginal or no income sources to more structured, predictable and regular employment, **underscoring the programme's role in enhancing workforce integration and income stability.**
- ❑ For the 90-days programme, the assessment indicates that among placed participants, average monthly income increased **from ₹21,985 immediately following training to ₹24,985 at the time of evaluation which account for 13% increase in income.**
- ❑ In comparison, participants of the 60-days program where qualification requirements are less rigorous, the reported average earnings of ₹16,753 at the time of evaluation. This reflects an 18% increase in income from the income during post training, underscoring a positive trajectory in earnings. The progression indicates that income growth extends beyond initial placement.

Analysis and Findings

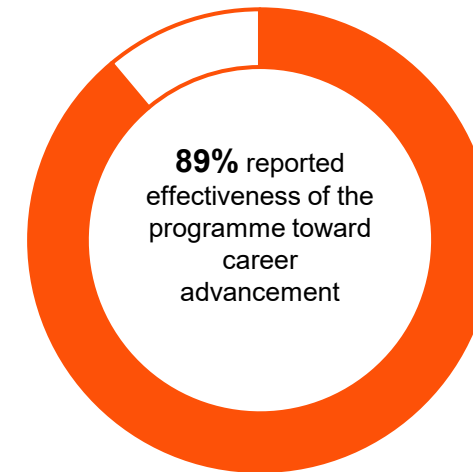
Strengthened Soft Skills and Confidence Leading to Sustainable Livelihoods

The programme also **has influence beyond technical skilling, highlighting how training contributes to holistic workforce readiness**. The outcomes point to strengthened confidence, interpersonal effectiveness, and adaptive skills that support sustained performance and progression in workplace settings.

% of respondents reporting on how the training has helped them (n=162)



Note: Multiple choice question, total may not add up to 100%



100%

100% of the trained and certified candidates (n=162) were still in jobs currently

70%

70% of the initially placed have continued in the same jobs since completion of the trainings

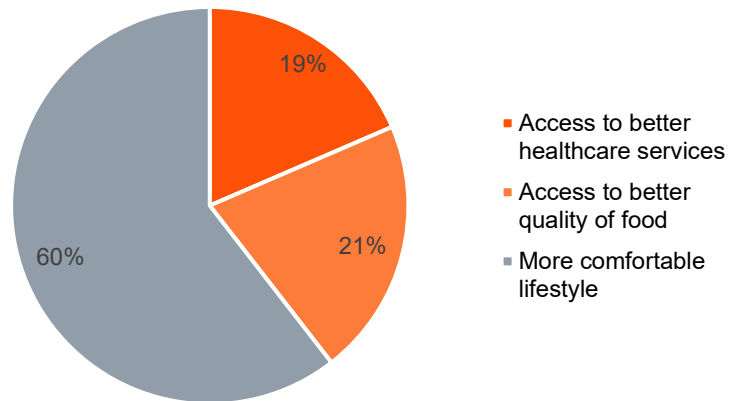
- ❑ 89% of respondents reported that the programme was effective in equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed for career advancement or personal goals. They highlighted that the programme helped them in **preparing for practical challenges such as cracking interviews and navigating career opportunities**
- ❑ The programme delivers holistic employability outcomes, with the strongest impact on skill enhancement (67%) and job attainment (65%), while also driving substantial gains in confidence (61%), problem-solving ability (61%), and communication skills (57%).
- ❑ Although fewer respondents directly linked the training to income improvement (41%), the overall pattern suggests that the programme first strengthens foundational and behavioural capabilities, which act as critical enablers for sustained employment and longer-term income growth rather than immediate financial gains.
- ❑ 100% of the surveyed respondents (n=162) remain employed post training, indicating that **livelihood outcomes have been retained beyond initial placement**. While 70% retained their initial roles, the remaining **30% transitioned to new jobs within the same job roles in pursuit of better income or working conditions, demonstrating an ability to leverage skills beyond first placement**.

Analysis and Findings

Improved Socio-Economic Status via Asset Growth

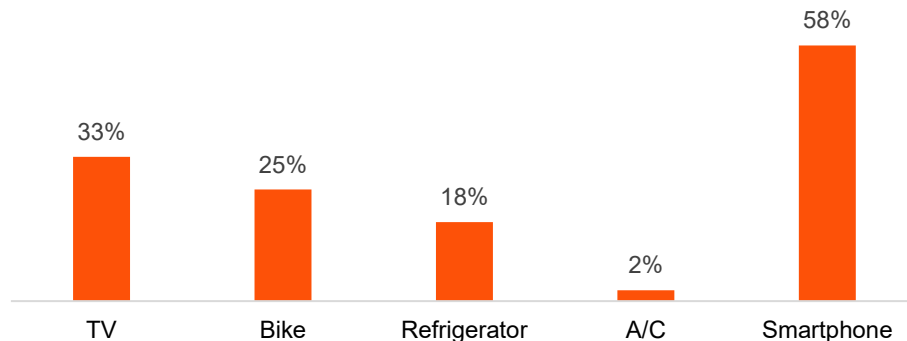
The programme's impact also reflects **sustained employment engagement, role continuity, and income diversification at the household level**. This indicates **strengthened economic resilience** and improved ability of trained candidates to navigate and sustain themselves in the Job market.

Trainees' response on the most important use of dispensable income post training (n=162)



- ❑ A majority of trainees (60%) reported using additional income to achieve a more comfortable lifestyle, while 21% spent on better quality food and 19% on improved healthcare access, **indicating a shift toward responsibilities in meeting household needs post training.**
- ❑ Smartphone ownership emerged as the most common asset acquisition (58%), highlighting the importance of digital connectivity for work, communication, and access to opportunities. This is followed by TVs (33%) and bikes (25%), reflecting investments in both access (information, entertainment etc.) and mobility.
- ❑ While high-value assets such as refrigerators (18%) and air conditioners (2%) show relatively lower uptake, their presence suggests early steps toward **long-term household asset building as income stabilises after training and employment.**

Types of assets acquired by the participants post training and job (n=162)



“Before joining Grow Green, I was struggling with irregular jobs and unstable income. The training in EV service and solar panel installation gave me strong technical skills and confidence in dealing with customers. With this knowledge, I was able to secure steady work and start earning a regular monthly income. This stability has allowed me to contribute consistently to my household and support my family. Today, I feel proud that my career is not only secure but also part of building a sustainable future.

~ As narrated by trained candidate



Analysis and Findings

Overall Program Effectiveness Review

It is evident that the programme has been effective in delivering its objectives as **there has been a universally high rating in terms of feedback from the trainees** on various aspects of the training programme.

Overall feedback of the trainees on various aspects of the programme (n=162)

	1-Lowest	2	3	4	5-Highest
Training Pedagogy	0%	0%	2%	52%	46%
Trainers (Qualification / Experience)	0%	0%	8%	52%	40%
Training Content and material	0%	0%	9%	46%	45%
Time allocated for Training	0%	0%	7%	56%	38%
Training Relevance	0%	0%	8%	60%	31%



- Majority of respondents rated the programme highly, with approximately 93% awarding top scores (4 or 5) across key dimensions such as training pedagogy, trainer effectiveness, content quality, time allocation, and overall relevance demonstrating consistent excellence in delivery. Notably, Training Pedagogy (98%) and Training Relevance (91%) achieved the strongest combined ratings, underscoring both the effectiveness of teaching methods and the alignment of course material with participant needs.
- During qualitative interactions with employers, it was consistently highlighted that candidates trained under the programme are entering the workforce with stronger knowledge and practical skills. These candidates are not only well-prepared but are also setting positive examples for others through their performance and professionalism. A majority of the candidates have become integral contributors within their organizations. They are actively **supporting their colleagues by addressing knowledge gaps, thereby fostering teamwork and enhancing overall productivity**. Their willingness to share expertise has positioned them as valuable assets in collaborative environments. Meanwhile, Grow Green graduates have demonstrated remarkable **leadership qualities. Many have progressed into roles as team leaders and internal trainers, taking on responsibilities that extend beyond their initial positions**. By guiding and mentoring others, they are helping to build organizational capacity and ensuring that knowledge is continuously transferred across teams.

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project shows a meaningful degree of inclusiveness because it reached young people, women, socially marginalized groups, and households with limited economic opportunities.
- The programme also appears inclusive from a social equity perspective 90-day cohort, 25% of respondents were from OBC communities and 15% from SC/ST groups, while in the 60-day cohort, 19% were OBC and 46% were SC/ST.

R

Relevance

- 15% to 29% of respondents across both cohorts reported earning an income before the programme. This shows that the intervention addressed a real need among unemployed youth.
- Overall, the project seems relevant not only because it targets unemployed youth, but also because it offers training that connects directly to employability and career progression.

E

Effectiveness

- The respondents, achieved employment following course completion, and that 100% remained employed post-training at the time of assessment.
- 89% of respondents said the programme was effective in equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed for career advancement or personal goals. In addition, around 93% of respondents gave top ratings.

C

Convergence

- The project performed well by integrating several stages of the employability pathway into one coherent model. The programme combines screening, training, and certification in a structured manner, which helps create a reliable talent pipeline.

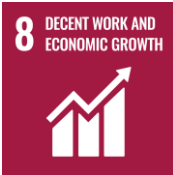
S

Sustainability

- 70% of those initially placed continued in the same jobs since completing the training. This demonstrates that the programme is not merely producing temporary placements; it is supporting employment that has some degree of continuity.
- The programme also appears sustainable because it has enabled participants to secure regular monthly income and contribute consistently to their households

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 8 focuses on ensuring decent work and economic growth across all ages. By providing industry-aligned, high-quality employability training to unemployed youth from low-income families, ensuring measurable skill development, certified delivery standards, and aspirational job placements that lead to sustainable livelihoods and economic growth.

Recommendations



Bridging Classrooms with Careers: The **Grow Tech 90 Days Programme** has proven effective in enhancing youth skills. To further strengthen its impact, the programme can be strategically expanded through collaborations with engineering colleges, offering it as a weekend training module for final-year computer science students. Embedding the programme within their academic journey will provide structured, industry-relevant learning that complements classroom education while equipping students for career advancement. Such partnerships will bridge the gap between theory and practice, boost employability, and create a strong pipeline of skilled graduates ready to contribute meaningfully to the technology sector.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Ram's Journey to Growth and Stability

Ram (name changed) always wanted to build a stable and successful career, but like many aspiring professionals, he struggled to find the right guidance and practical skills to break into the fast-growing world of technology. That changed when he enrolled in the **Grow Tech Full Stack Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and Machine Learning (ML) Programme**. Through the programme, Ram gained a strong understanding of data analytics, AI, and ML concepts, along with the hands-on skills needed to apply them in real-world business situations. The training helped him build confidence in working with data, solving problems, and understanding how advanced technologies can create impact in organisations. More importantly, the structured learning approach and industry-focused curriculum prepared him to step into the professional world with clarity and confidence. After successfully completing the programme, Ram was able to secure a promising job opportunity. With consistent hard work, dedication, and the knowledge he acquired, he gradually grew within his organisation and is now earning well and leading as a Team Lead. His journey stands as an inspiring example of how the right training and support can transform not just a career, but a person's entire future. The impact of this opportunity has gone far beyond professional success. Getting a stable job has helped Ram lead a healthier and more balanced life. With financial security, reduced stress, and a sense of purpose, he has been able to improve his overall well-being and focus on a better lifestyle. Today, Ram's story reflects the life-changing power of upskilling, showing how the Grow Tech programme helped him gain understanding, achieve career growth, and build a healthier, happier future.



02

Madhu's Journey to Financial Independence

Madhu's (name changed) life began to change when she joined the 60 Days Programme. Before becoming part of the programme, she had limited understanding of stable income opportunities, financial planning, and how consistent work could help her build a secure future. Like many others, she faced uncertainty about earnings and long-term financial stability. Through the 60 Days Programme, Madhu gained valuable understanding, practical exposure, and the confidence needed to grow within the organisation. The programme helped her learn the importance of discipline, regular work, financial management, and leadership. Over time, she not only improved her skills but also became capable of earning steadily and taking on a stronger role in the organisation. Today, Madhu is earning in a stable and consistent way. More importantly, she is now leading with confidence and serving as an example for others in the organisation. Her journey reflects how the programme does not just create income opportunities, but also builds capacity, self-belief, and leadership among participants. One of the most significant changes in Madhu's life is her ability to save money. With the steady earnings she now receives, she has started building her own savings. These savings have given her a sense of security and control over her life. She is no longer fully dependent on others for her financial needs and has become more financially independent. Madhu's story is a powerful reminder of how the 60 Days Programme can transform lives. By helping participants gain understanding, develop confidence, and move toward stable earnings, the programme creates lasting impact. For Madhu, it has not only improved her income but also strengthened her independence, dignity, and hope for the future.



Project 5

PwD Skilling Programme

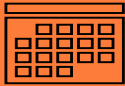


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

Dr. Reddy's Limited partnered Dr. Reddy's Foundation to mainstream Persons with Disabilities in the workforce by training them on "Core Employability skills" and "Entrepreneurial skills for youth with locomotor, visual, speech and hearing impairment.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Telangana and Delhi
NCR



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 6.77 Cr.

Project Activities

- ❑ **Mobilisation and enrolment of candidates:** Customized outreach activities for the centre to enrol the right target group (Persons with Disability) for the program
- ❑ **Training: The are two components of the training**
 1. Conduct structured 60-days training programme that focuses on **Core Employability Skills through computer-aided learning.**
 2. programme will provide **Entrepreneurial Skills** training to help young entrepreneurs gain a basic understanding of how to start and grow a business. The aim is to enable participants to increase their income by up to **50% during the programme.** To support this, each participant will also receive a **one-time grant of INR 25,000** to set up or expand their business.
- ❑ **Placement:** Candidates under the training programme are oriented about the reality of job market and their aspiration related to job is captured
- ❑ The project has reached a total of 1,352 candidates (40% were in entrepreneurial skills and 60% from employability skills)

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 6 In-Depth Interviews with **trainees of the programme** (3 each from 60-days cohort and Entrepreneurship cohort)
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **a trainer.**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a **professor from academia.**
- 2 In-depth interview with **employers.**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **the implementing partner.**

Quantitative Interactions

- 159 sample was proposed however to gauge the impact we have covered 170 sample. The sample distributed as 60 Days training - 105 & Entrepreneurial Skills - 65.

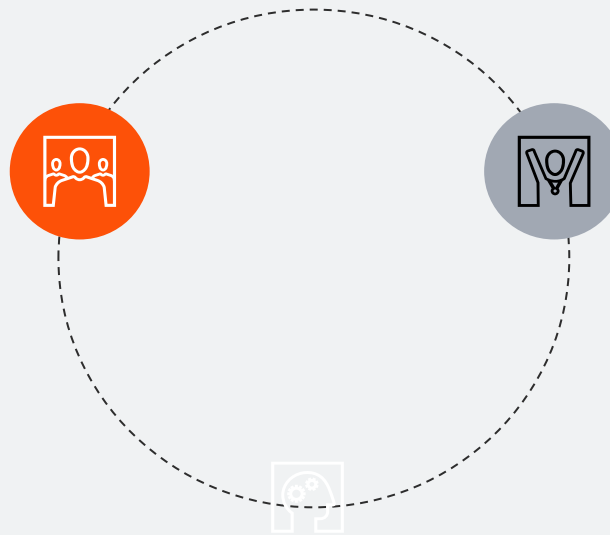
Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

Prior to the programme, the following challenges were shared by various stakeholders:

• Challenges Faced by Candidates –

- ❑ Candidates with disabilities face a combination of barriers that make their journey into the workforce particularly challenging. Many have only basic literacy, with very few progressing to higher education, which restricts their ability to pursue advanced training or modern job roles.
- ❑ A large proportion live in rural areas where training centres, internet access, and assistive technologies are limited, further reducing opportunities. Even when training is available, materials and facilities often fail to accommodate diverse disabilities, making participation difficult.
- ❑ On top of these structural issues, social stigma and discrimination undermine confidence and discourage candidates from seeking opportunities. Finally, limited exposure to career options, entrepreneurship pathways, and workplace practices leaves many unaware of the possibilities that exist



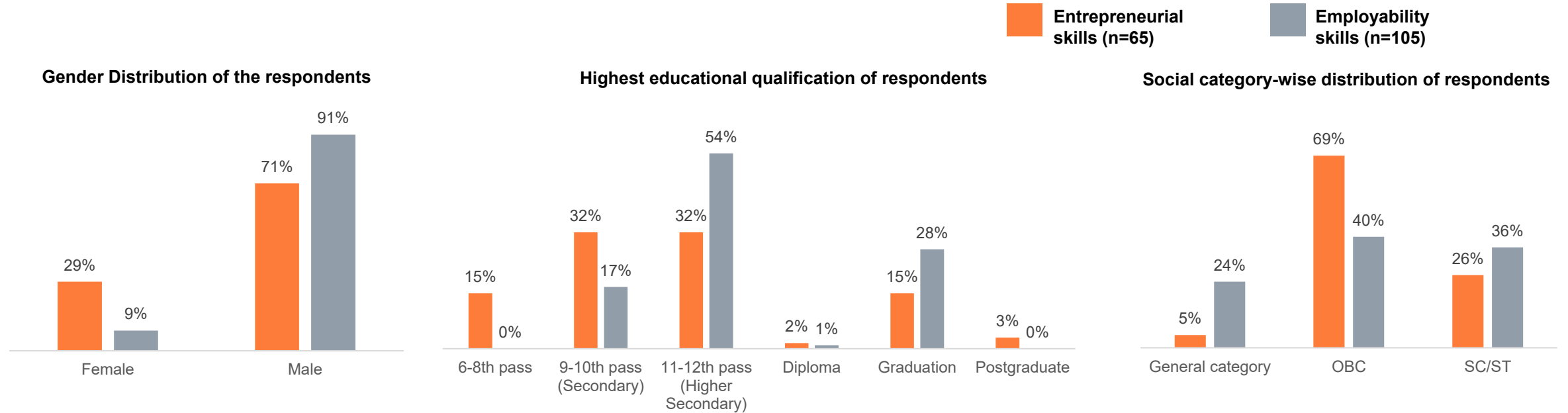
• Challenges in the Ecosystem –

- ❑ Employers often remain unaware of the abilities and contributions that persons with disabilities can bring to the workplace, which leads to hesitation in hiring and perpetuates exclusion.
- ❑ At the same time, many training programmes fail to align with industry requirements, creating a mismatch where candidates acquire skills but still struggle to find suitable employment. This gap between training and actual job opportunities leaves them underprepared for the demands of the market.
- ❑ Adding to this challenge is the lack of robust support systems career counselling, mentorship, and placement services are limited, making the transition from training to employment even more difficult. Together, these ecosystem barriers restrict the full participation of persons with disabilities in the workforce and highlight the urgent need for systemic change.

Analysis and Findings

Socio-Demographic Profile of the respondents

The respondent's profile, as depicted below, reflects the programme's reach **across diverse population segments**. The distributions indicate **meaningful engagement of candidates with marginalised communities**, while capturing perspectives from households with largely moderate educational attainment.



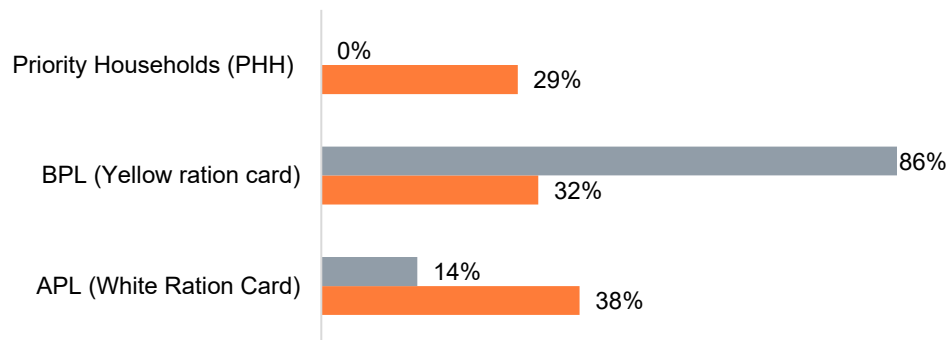
- ❑ Female participation constituted **29% of the Entrepreneurial Skills cohort (n=65) and 9% of the Employability Skills cohort (n=105)**.
- ❑ The **average age** of respondents across both cohorts **ranged between 26-28 years**, aligning with the programme's focus on **youth with disabilities**.
- ❑ Among Entrepreneurial Skills respondents, **69% belonged to OBC categories and 26% to SC/ST categories**, while in the Employability Skills cohort, **40% were OBC and 36% were SC/ST**.
- ❑ Entrepreneurial Skills participation was **higher among respondents with lower-to-mid levels of formal education**, whereas Employability Skills participation increased with education levels, peaking among individuals who had completed higher secondary or graduation.

Analysis and Findings

Socio-Economic Profile of the respondents

The socio-economic profile of the respondents, as depicted below, reflects **engagement of the programme with households facing food security dependence, limited income participation, and low pre-intervention earnings.**

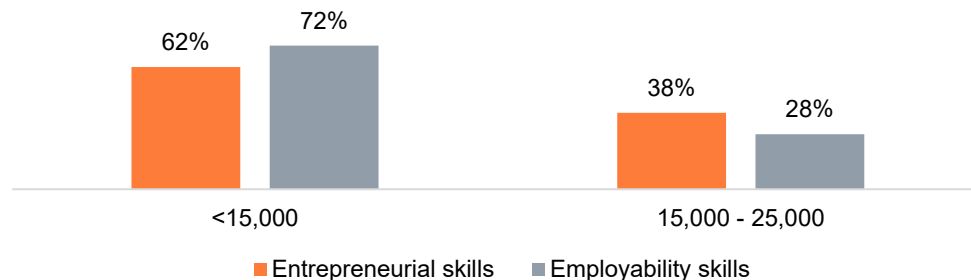
Distribution of respondents based on the types of ration cards



100% (n=65) of the respondents from the entrepreneurial skills cohort were **earning prior to the programme implementation period with an average income of INR 4,000**

Non of the respondents from the employability skills were working prior to the enrolment of the training as

Average monthly income of the family in INR



Entrepreneurial skills (n=65)

Employability skills (n=105)

- Majority of the **training participants come from economically weaker households**, 86% in the Employability skills cohorts fall in the BPL category and 32% in the entrepreneurial skills cohorts, indicating outreach communities with limited access to opportunities.
- All respondents from the **Entrepreneurial Skills** group were engaged in income-generating activities prior to the programme's implementation, though their earnings were minimal. In contrast, none of the respondents from the **Employability Skills** group were working at the time.
- During qualitative interactions, most of the respondents from the Employability Skills group shared that they were **largely unaware of the skill sets required to be employable.**
- A significant proportion of the programme's beneficiaries belong to households with limited financial resources, with **many families earning less than INR 25,000 per month.** This highlights the initiative's strong focus on empowering youth from economically weaker sections who lacked financial stability prior to the intervention.
- On average, households consist of about four members, with roughly two individuals contributing to the income, underscoring **the critical need for targeted support in these communities.**

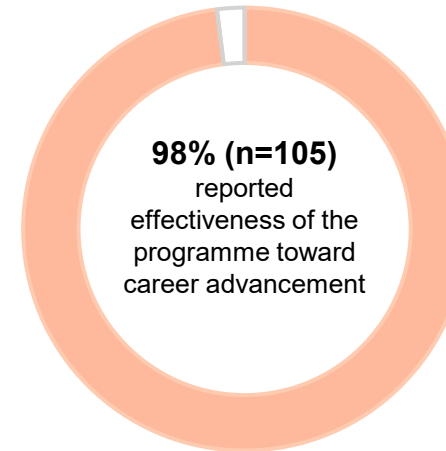
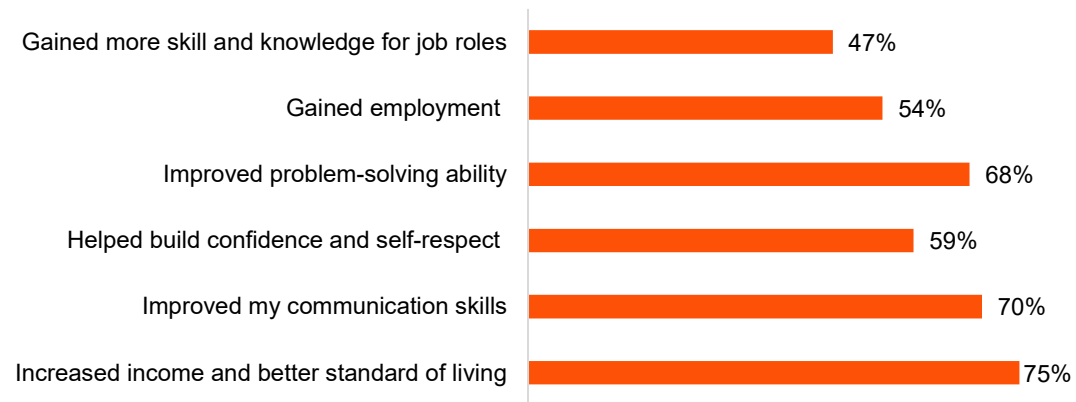
This low baseline of earning and participation underscores the programme's importance and relevance for communities with limited access to economic opportunities.

Analysis and Findings

Strengthened Soft Skills and Confidence Leading to Sustainable Livelihoods - PwD Employability skills

The programme also **has influence beyond technical skilling, highlighting how training contributes to holistic workforce readiness**. The outcomes point to improved confidence, interpersonal effectiveness, and adaptive skills that support sustained performance and progression in workplace settings.

% of respondents reporting on how the training has helped them (n=105)



100% of the trained candidates have received the certificates and give employment opportunity

Out of the certified candidates **75%** of them have been placed

Out of the candidates who are placed **98%** of the candidates are in the same job.

Note: Multiple choice question, total may not add up to 100%

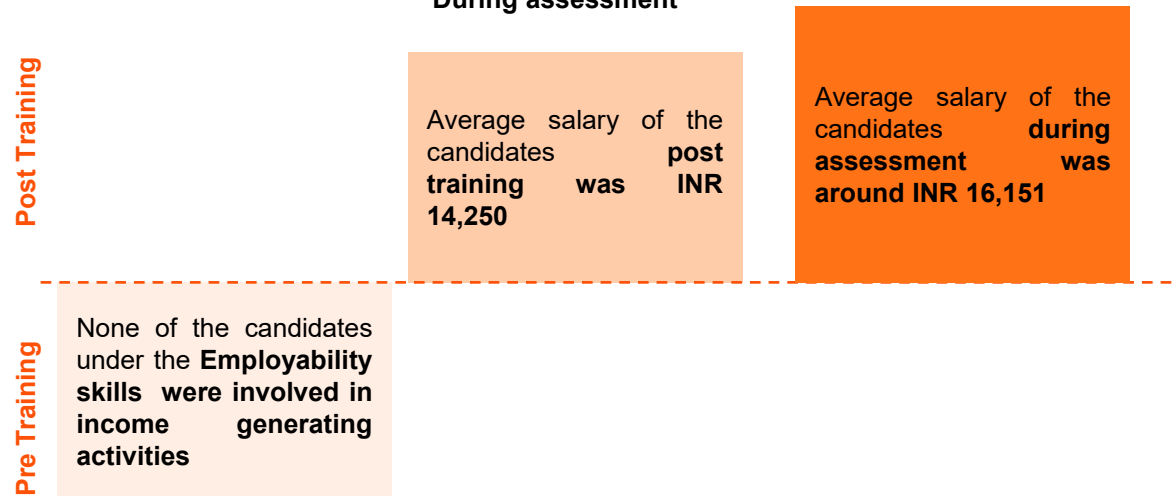
- ❑ 98% of respondents reported that the programme was effective in equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed for career advancement or personal goals. They highlighted that the programme helped them in **preparing for practical challenges such as cracking interviews and navigating career opportunities**
- ❑ The programme **delivers holistic employability outcomes**, with a major impact on skill enhancement (70%) and job attainment (75%), while also driving substantial gains in confidence (59%) and problem-solving ability (68%).
- ❑ Although fewer respondents directly linked the training to income improvement (41%), the overall pattern suggests that the programme **first strengthens foundational and behavioural capabilities, which act as enablers for sustained employment** and longer-term income growth rather than immediate financial gains.
- ❑ Among the surveyed respondents (n=105), 75% remain employed after completing the training, demonstrating that livelihood outcomes have been sustained beyond initial job placements. **Notably, 98% continued in their original roles**, while the remaining 2% shifted from active employment to part-time freelance work combined with household responsibilities. The training has played a **pivotal role in equipping youth with new skills, enabling the majority to begin earning and establish sustainable livelihood opportunities**.

Analysis and Findings

Empowered Candidates, Elevated Socio-Economic Status through Asset Growth - PwD Employability skills

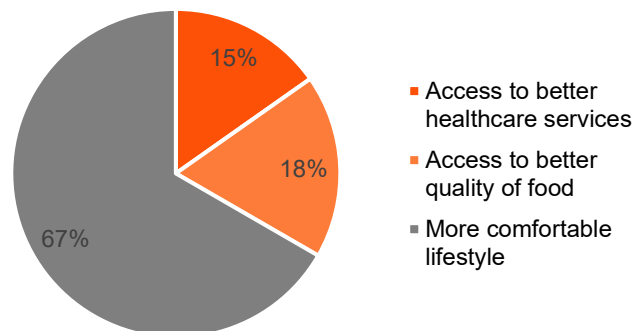
The programme has **facilitated a shift from no earnings to more stable and higher-value income opportunities**, underscoring how the training translate into sustained economic gains for youth from vulnerable backgrounds.

Average Salary of the Respondents (INR per month): Pre-intervention, Post-intervention & During assessment

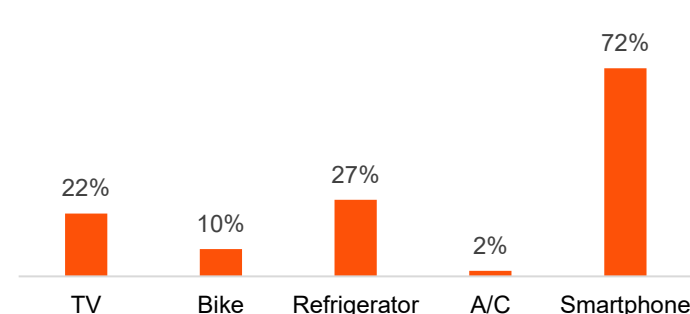


- ❑ Before the training, none of the respondents had jobs. When probed further, they explained that they did not know how or where to apply for work and were unsure about the skills needed.
- ❑ This lack of awareness meant they had no source of income. After completing the training, **however, many were placed in roles such as customer support and business process outsourcing**. They were able to work responsibly and earn a steady income. In fact, their earnings increased by about 12% between the time of placement and during assessment.
- ❑ Further, during the qualitative interaction with the employers, they informed that the candidates from the project centres are well-prepared, **show strong teamwork, and adapt quickly to their roles**.
- ❑ **Some of these candidates have even been recognized as top performers of the month**, which has helped them earn additional variable pay. This feedback highlights both the quality of training and the positive impact on the candidates' career growth.
- ❑ A majority of trainees (67%) reported using additional income to achieve a more comfortable lifestyle, while 18% spent on better quality food and 15% on improved healthcare access, **indicating a shift toward responsibilities in meeting household needs post training**.

Trainees' response on the most important use of dispensable income post training (n=79)



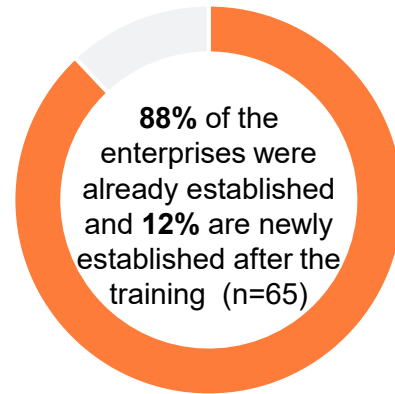
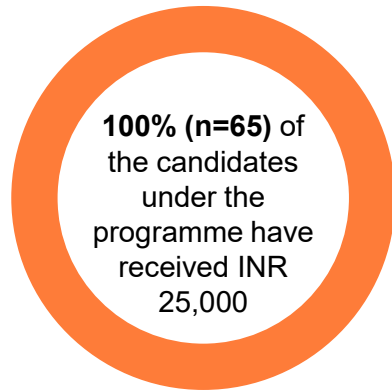
Types of assets acquired by the participants post training and job (n=79)



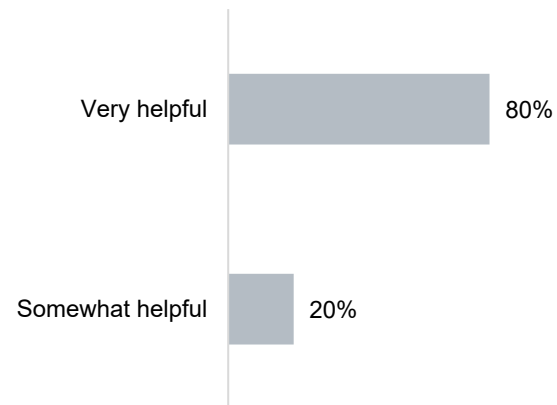
Analysis and Findings

Enabling candidates to expand or create their own small enterprise - PwD Entrepreneurial skills

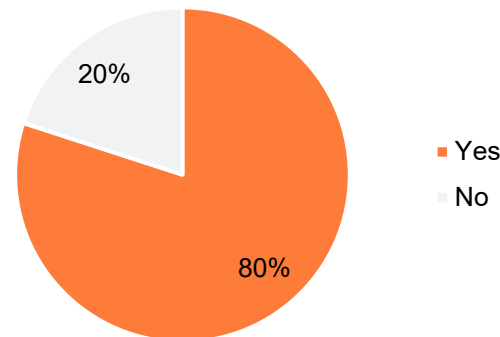
The programme has facilitated in providing one time grant to certain candidates INR 25,000 for establishing their or expanding their enterprise and helping them grow their income by 50% from what they were earning before the programme implementation.



% of candidates considered mentorship helpful in making business decisions (n=65)



% of candidates reported customer base have also increased (n=65)



- ❑ All candidates enrolled in the programme have successfully received the financial support of INR 25,000. **Among them, approximately 12% have gone on to establish new enterprises, having previously worked as employees in shops and similar establishments.** Candidates also reported that the training and mentorship provided under the programme played a significant role in their decision-making processes.
- ❑ As a result of the training, **80% of participants indicated that they were able to expand their customer base.** On further probing, they explained that this growth was driven by an increase in the variety of goods and services offered. Additionally, the training helped them adopt a more diligent and growth-oriented attitude toward their businesses, enabling them to complete tasks more effectively and focus on long-term success.
- ❑ The support provided under **this programme is closely aligned with the objectives of the Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP)¹ initiative.**
- ❑ RAMP aims to deliver comprehensive support to MSMEs by enhancing market and credit access, strengthening institutions and governance at both the Centre and State levels, improving Centre-State linkages and partnerships, addressing challenges such as delayed payments, and promoting the greening of MSMEs. The assistance offered by DRL mirrors the goals and framework of this national programme.

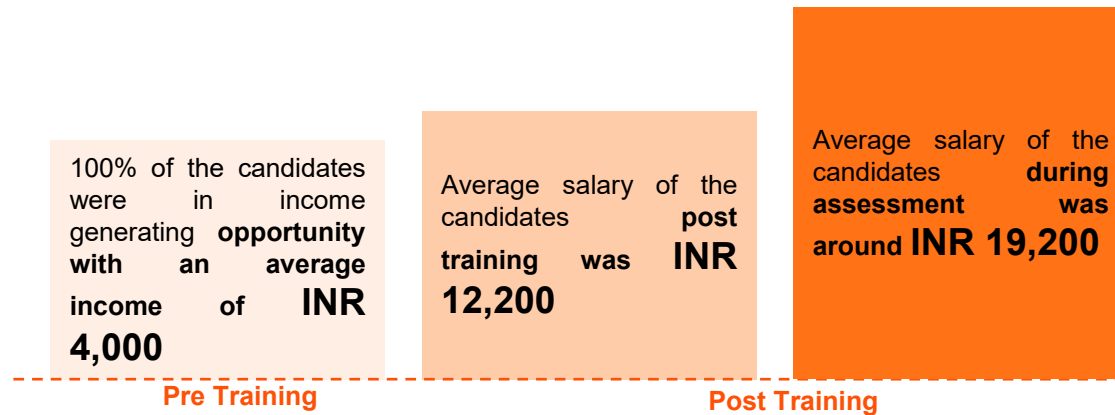
1. [https://msme1connect.up.gov.in/about-ramp#:~:text=%E2%80%9CRaising%20and%20Accelerating%20MSME%20Performance,Enterprises%20\(MSMEs\)%20in%20India.](https://msme1connect.up.gov.in/about-ramp#:~:text=%E2%80%9CRaising%20and%20Accelerating%20MSME%20Performance,Enterprises%20(MSMEs)%20in%20India.)

Analysis and Findings

Enabling candidates to expand or create their own small enterprise - PwD Entrepreneurial skills

The programme has **facilitated a shift from low income to more stable and higher-value income opportunities**, underscoring how the support translate into sustained economic gains for youth from vulnerable backgrounds.

Average Salary of the Respondents (INR per month): Pre-intervention, Post-intervention & During assessment



□ The Entrepreneurial Skills Programme has enabled candidates to establish small businesses, primarily tailoring shops and daily essential stores. Many participants have also improved their supply chains by securing better arrangements with distributors. During the assessment of their monthly income revealed a significant rise compared to their earnings before joining the programme. All candidates trained under the initiative were actively engaged in **income-generating activities**. Their **average monthly income, which stood at INR 4,000 prior to training, increased to INR 12,200 and later reached INR 19,200.**

□ During qualitative interactions, candidates reported that the increase in income has allowed them to save between **INR 8,000 and INR 10,000 after covering household expenses. Importantly, around 40% of these savings are reinvested into their businesses, such as purchasing new machines or expanding product offerings.** This reinvestment has supported local business growth and further boosted their earnings, demonstrating a positive cycle of income generation, savings, and reinvestment.

“ Before joining this course, I was working as a tailor in a shop, earning around INR 5,000 per month. With the growing demands of my household, I wanted to start something of my own from home. After completing the training and receiving INR 25,000, I invested in a sewing machine, which became the foundation for establishing my own shop. Thanks to this training and support, I am now able to run my tailoring business independently and earn a monthly income of INR 20,000. This journey has truly transformed my livelihood and given me the confidence to grow further.
~ Narrated by one the trainee ”



IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project reached marginalized communities, with a high share of participants from OBC and SC/ST categories, showing inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups in both entrepreneurial and employability cohorts
- The programme specifically targeted youth with disabilities, including those with locomotor, visual, speech, and hearing impairments, and also included participants from economically weaker households, including many BPL families

R

Relevance

- The project addressed key pre-existing barriers faced by PwDs, such as low awareness of career opportunities, limited employability skills, social stigma, and lack of accessible training
- It was relevant to participants' economic needs, as none of the employability trainees were working before enrolment and entrepreneurial trainees had very low average earnings of about INR 4,000 before the programme

E

Effectiveness

- Among employability trainees, 98% reported that the programme was effective in equipping them with skills and knowledge needed for career advancement or personal goals
- 75% of certified employability candidates were placed, and entrepreneurial participants increased their average monthly income from INR 4,000 pre-training to INR 19,200 during assessment

C

Convergence

- The programme aligned closely with the objectives of the national Raising and Accelerating MSME Performance (RAMP) initiative, showing convergence with broader government MSME support frameworks
- The project combined outreach, training, certification, mentorship, grants, and placement support, creating convergence between skilling, livelihood promotion, and enterprise development

S

Sustainability

- Among employability candidates who were placed, 98% remained in the same job, indicating sustained employment outcomes beyond initial placement
- Entrepreneurial candidates demonstrated sustainability through savings and reinvestment, with many saving INR 8,000–10,000 and reinvesting around 40% into their businesses for further growth

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 8 focuses on ensuring decent work and economic growth across all ages. By providing industry-aligned, high-quality employability training to mainstream Persons with Disabilities in the workforce by training them on “Core Employability skills” and “Entrepreneurial skills for youth”

Recommendations



Opportunities for Everyone: Since this programme primarily focuses on persons with disabilities (PwD), it is recommended that, for employability skills training, they tie up with schools and colleges for specially abled students and deliver the training at these institutions. This will help students build relevant skills, improve their employability, and ensure they are at least job-ready by the time they graduate.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Journey of Determination

Aman (Name changed) an 26-year-old from Bihar, once earned just ₹5,000 in his village and was unsure whether DRF could change his life. But through determination and hard work, he proved otherwise. Growth, and build a healthier, happier future. During his training, Aman kept asking questions until he overcame his struggles with English and computers. His persistence helped him build confidence and stay committed to learning. Today, Aman works in loan and credit card collections at IDFC Bank. His base salary has grown from ₹14,000 to ₹18,000, and he earns an additional ₹8,000 to ₹10,000 in incentives during his best-performing days. Known for his extraordinary dedication, he works long hours and consistently ranks among the top 10 in a team where 87% of members are able-bodied. He has also received multiple Excellence awards. Aman's journey from doubt to achievement is a powerful example of resilience, discipline, and the life-changing impact of opportunity.



02

Journey to Financial Independence

Rohan, (name changed) a 25-year-old young man who completed his 12th standard, comes from a struggling single-parent household and lives with an orthopaedic disability affecting his right hand. Despite his potential, his path to employment was filled with fear, mistrust, and bias. Before joining the programme, Rohan had a painful experience with a fraudulent organisation that took ₹22,000 from him by promising a fake job. After that incident, his mother was terrified of being cheated again. When a mobiliser first approached them, she refused to listen, fearing they would take away her son's government support. It took a home visit and a personal assurance from a senior trainer to slowly build trust. Today, that same mother is deeply grateful for the opportunity that changed her son's life. Rohan's challenges did not end there. During placement at a BPO, he was nearly rejected in the middle of training because a trainer assumed his hand disability would stop him from typing fast enough and meeting call targets. But Rohan refused to give up. With support and intervention from the team, he was given two extra days to prove himself. He practiced typing for 4.5 hours continuously, cleared the certification, and impressed the employer with his determination. Within just one year, Rohan was promoted to Senior Executive, and his salary rose to ₹22,500.



Project 6

Healthcare Skilling Programme

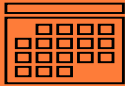


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

Dr. Reddy's Limited, in partnership with Dr. Reddy's Foundation, is advancing healthcare skilling through state-of-the-art labs. The Programme offers certified training to unemployed youth from low-income families, creating a pool of Homecare General Duty Assistants. By equipping them with industry-relevant skills, the initiative promotes sustainable livelihoods and supports long-term economic growth.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Telangana & Andhra Pradesh



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 4.5 Cr.

Project Activities

- Mobilisation and enrolment of candidates
 - Identifying, counselling and enrolling candidates for the healthcare skilling programme
 - Approaching corporate hospitals, private clinics etc and understanding their workforce requirement
 - Approaching academic institutions and mobilising students to develop awareness about the courses and their benefits
- To conduct structured 90-day healthcare (General Duty Assistant) training and upskilling programmes at Dr. Reddy's Foundation centres. Equipping the trained candidates with the employability skills, enhancing their career readiness, and providing certification upon successful completion of assessments to enable access to quality entry-level jobs
- Provide job placement to the trained candidates.
- The project has reached a total of 730 candidates on GDA course (90-day course) from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 3 In-Depth Interviews with **trainees of short-term skilling course**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **a trainer**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a **professor from academia**
- **2 In depth Interview with the employers**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **the implementing partner**

Quantitative Interactions

- The total youth sample to be covered was 139
- However, the total sample size covered 143 from Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

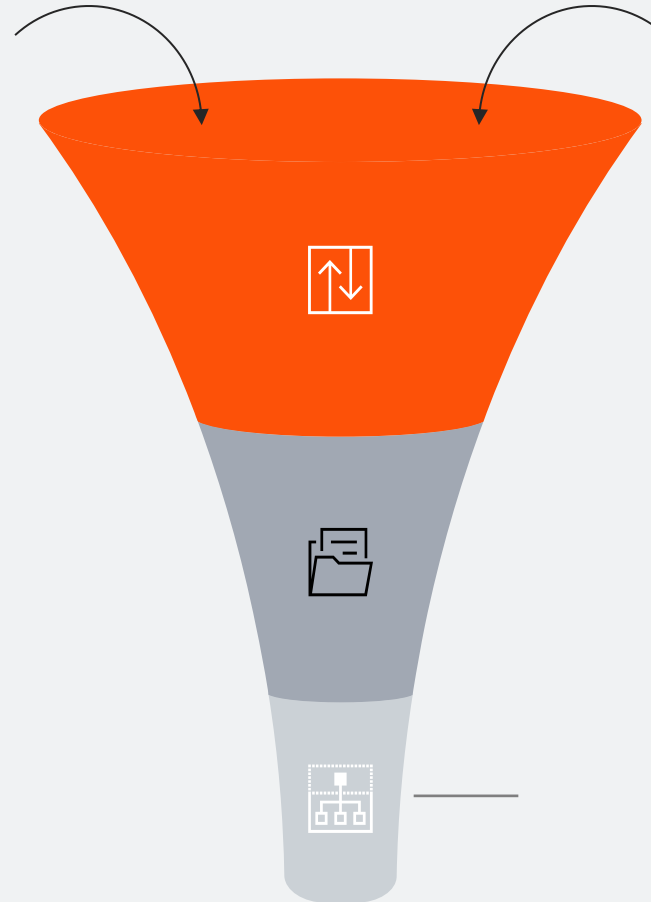
Prior to the programme, the following challenges were shared by various stakeholders:

Limited Availability of Job-Ready Healthcare Skills:

Prior to the intervention, the healthcare ecosystem faced a persistent shortage of candidates equipped with job-ready, industry-aligned skills. Existing education and vocational pathways placed limited emphasis on practical exposure, clinical readiness, digital literacy, and essential soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and patient handling. As a result, many aspirants were unable to meet employer expectations, leading to skill mismatches, longer onboarding periods, and underutilisation of available employment opportunities within the healthcare sector.

Inadequate Training Infrastructure and Unequal Access to Skilling Opportunities:

Training infrastructure for allied health and healthcare support roles was limited and unevenly distributed, with quality institutions largely concentrated in urban centres. Youth from low-income, rural, and underserved communities faced significant barriers to entry due to financial constraints, lack of nearby institutions, and limited awareness of healthcare career pathways. This restricted participation of first-generation learners and women, and constrained the overall supply of trained healthcare professionals.



High Unemployment and Weak Livelihood Security Among the Beneficiaries:

A significant proportion (97%) of the respondents were unemployed prior to programme implementation, while those engaged in work were largely employed in informal, low-paying, and unstable jobs. Household income levels remained well below sustainable thresholds, reflecting deeper livelihood vulnerabilities and a lack of access to formal employment pathways. The absence of structured, market-linked skilling opportunities further limited economic mobility within the community.

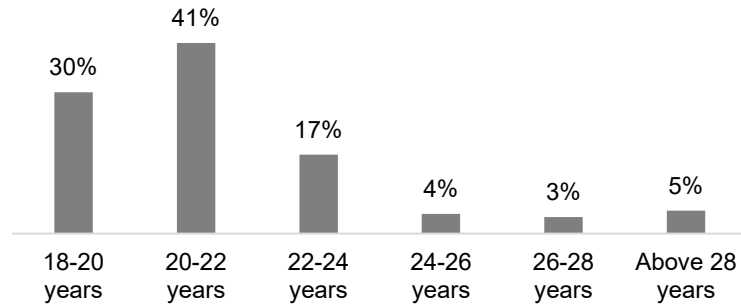
Widening Demand-Supply Gap in the Healthcare Workforce:

India's healthcare system is witnessing a growing demand for trained professionals due to population growth, increased life expectancy, and a rising burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. This demand extends beyond doctors and nurses to allied health and support staff critical for quality healthcare delivery. However, the existing workforce pipeline and skilling capacity remains insufficient to meet national healthcare goals and policy commitments, amplifying the urgency for focused and scalable skilling interventions.

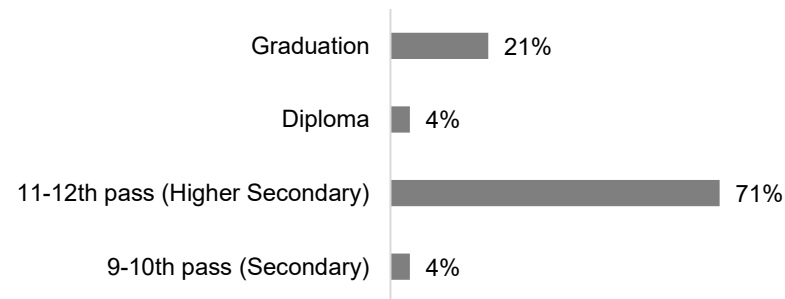
Analysis and Findings

Socio-Demographic Profile of the respondents

Age group (N=143)



Highest educational qualification of respondents (N=143)

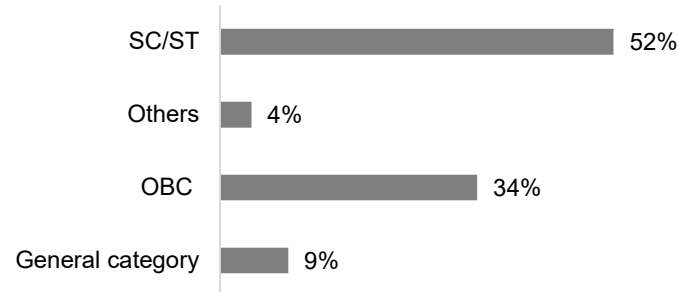


Respondents' gender (N=143)

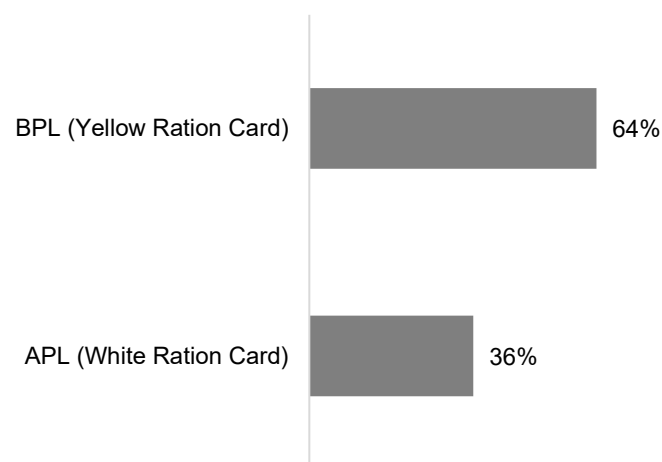


100% of the respondents are female

Social category-wise distribution of respondents (N=143)



Distribution of respondents based on the types of ration cards (N=143)



With over 70% of respondents clustered in the 18–22 age group, the **programme effectively reached youth at a critical school-to-work transition stage**. This demographic profile strengthens attribution of post-training employment and income outcomes to the intervention, as most participants were at the entry point of their careers prior to exposure.

The predominance of SC/ST (52%) and OBC (34%) participants, combined with 64% holding BPL ration cards, indicates that the **programme largely reached economically and socially disadvantaged groups**. From an impact lens, this suggests a high likelihood of generating additionality, as beneficiaries had limited access to skilling and livelihood opportunities prior to the intervention.

Despite 71% of respondents having completed higher secondary education and 21% being graduates, baseline employment levels remained low, **highlighting under-utilisation of existing human capital**. The fact that 100% of respondents were women underscores the Programme's potential contribution to **improving female labour force participation** and translating education into sustainable healthcare employment.

Analysis and Findings

Awareness and Relevance of the Project

Awareness: During the field interactions, the research team noted that this project raised awareness through extensive community outreach which has been summarized below

- ❑ Around 35% of respondents reported **learning about the programme through family and friends**, indicating the importance of informal community networks and word-of-mouth in disseminating information.
- ❑ About 25% of respondents became **aware of the programme through IEC materials displayed or distributed** at the centre, reflecting the role of centre-level communication tools in generating awareness among local populations.
- ❑ Nearly 40% of respondents cited **outreach and awareness camps conducted by DRF** as their primary source of information, highlighting the effectiveness of direct, on-ground mobilisation efforts in reaching and enrolling beneficiaries.



Free vocational training: Based on discussions with DRF, we noted that the project provides free vocational training along with residential facilities, benefiting of students who would otherwise need to travel long distances

- ❑ **Universal Access to Free Training:** 100% of respondents confirmed that the training was provided free of cost, ensuring that financial constraints did not limit participation in the programme.
- ❑ **Removal of Financial Barriers:** By offering vocational training at no cost, the project addressed key economic barriers faced by low-income families, enabling broader access to skill development opportunities.
- ❑ **Empowerment and Inclusion Outcomes:** Free access to training supported participation from disadvantaged groups, contributing to improved confidence, self-reliance, and pathways toward economic independence.

- ❑ The project's **alignment with current industry skill requirements** ensured high relevance of the training content. Courses such as General Duty Assistant (GDA) were directly mapped to real-world healthcare roles, improving job readiness and increasing the likelihood of successful placements.
- ❑ Evidence from training centre leadership indicates that trainees **secured placements in established healthcare facilities, including hospitals and homecare providers**. This reflects the Programme's effectiveness in bridging the gap between skilling and formal employment within the healthcare sector.
- ❑ By equipping participants **with hands-on experience and market-relevant skills**, the programme addressed immediate employment needs while enabling income generation and economic stability for trainees. These outcomes reinforce the Programme's role in improving individual livelihoods and supporting community-level economic development.
- ❑ The focus on nationally recognised roles such as GDAs, **endorsed by The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC) have officially recognized the GDA role as part of their skill development initiatives**¹. These programmes aim to create employment opportunities while strengthening the healthcare system. This training programme directly supports the Indian government's mission to build a strong and **responsive healthcare workforce**², especially through roles like GDA.

<https://nsdcindia.org/covid-19-healthcare-Programme>,
https://www.healthcare-ssc.in/pdf/GDA_FG_Revise.pdf

https://www.mohfw.gov.in/sites/default/files/Short%20term%20training%20curriculum%20Handbook_General%20Duty%20Assistant_1%20June%202017_0.pdf

Analysis and Findings

Effectiveness of the Training programme

- ❑ The trainees' curriculum was tailored using training programme guidelines developed by the Health Sector Skill Councils under the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), as confirmed by the DRF team.
- ❑ The programme combined theoretical instructions with hands-on practical sessions, ensuring a well-rounded and comprehensive learning experience. The entire course **spanned 90 days of formal training, followed by an additional 1-week module dedicated to revision and doubt-clearing prior to assessment.**
- ❑ To provide hands-on experience, the project integrated practical training sessions that allowed trainees to apply their newly acquired skills in real-world settings. **For instance, during the GDA Programme, participants spent approximately 20 days in hospital wards,** where they practiced key responsibilities such as assisting patients with mobility, monitoring vital signs, maintaining hygiene, and supporting nursing staff in daily care routines.
- ❑ This immersive exposure **bridged the gap between classroom instruction and workplace readiness,** fostering both confidence and competence among the trainees.
- ❑ Feedback from trainees reflected a high level of satisfaction with the **training methodology, the curriculum structure, and the quality of instruction provided by trainers.**



100% Respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the training pedagogy (N=143)



99% Respondents have rated the training content and Material more than 4 on a scale of 1-5 (5 being highly satisfied) (N=143)



100% Respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the trainers (N=143)



“A few years ago, our neighbour's daughter enrolled in the General Duty Assistant (GDA) training project at this very centre. Soon after completing her training, she was placed at a well-regarded hospital, where she began her professional journey in healthcare. What struck us most was not just her employment, but the remarkable transformation we witnessed in her personality and confidence. She became more articulate, carried herself with assurance, and communicated with ease in both personal and professional settings. Beyond this, she began contributing financially to her household, which brought immense pride and joy to her parents. Observing this positive change firsthand left a deep impression on me. It was inspiring to see how the project had empowered her to step into a meaningful career, while also uplifting her family's circumstances. Her journey became a source of motivation for me, and I realized that the GDA training could open similar doors in my own life.

With this conviction, I decided to enrol in the GDA training at this centre. My aspiration is to support my family and make them proud, just as she did. I believe that through this training, I will gain the skills, confidence, and opportunities necessary to serve others with compassion while securing a brighter future for myself and my loved ones.

~Shared by a current trainee under GDA.

Analysis and Findings

Development of Skilled and Confident workforce

Skills, Knowledge and Employment (n=143)

85% respondents reported that they gained more skills and knowledge for performing job roles effectively.

100% mentioned that the project activities helped them gain employment.

Confidence and self-respect (n=143)

80% reported training helped build confidence and self-respect.

79% reported improvement in their problem-solving skills.

Communication skills (n=143)

67% reported improvement in communication skills.

“My journey in skill development has been truly empowering. I began as a determined GDA trainee, eager to learn how to care for patients and support hospital staff. With each day of training, I gained not only technical knowledge like monitoring vital signs and assisting with daily hygiene but also the confidence to work in a professional healthcare setting.

After completing the course, I was placed at a reputed hospital in Hyderabad. The transition from classroom to clinic was challenging, but my training had prepared me well. Today, I earn between **INR 10,000 – INR 13,000 per month**, and I'm proud to contribute to my family's income. My earnings help cover household expenses and support my younger siblings' education.

Beyond the financial impact, this opportunity has given me a sense of purpose. I now care for patients with compassion and dignity, and I'm respected both at work and at home. My story is a testament to how skill development can change lives, not just for individuals, but for entire families and communities.”

~Shared by a former trainee from Hyderabad during our interactions



- ❑ As the GDA trainees progressed through the programme, 85% demonstrated measurable gains in job-relevant skills and knowledge. Among these, 98% confirmed that the training met their expectations, effectively equipping them for healthcare support roles in clinical settings.
- ❑ The programme facilitated **employment for 100% of respondents (N=143)**, representing a pivotal shift in their professional trajectories. Throughout the training period, participants reported **notable improvements in communication skills**, enabling them to engage more confidently with patients, colleagues, and supervisors in both workplace and community environments.
- ❑ In addition to technical competencies, the programme fostered **personal development**, with **80% (N=143) of trainees reporting increased confidence and self-respect**, and **79% (N=143) indicating enhanced problem-solving abilities**.
- ❑ Recognizing that GDAs are often the **primary point of contact for patients**, the programme places strong emphasis on **soft skills and communication training**. Trainees are equipped to interact empathetically, maintain patient morale, and uphold the hospital's service standards, skills that are as critical as clinical knowledge in patient recovery and satisfaction.

Analysis and Findings

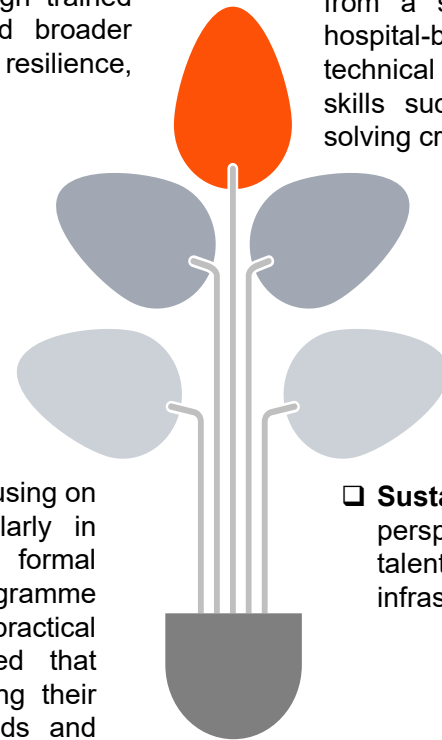
Empowering Candidates and Building Healthcare Careers

❑ **Socio-Economic Impact and Community Development** : Beyond individual skill acquisition, the Programme has generated measurable socio-economic benefits. Structured placement support enabled graduates to secure sustainable livelihoods, leading to a rise in household income and improved financial stability. This empowerment not only reduced unemployment in marginalized regions but also strengthened healthcare delivery systems through trained support staff. Ultimately, the initiative fostered broader community development and enhanced economic resilience, contributing to long-term socio-economic growth.

❑ **Industry-Relevant Curriculum** : The training curriculum was carefully designed to align with the operational needs of local healthcare institutions, ensuring that the training remained demand-driven and industry-relevant. Hospitals reported high satisfaction with the preparedness and adaptability of newly placed GDAs, highlighting how this alignment enhanced employability. Participants benefited from a structured blend of classroom instruction and hospital-based practice, which not only strengthened technical competencies but also nurtured essential soft skills such as communication, empathy, and problem-solving critical for patient-facing roles.

❑ **Strategic Deployment of GDA Training** : By focusing on youth from underserved communities, particularly in areas surrounding healthcare facilities where formal employment opportunities are scarce, the Programme has successfully bridged skill gaps. Embedding practical exposure within clinical environments ensured that participants gained hands-on experience, making their learning directly relevant to workplace demands and enhancing employability.

❑ **Sustainable Community Impact** : From a systems perspective, the training has established a sustainable talent pipeline that supports regional healthcare infrastructure while promoting inclusive economic growth.



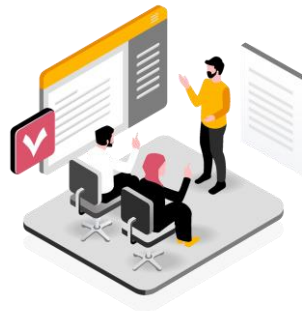
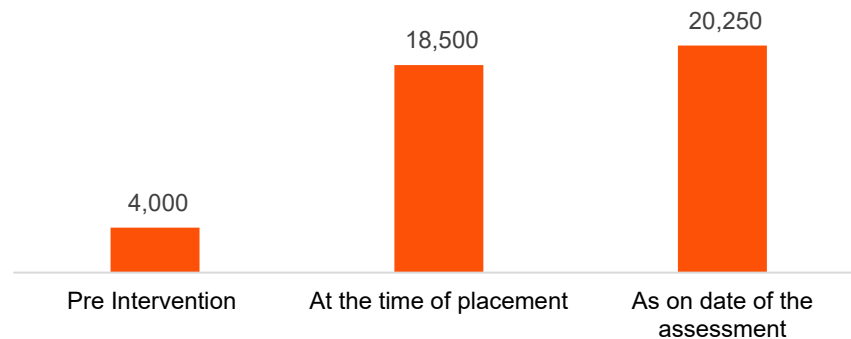
Analysis and Findings

Strengthened Economic Position of Candidates



100% of the respondents have received placement opportunities. Of these, **94%** have been placed (N=143)

Average Monthly Earning Pre-intervention, At the time of the placement and during assessment (n=135)



□ The GDA training project has proven highly effective in **preparing candidates for healthcare support roles**, ensuring they are workplace-ready from day one. Delivered through hospital-based training centres, the programme combined rigorous technical instruction with personalized career counselling. This holistic approach equipped trainees **not only with practical skills but also with the clarity, confidence, and sense of purpose** needed to enter the workforce and contribute meaningfully from the outset.

□ Participants highlighted that the practical, hands-on nature of the training significantly **eased their transition into job roles**. Employers reinforced this view, observing that candidates emerging from the project **were already well-acquainted with their responsibilities and required minimal onboarding support**. Together, these perspectives underscore the program's success in bridging the gap between training and workplace readiness.

□ Compared to fresh hires from the open market who typically require up to three months of training **GDA trainees acclimated to their roles from day one**. This has resulted in time savings for the employers.

□ Before joining the programme, only 3% of respondents (n=143) were employed, earning an average of ₹4,000 per month. Following successful certification, 94% of participants (n=143) **secured employment, with average initial monthly earnings rising to ₹18,500**.

□ At the time of the assessment the average income of the placed candidates was reported to be around ₹20,250. This reflects a meaningful step toward financial independence and growth along with the household support.

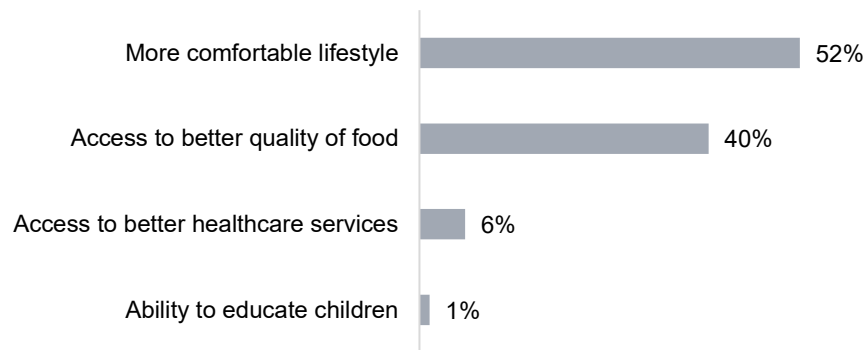
□ Overall, the project has not only enhanced individual employability but also contributed to strengthening the healthcare workforce.

Analysis and Findings

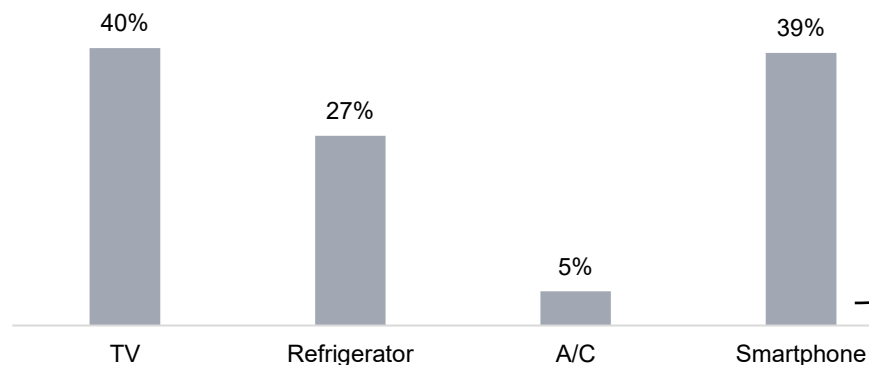
Improved Socio-Economic Status via Asset Growth

The Programme's impact also reflects **sustained employment engagement, role continuity, and income diversification at the household level**. This indicates **strengthened economic resilience** and improved ability of trained candidates to navigate and sustain themselves in the job market.

Trainees' response on the most important use of dispensable income post training (n=143)



Types of assets acquired by the participants post training and job (n=143)



- ❑ 52% trainees report a more comfortable lifestyle. This suggests the **training translated into immediate, tangible quality-of-life gains** (housing comfort, utilities, transport convenience, etc.).
- ❑ 40% trainees say they now **access better-quality food, implying higher disposable income or more stable earnings**. Only 6% report better access to healthcare. This may reflect continued barriers (cost, availability, insurance coverage) that income alone doesn't fully solve.
- ❑ **40% acquired TVs and 39% smartphones** showing spending on information, entertainment, and digital access. Basic household infrastructure is growing: 27% obtained refrigerators, enabling better food storage and diet quality.



Joining the GDA training changed our lives. The course taught us the skills we need and helped us get jobs with tests, certificates, and mock interviews. Many of us now work as GDAs or coordinators in good hospitals like Apollo, many other homecare services. Our communication is better, and we earn our own money.

During the pandemic, we saw the value of healthcare and chose this path. We now support our families and feel respected at work. We've told our neighbours about the programme, and some have joined. It helped us grow at work and in life. We are grateful.

- GDA Trainees



Analysis and Findings

Overall Programme Effectiveness Review

It is evident that the programme has been effective in delivering its objectives as **there has been a universally high rating in terms of feedback from the trainees** on various aspects of the training programme.

Overall feedback of the trainees on various aspects of the programme (n=143)

	1-Lowest	2	3	4	5-Highest
Training Pedagogy	0%	0%	0%	16%	84%
Trainers	0%	0%	0%	16%	84%
Training Content and material	0%	0%	1%	15%	85%
Time allocated for Training	0%	0%	15%	85%	0%
Training Relevance	0%	0%	1%	13%	86%



- ❑ Majority of respondents rated the programme highly, **with approximately 94% awarding top scores (4 or 5) across key dimensions** such as training pedagogy, trainer effectiveness, content quality, and overall relevance demonstrating consistent excellence in delivery. Notably, Training Pedagogy (95%) and Training Relevance (99%) achieved the strongest combined ratings, underscoring both the effectiveness of teaching methods and the alignment of course material with participant needs.
- ❑ During qualitative discussions with employers, it was consistently emphasized that candidates trained under the programme are entering the workforce with stronger knowledge and practical skills. These individuals are not only well-prepared but also serve as role models through their performance and professionalism. A majority have become integral contributors within their organizations, **demonstrating reliability and setting positive trends for their teams. Many candidates have worked in elderly care, where family members have shared highly positive feedback about their dedication and compassion.**

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The programme targeted youth from low socio-economic backgrounds (mostly 18–28), with 64% of respondents from BPL households and 100% female.
- The project offered free vocational training (with accommodation for 30–50% of students) helping remove money-related obstacles that often stop people from getting good education and skills. This made it easier for everyone to join the training, giving them a chance to improve their job opportunities and earn a better living..

R

Relevance

- The programme offered the candidates to work closely with hospitals, the GDA training curriculum was designed to reflect the actual skill requirements of healthcare facilities. This ensured that trainees were equipped with practical competencies such as patient care, vitals monitoring, and ward management that matched the expectations of employers, making them immediately job-ready.

E

Effectiveness

- 90-day course plus a 1-week revision module and about 20 days of ward exposure, alongside very high learner satisfaction (100% with pedagogy and trainers, 99% high ratings for content), contributing to 85% reporting increased job-relevant skills.
- 100% of respondents received placement opportunities and 94% were placed, with employment rising from 3% pre-Programme and average earnings increasing from ₹4,000 to ₹18,500 initially and about ₹20,250 at assessment hence the programme is effective

C

Convergence

- This Programme supports India's mission to strengthen its healthcare workforce by training General Duty Assistants (GDAs). Recognized by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and the Healthcare Sector Skill Council (HSSC), GDAs assist nurses and doctors with patient care, hygiene, and safety. These initiatives aim to boost employment while reinforcing the healthcare system.

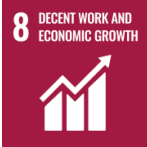
S

Sustainability

- The GDA training project is sustainable because it builds a continuous pipeline of skilled healthcare support workers by integrating training with real hospital environments, ensuring long-term employability for participants while consistently meeting the staffing needs of healthcare institutions across multiple states. Consequently, this approach not only boosts individual economic stability but also contributes to broader community growth and development.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 8 focuses on ensuring decent work and economic growth across all ages. By providing training to unemployed youth from low-income families, creating a pool of Homecare General Duty Assistants.

Recommendations



Extending Training: The current 20-day on-site training period within the GDA programme is limited in duration, considering that trainees will spend the majority of their working time directly with clients in real-world settings. To enhance their readiness and confidence, DRF should increase the focus on extending and deepening this on-site training experience as an integral part of the curriculum. By providing longer, structured, and supervised on-site training, trainees can gain more extensive hands-on exposure to patient care, workplace protocols, and client interactions under the mentorship of experienced professionals. This, combined with improved realistic simulation exercises and reflective learning, will better prepare trainees for the actual demands of their roles, bridging the gap between theory and practice, increasing employer satisfaction, and improving job retention and performance outcomes.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Empowered Through GDA Training



Renu Verma (Name changed), a General Duty Assistant, is a shining example of how skill-based training can transform lives. She received her **clinical training through the support of Dr. Reddy's Foundation**, where she learned essential patient care techniques and developed a deep understanding of compassionate healthcare. Following the completion of her training, Rekha was offered a job at Apollo Hospital an opportunity that marked a turning point in her life. With her newfound skills and confidence, she became financially independent and workplace ready from day one. Rekha's journey took on even greater significance after her husband met with a serious accident, leaving her as the sole provider for her household and children. The support from Dr. Reddy's Foundation **empowered her to take charge of her family's future**. Today, she manages her home and children on her own, with pride and resilience. She credits the training not only for her employment but also for restoring her sense of purpose. Rekha expresses heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Reddy's Foundation for helping her rebuild her life and become a role model for others in her community.

02

From Uncertainty to Empowerment

A young woman faced a difficult crossroads after completing her 12th grade. Despite a strong desire to pursue higher education and build a career, her family's financial crisis forced her to abandon her academic aspirations and left her feeling helpless and uncertain about the future. During this challenging time, she discovered the free General Duty Assistant (GDA) course offered by Dr. Reddy's Foundation. Recognizing it as a rare opportunity to reshape her life, she enrolled without hesitation. Over the course of 90 days, she received comprehensive training in patient care, hygiene practices, basic first aid, CPR techniques, and infection control. The programme blended theoretical instruction with practical exposure, including a visit to a professional workplace, where she learned about customer service, discipline, and workplace ethics broadening her understanding of professional environments. Upon completing the course and earning her certification, she secured a job where she now provides care and support to patients. Her income has allowed her to contribute meaningfully to her family's financial well-being, helping them gradually overcome the hardships they once faced. The transformation has brought renewed confidence, dignity, and hope. She credits the training not only for her employment but also for restoring her sense of purpose. She expresses heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Reddy's Foundation for helping her rebuild her life and become a role model for others in her community.



Project 7

Making Integrated Transformation through Resourceful Agriculture (MITRA)

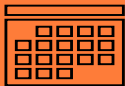


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

MITRA initiative aims to develop an impactful, scalable and sustainable Agri-extension delivery platform to empower small and marginal farmers. The objective is to come out with a sustainable Agri-extension delivery channel which can help the small and marginal farmers in the areas of technology transfer, Irrigation and Digital and Financial literacy.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Samastipur, Bihar



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 4.50 Cr.

Project Activities

The MITRA project established a community-driven lead farmer platform at village level, designed to facilitate the **adoption of modern Agri-practices and strengthen market linkages among fellow farmers**. The trainings also sought technical support from scientists at Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University (Dr. RPCAU) and Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Samastipur, who conducted multiple capacity-building sessions with farmers to strengthen their understanding and adoption of modern farming techniques. The following training interventions were conducted for farmers under the project:

- **Maize-Potato Intercropping:** Introduced sustainable intercropping systems maximizing land utilization, reducing production risks, and providing dual income sources with efficient nutrient management, reaching 6,796 farmers.
- **Mushroom Cultivation:** Developed landless-friendly mushroom farming using agricultural waste as substrate, providing quick returns through 45-day cycles with minimal capital investment, benefiting 34,112 farmers through awareness and training.
- **Package of Practices (PoP) Training:** Delivered scientific agronomic training for conventional crops (paddy, maize, wheat, potato) focusing on optimized nutrient, water, and plant protection management to enhance productivity and reduce costs, training 18,347 farmers.
- **Direct Seeded Rice (DSR) Promotion:** Introduced water-saving paddy cultivation techniques through Dry-DSR (596 farmers) and Wet-DSR (56 farmers) methods, reducing labour requirements and irrigation needs while ensuring comparable yields.
- **Zero Tillage (ZT) Implementation:** Promoted soil-conserving cultivation practices for wheat (538 farmers) and maize (80 farmers) using specialized multi-crop planters, reducing fuel costs and improving soil health.

The total project reach was **60,525 farmers** across five key agricultural interventions.

Methodology: IRECS– Mixed Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 7 Focus Group Discussions with **beneficiaries across, Maize-Potato Intercropping, Mushroom Cultivation, PoP Training, DSR, and Zero Tillage.**
- 1 In-Depth Interview with **KVK Scientists**
- 1 Small Group Discussion with **DRF Project Team**

Quantitative Interactions

187 farmers across 5+ blocks in Samastipur district, Bihar.

*Source: As per documents (Memorandum of Understanding , Addendum signed between Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Dr. Reddy's Foundation, Annual Programme Reports, Beneficiary Data) shared by DRL and DRF, drreddysfoundation.org/education/

Analysis and Findings

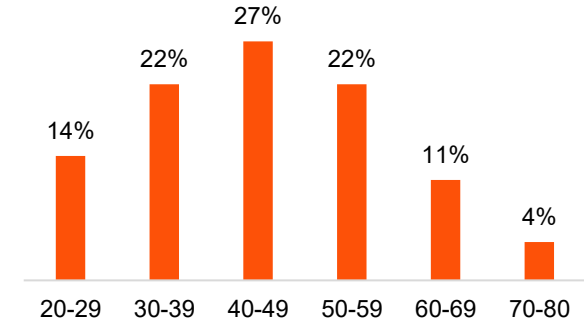
Profile of the Beneficiaries Sampled

- **Gender Composition:** Nearly balanced participation with 53% male and 47% female respondents.
- **Age Distribution:** Largest representation from 40-49 years age group (27%) followed by equal distribution in 30-39 and 50-59 brackets (22% each), with younger adults (20-29) comprising 14% of respondents.
- **Educational Profile:** Diverse educational backgrounds with 10th pass being most common (26%), followed by graduates (22%), 12th pass (18%), 8th pass (17%), 5th pass (12%), and minimal illiteracy (4%).
- **Social Composition:** Primarily OBC households (55%) and General category (36%) with limited SC (8%) and ST (1%) representation across the sample.
- **Economic Status:** Majority fall in lower-middle income brackets with 43% earning ₹25,000-49,999 and 32% earning ₹50,000-74,999 annually, while 2% earn below ₹10,000.
- **Occupation Pattern:** Majority agriculture-dependent with 91% as cultivators with minimal dependence on other livelihood sources including agricultural labour (1%), business (3%), and salaried employment (3%).
- **Project Engagement:** All sampled respondents reported awareness of MITRA project activities, reflecting effective outreach among surveyed beneficiaries.

Gender Distribution of the Respondents (n= 187)



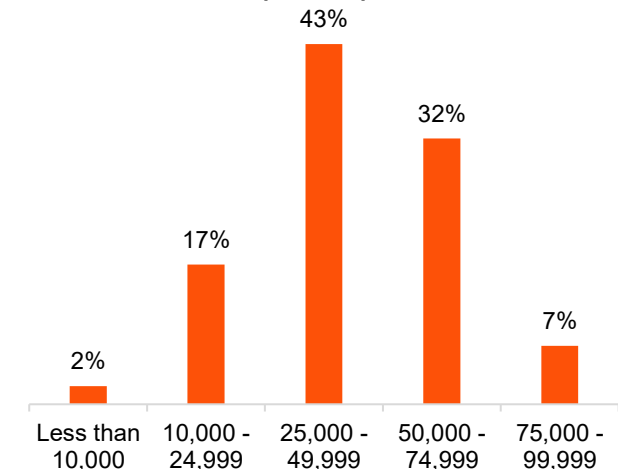
Age Distribution of the Respondents (n= 187)



Occupation of the respondents (n=187)



Annual Income of the respondents (INR) (n=187)

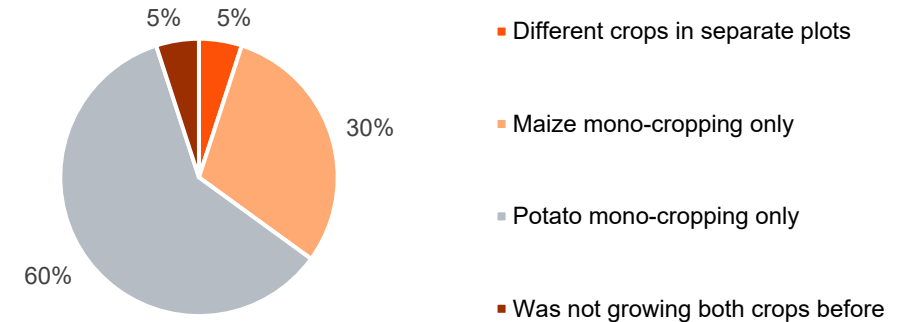


Analysis and Findings

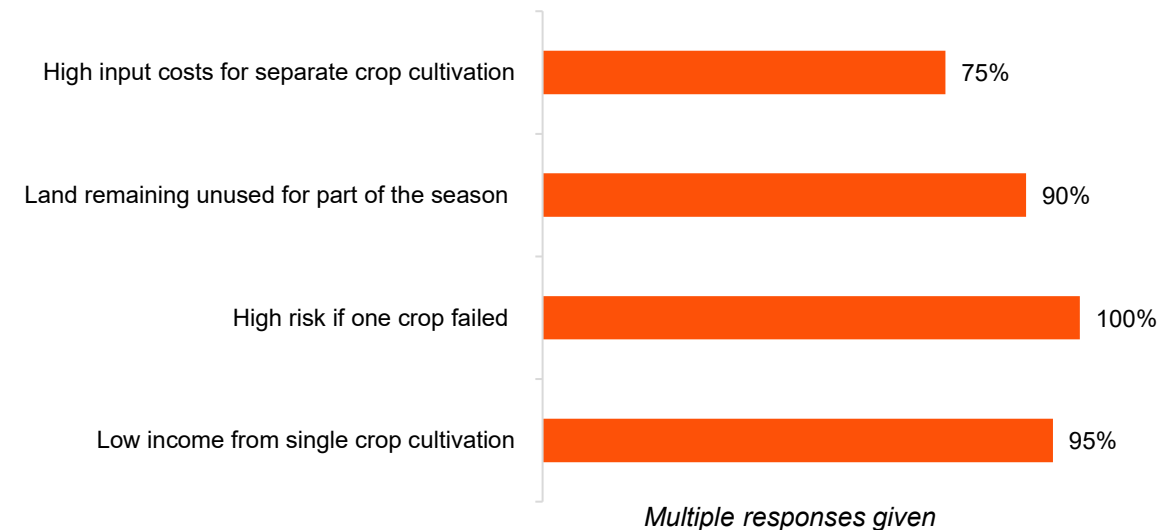
Promotion of maize and potato intercropping over mono-cropping

- The project promoted maize–potato intercropping as a **land-efficient, risk-reducing alternative to sole-cropping systems**. Farmers were trained to integrate potato within maize rows to optimize resource use, enhance productivity, diversify returns, improve soil efficiency, and support more stable, resilient cropping systems for small and marginal farmers.
- Before the intercropping activity, **cropping patterns were largely centred on single-crop systems**, with 60% of farmers cultivating potato alone and 30% relying exclusively on maize mono-cropping, while only a negligible share grew crops on separate plots or did not grow either crop. This indicates a **strong dependence on mono-cropping** practices prior to project engagement.
- The distribution of existing practices shows **close alignment between activity focus and farmer conditions**, as most participants were dependent on single-crop production systems with limited diversification and therefore stood to benefit from adopting integrated and risk-spreading intercropping approaches.
- Prevailing cropping systems exposed farmers to multiple constraints. All respondents (100%) reported **high risk when a single crop failed**, while 95% experienced **low-income outcomes**. Substantial land remained unused for part of the season for 90% of farmers, and 75% highlighted high input expenses associated with managing crops separately, underscoring the need for a more efficient and resilient production strategy.
- Together, these challenges highlighted intercropping as a **viable solution to enhance productivity, optimize land use, and stabilize farm returns**.

Cropping methods practiced by farmers prior to Intercropping activity (n=20)



Challenges faced by farmers in previous cropping methods prior to Intercropping activity (n=20)



Analysis and Findings

Integrated Cropping, Improved Returns: Maize - Potato Intercropping in Samastipur (N=20)

- The maize-potato intercropping intervention supported farmers in growing maize and potato together within the same field using structured row arrangements to enhance land use efficiency and production stability. Targeting farmers vulnerable to low returns and high risk under mono-cropping, the initiative promoted practical intercropping designs. Post-activity, **71% of farmers adopted maize-potato intercropping in the same field with defined row patterns**, while **14% used alternate rows** and **14% tested intercropping on part of their land**, demonstrating strong acceptance of integrated cropping as a means to boost productivity and reduce income risk.

Impact Indicator	Pre Activity	Post Activity	% Change
₹ Net profit per bigha from intercropping (In INR)	25,900	33,000	+27%

75%

reported **reduced fertilizer usage under intercropping** (75% much less fertilizer needed as potato residue significantly benefited maize, and 25% less fertilizer compared to separate cultivation).

55%

reported reduced labour requirements under intercropping (55% much less labour due to shared operations, and 45% somewhat less labour compared to separate cultivation).

50%

reported **improved income timing** (50% experienced much better cash flow with potato providing quick cash and maize giving later income, and 50% reported better cash flow throughout the season).



100% of farmers **expressed satisfaction with maize-potato intercropping**, with 55% very satisfied citing **higher income and better land use**, and 45% satisfied with good income improvement, indicating positive satisfaction ratings and continued interest among surveyed farmers.

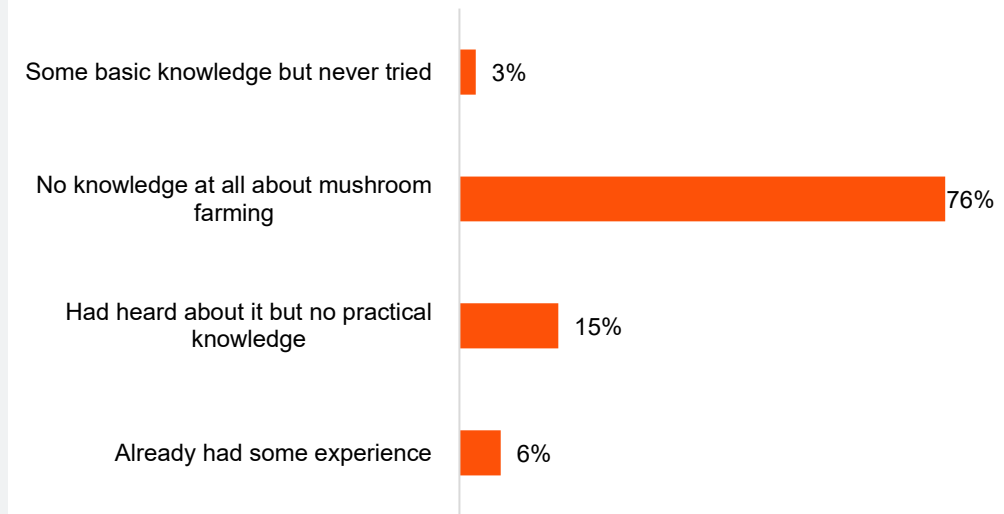
- Adoption pathway and land use adjustment:** The transition from separate cultivation of maize and potato to intercropping resulted in farmers initially adopting maize-potato intercropping on a smaller, more manageable land area, with the total intercropped area declining from 2.15 bigha to 1.70 bigha (21% reduction). This pattern suggests a phased adoption approach, as reported during beneficiary discussions, with farmers initially testing intercropping on manageable land parcels.
- Complementary yield dynamics and system productivity:** Under intercropping, crop performance followed a complementary and agronomically expected pattern. Potato yield declined from 43 quintals per bigha under monocropping to 37.5 quintals per bigha under intercropping due to shared space and early canopy interaction. In contrast, maize yield increased from 25.1 to 27.7 quintals per bigha (10% increase), benefiting from complementary rooting patterns, residual nutrients, and improved soil microclimate following potato harvest. Together, these responses resulted in higher overall system-level productivity, highlighting the effectiveness of intercropping at the system level rather than for maximizing individual crop yields.
- Input use efficiency and cost reduction:** Maize-potato intercropping led to a substantial improvement in input use efficiency, with total cultivation costs per bigha declining from INR 31,950 to INR 25,600 (20% reduction). Cost savings were achieved through shared land preparation, overlapping fertilizer and irrigation use, reduced idle periods, and more efficient labour deployment across both crops.
- Income gains and livelihood stability:** As a combined outcome of reduced production costs, diversified output, and improved maize performance, net profit per bigha increased from INR 25,900 to INR 33,000, representing a 27% rise in farm income. The presence of two crops within the same production cycle strengthened income stability, with potato providing early cash returns and maize acting as a longer-duration stabilizing crop.

Analysis and Findings

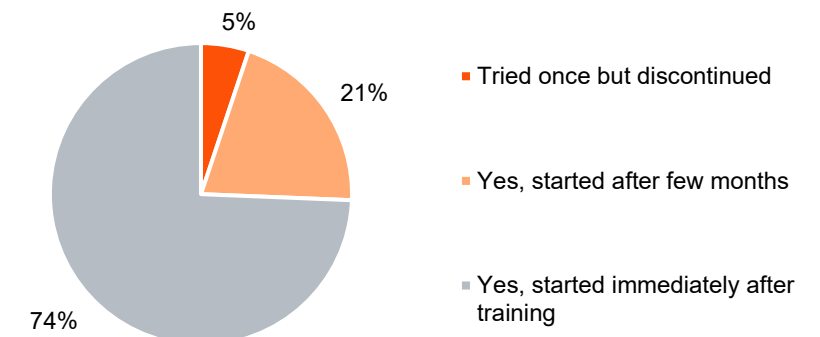
Promotion of Mushroom Production

- The project promoted mushroom cultivation as a **land-independent, livelihood-enhancing enterprise for landless and marginal households**. Farmers, particularly women and rural youth, were provided awareness sessions and capsule-based training to produce mushrooms using agricultural waste, enabling short-cycle income generation, nutritional security, and sustainable enterprise development.
- Before the mushroom cultivation intervention, a substantial proportion of participants had **limited or no exposure to mushroom farming**, with 76% reporting no prior knowledge and an additional 15% having only heard about it without any practical understanding. Only a very small fraction had prior experience or basic familiarity, indicating a significant knowledge gap among intended beneficiaries.
- The baseline distribution of knowledge levels demonstrates **strong alignment between the intervention design and participant needs**, as the project effectively targeted individuals who lacked viable livelihood alternatives and required capacity building to engage in non-land-based income-generating activities.
- Following training delivery, participants reported high training effectiveness, with 87% stating that they **clearly learned the complete cultivation process**. Following training, **74% reported initiating cultivation immediately**; this suggests short-term uptake among surveyed participants.
- These early results illustrate a rapid shift from skill acquisition to enterprise initiation, enabled by practical training and low entry barriers. While participants received exposure to both oyster and milky mushroom cultivation, **farmers indicated during discussions that they predominantly adopted oyster mushroom farming** due to its simpler management and lower labour requirements, whereas milky mushroom cultivation was perceived as more effort-intensive.

Baseline knowledge on mushroom cultivation (n=78)



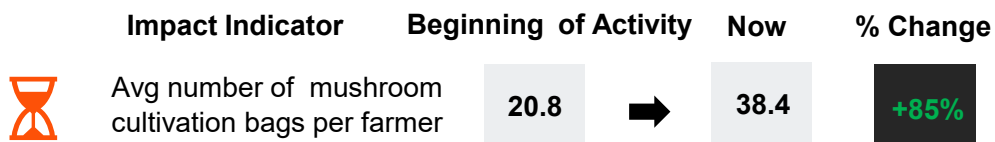
Uptake of mushroom cultivation after training (n=78)




Analysis and Findings

Building Resilient Livelihoods through Oyster Mushroom Cultivation (N=78)

- The oyster mushroom cultivation intervention supported **landless and marginal households** in adopting mushroom production as a **land-independent, short-cycle livelihood enterprise**. Designed for farmers with limited livelihood options and low entry capacity, the activity focused on practical, low-cost oyster mushroom cultivation using locally available agricultural waste.
- Post-training, the majority of participants successfully transitioned from learning to production. **78% of farmers reported being very successful and earning regular income**, while **14% were moderately successful and generating supplemental income**, and **6% faced initial challenges but continued learning**. With only **1% discontinuing after trial**, the results indicate strong acceptance of oyster mushroom cultivation as a feasible, income-enhancing livelihood option under local conditions.



 Farmers reported an average income of **INR 5,015 per production cycle**

59%

shared mushroom cultivation knowledge with others (59% trained several farmers/family members, 38% shared informally with neighbours, 3% shared basic information with few people)



While 95% of farmers rated the mushroom cultivation training positively (77% excellent and 18% good), **marketing and selling produce emerged as the most prevalent challenge** for 51% of respondents, followed by **sourcing quality spawn and raw materials** (24%). This indicates that market access and input supply reliability remain operational constraints for a subset of respondents.

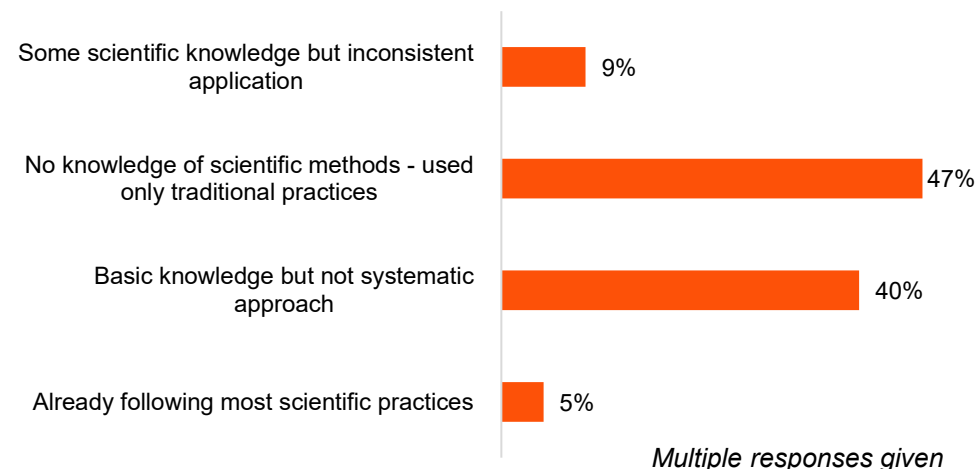
- Affordable input access and productive yield realization:** Through vendor linkages facilitated by the project, farmers accessed oyster mushroom spawn at a subsidised rate of INR 110-120 per kg. During discussions, farmers reported that 1 kg of spawn produced an average yield of 4-6 kg of fresh mushrooms per production cycle under field conditions. This yield level reflects effective input utilization and confirms oyster mushroom cultivation as a high biological-efficiency, low-input livelihood option.
- Enhanced production intensity per cultivation unit:** Following training and handholding support, farmers increased the average size of mushroom cultivation bags procured from 3.47 kg to 6.26 kg, representing an 80% increase. The adoption of larger bags indicates strengthened technical capacity in substrate preparation, spawning density, and moisture management, enabling higher output per cultivation unit.
- Enterprise scale expansion and reinvestment behaviour:** Alongside larger bag sizes, farmers also expanded the average number of cultivation bags from 20.8 to 38.4, reflecting an 85% increase. This expansion signals a clear shift from pilot-level experimentation to more structured, income-oriented mushroom enterprises, with farmers reinvesting in scale after observing reliable production outcomes.
- Sustained livelihood engagement through repeat production cycles:** On average, farmers completed approximately 6.2 production cycles since receiving training. Given the short biological cycle (30-45-day cycle; best grown from April–November) of oyster mushrooms, this indicates continued and repeated engagement over multiple seasons, demonstrating that mushroom cultivation was adopted as a recurring livelihood activity rather than a one-time intervention.
- Regular short-cycle income generation:** Farmers reported a average income of INR 5,015 per production cycle. When combined with multiple cycles completed and expanded production scale, these returns translated into regular, short-interval cash inflows, particularly valuable for landless and marginal households with limited access to steady income sources. In several cases, women who were otherwise engaged in domestic work undertook home-based mushroom cultivation, generating supplementary income and improving household nutrition.

Analysis and Findings

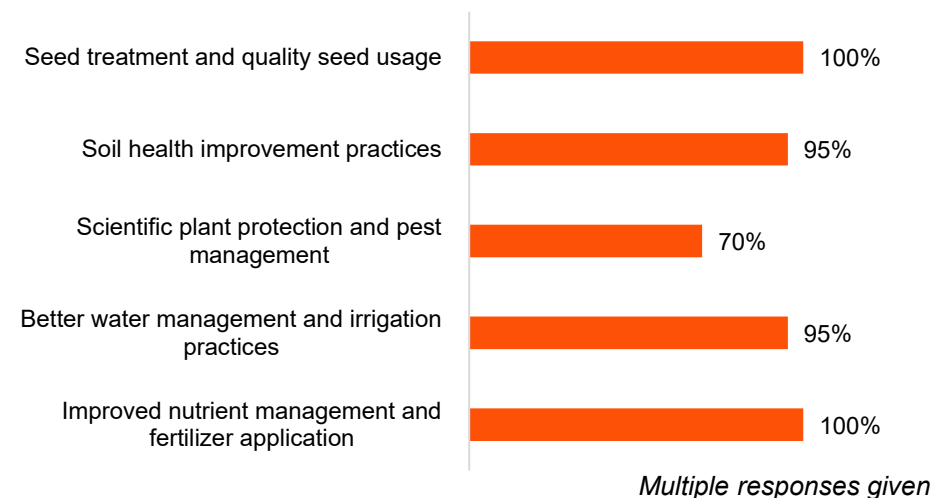
Package of practice training for conventional maize, paddy, wheat, and potato farmers

- The project strengthened conventional crop cultivation through **targeted agronomic training focused on improving resource efficiency**. Farmers cultivating paddy, maize, and wheat were trained on the optimal use of nutrients, irrigation, and plant protection inputs, enabling the adoption of scientifically informed practices that improve soil health, reduce production costs, and enhance yields.
- Before the PoP agronomic training, a large proportion of participating farmers had **limited or inconsistent exposure to scientific farming practices**, with 47% relying entirely on traditional methods and 40% possessing only basic knowledge without a systematic approach. Only 5% of farmers reported already following most scientific practices, while 9% had partial knowledge but applied it inconsistently, indicating a **substantial gap between awareness and effective implementation of scientific crop management**.
- The baseline distribution of knowledge levels **demonstrates clear alignment between the training design and farmer needs**, as the intervention primarily targeted farmers who were cultivating crops under resource-intensive and inefficient practices, and therefore stood to benefit from structured, science-based guidance on nutrient, water, and plant protection management.
- Following the training, farmers reported strong **adoption of improved practices across multiple agronomic domains**. All participants (100%) adopted improved nutrient management and quality seed usage, while 95% implemented better water management and soil health improvement practices. In addition, 70% adopted scientific plant protection and pest management methods, indicating a broad shift from traditional to more balanced and informed crop management approaches.
- These patterns reflect a meaningful transition from **fragmented knowledge to systematic adoption of scientific farming practices**, reinforcing the effectiveness of PoP training in driving behaviour change at the farm level.

Baseline knowledge of scientific farming practices before PoP training (n=43)



Adoption of scientific farming practices after PoP training (n=43)



Analysis and Findings

Strengthening Climate-Smart Crop Production through PoP Agronomic Training (N=43)

- The PoP agronomic training intervention supported farmers cultivating paddy, maize, wheat, and potato in **improving crop productivity and farm resilience through the adoption of scientifically informed practices**. Designed for farmers operating under input-intensive and inefficient conventional systems, the initiative focused on **optimizing nutrient management, water use, seed quality, and plant protection practices**.
- The project engaged farmers across these crops, with **79% receiving maize training, 74% wheat training, 72% paddy training, and 60% potato training**, enabling a transition toward more resource-efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable crop management approaches that strengthen farm-level income and long-term agro-ecological stability.

Change in average crop yield per bigha before and after PoP agronomic training (n=43)

Crop	Yield (q/bigha) – Before PoP	Yield (q/bigha) – After PoP	% Change
Paddy	13.36	15.81	18%
Maize	23.08	25.83	12%
Wheat	9.30	11.90	28%
Potato	38.40	47.60	24%

Change in net profit per bigha before and after PoP agronomic training (n=43)

Crop	Net Profit (₹/bigha) – Before PoP	Net Profit (₹/bigha) – After PoP	% Change
Paddy	9,818	12,636	29%
Maize	17,166	21,083	23%
Wheat	9,750	12,600	29%
Potato	22,400	28,800	29%

70%

reported **improved fertilizer use practices post-training** (70% using less fertilizer with better results through scientific application, 26% achieving better results with the same amount, and 4% using slightly more but in a scientific manner).

65%

reported **improved water management post-training** (65% significantly improved with more efficient water use, 30% moderately improved with better irrigation timing, and 5% slightly improved with some water-saving practices).

60%

reported **improved plant protection practices post-training** (60% adopted scientific pest management with reduced chemical use, 35% shifted to more targeted and timely spray applications, and 5% slightly improved pest identification and treatment).




- The PoP agronomic training delivered **consistent productivity and income gains across paddy, maize, wheat, and potato**, with yield improvements of 12–28% translating into net profit increases of 23–29% per bigha, driven primarily by improved nutrient, water, and crop management efficiency rather than increased input use.
- Beyond yield and income gains, farmers **reported marked improvements in core agronomic practices**, including scientific fertilizer application, efficient irrigation management, and targeted plant protection, leading to reduced chemical dependency and strengthened overall farm management across crop stages.
- Overall satisfaction with the training was high**, with 65% reporting very high satisfaction citing major improvements in farming knowledge and income, and 35% expressing satisfaction with improved learning and noticeable income gains, reaffirming the relevance and effectiveness of the intervention.

Analysis and Findings

Promotion of Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR)




- The project promoted **Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR)** as a **water-saving, labour-efficient alternative** to conventional transplanted rice. Farmers were trained on **two DSR methods: Dry-DSR**, where seeds are drilled or broadcast into dry, unpludded soil and **Wet-DSR**, where seeds are sown directly into wet-puddled soil.
- Before the intervention, **64% of respondents (n=25)** relied on puddled transplanted rice (PTR), while **28% used manual broadcasting and 8% followed other traditional direct seeding methods**. These practices are generally associated with higher labour and water requirements. The intervention primarily engaged farmers transitioning from these conventional approaches.
- The conventional methods posed significant challenges for farmers. Across all respondents, **high labour requirement** (92%,n=25) and **excessive water usage** (92%) emerged as the most prevalent concerns, followed by **prolonged land preparation time** (84%) and **high cultivation costs** (76%). Further, over half the farmers (56%) also reported labour shortages during peak transplanting season. These reported **constraints are consistent with the rationale for exploring DSR as an alternative paddy establishment method** in the region.

Impact of Dry-DSR (N=13)

Impact Indicator	Pre Activity	Post Activity	% Change
 Number of days for land preparation for 1 bigha paddy cultivation (in Days)	8.46	4.46	-47%
 Avg cost of cultivating 1 bigha of land for paddy (In INR)	12,461	9,915	-20%
 Avg paddy yield per bigha (In Quintals)	15.08	18.85	+25%

- Number of irrigations per season:** The average number of irrigations per season declined from 3.85 to 3.31, while irrigation time reduced from 7.6 hrs to 5.1 hrs (1 bigha).
- Net profit:** Average paddy net profit per bigha rose from INR 10,208 to INR 13,954, representing a 37% increase.
- 100% reported an **advancement in sowing time** (62% start much earlier by sowing before the monsoon now, and 38% now take advantage of pre-monsoon rainfall)
- All observed **earlier crop maturity** (with 54% reporting maturity 7–10 days earlier and 46% experiencing maturity 10–14 days earlier)
- While 100% of respondents **expressed satisfaction with Dry-DSR and intent to continue**, all of them identified **weed management as a persisting challenge**, underscoring the need for continued technical support alongside strong adoption momentum.

Impact of Wet-DSR (N=12)

Impact Indicator	Pre Activity	Post Activity	% Change
 Time required to irrigate 1 bigha of land (In Hours)	11.75	9.75	-17%
 Avg paddy yield per bigha (In Quintals)	10.83	16.92	+56%
 Net profit per bigha from paddy per season (In INR)	9,250	11,683	+26%




- Number of irrigations per season:** The average number of irrigations per season decreased from 6.92 to 5.83, representing a 16% reduction.
- 100% reported complete elimination of transplanting labour through drum seeder-based direct seeding on puddled soil.
- All reported **earlier crop maturity of 7–14 days** after adopting Wet-DSR
- All reported **improved weed management** (75% attributing it to water layer-based weed suppression, 25% finding it better compared to dry methods)
- 100% of farmers **expressed satisfaction with Wet-DSR**, with 92% **very satisfied and committed to continuing its use** and 8% **satisfied and likely to continue**, indicating **positive adoption intent among surveyed farmers**.

Analysis and Findings

Promotion of Zero Tillage (ZT) in Wheat and Maize




- The project promoted Zero Tillage (ZT) in both wheat and maize as a **resource efficient, cost saving, and climate smart alternative to conventional tillage systems**. Farmers were trained to use **zero tillage drills and multi crop planters** in untilled soil with residue retention, improving soil moisture conservation, reducing fuel consumption, minimizing soil disturbance, and supporting more sustainable and resilient crop establishment practices across both cropping systems.
- Prior to the intervention, most farmers relied on **tillage intensive methods**. In wheat, 64% used **conventional tillage with multiple plowing operations**, while in maize this share was 80%. The remaining **farmers depended on manual or reduced tillage approaches**. Overall, this reflects a strong dependence on labour and fuel intensive practices, with limited awareness and adoption of zero tillage technologies among the farming community before program engagement.
- These practices created major challenges, including **high fuel and cultivation costs, increased labour and machinery expenses, and delayed sowing due to lengthy land preparation**. Farmers also reported **soil degradation, poor structure, reduced moisture retention, and nutrient loss**. These issues highlighted the need for efficient alternatives and reinforced the value of ZT as a cost effective, time saving, and soil health enhancing solution.

Impact of ZT- Wheat (N=11)

Impact Indicator	Pre Activity	Post Activity	% Change
 Avg no of days for land preparation for 1 bigha wheat cultivation (in Days)	12	4.82	-60%
 Avg cost of cultivating 1 bigha of land for wheat (In INR)	10,136	5,590	-45%
 Avg wheat yield per bigha (In Quintals)	11.18	16.90	+51%

- Time gap between paddy harvest and wheat sowing:** The time gap between paddy harvest and wheat sowing reduced from 20.90 days to 10.90 days, a 48% reduction.
- Net profit:** Net profit per bigha from wheat cultivation increased from INR 10,727 to INR 16,363, reflecting a 53% increase.
- 100% reported **improved soil condition after ZT adoption** (64% observed much better soil structure and organic matter, and 36% noticed some soil improvement).
- 100% reported **effective weed management under ZT method** (91% rated it excellent with minimal manual weeding, and 9% found improved weed control with less labour)
- 100% of farmers **expressed being very satisfied** with Zero Tillage wheat technology and confirmed they **will definitely continue its use**, indicating high satisfaction among surveyed farmers and stated intent to continue use.

Impact of ZT- Maize (N=10)

Impact Indicator	Pre Activity	Post Activity	% Change
 Avg no of days for land preparation for 1 bigha maize cultivation (in Days)	8.6	5.6	-35%
 Avg cost of cultivating 1 bigha of land for maize (In INR)	18,900	15,800	-16%
 Avg maize yield per bigha (In Quintals)	30.1	35.4	+18%

- Time gap between wheat harvest and maize sowing:** The time gap between wheat harvest and maize sowing decreased from 80.1 days to 66.4 days, a 17% reduction.
- Net profit:** Net profit per bigha from maize increased from INR 20,700 to INR 29,000, representing a 40% increase.
- 100% reported **improved soil condition after ZT adoption** (70% observed much better soil structure and organic matter, and 30% noticed some soil improvement).
- 100% reported **effective weed management under ZT method** (80% rated it excellent with minimal manual weeding, and 10% found improved weed control with less labour)
- 100% of farmers expressed **satisfaction with Zero Tillage maize technology**, with 90% very satisfied and committed to continuing its use and 10% satisfied and likely to continue, indicating positive satisfaction ratings and stated intent to continue use.

Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field

A **multi-crop planter**, owned by a farmer through support facilitated by DRF at subsidized rates, was observed during the field visit.

During the interaction, the owner shared that the equipment is made available to other farmers on a low-cost, scheduled basis during the relevant cropping seasons.



A **zero-tillage drill**, owned by a farmer through support facilitated by DRF at subsidized rates, was observed during the field visit.

During the interaction, the owner shared that the equipment is made available to other farmers on a low-cost, scheduled basis during the relevant cropping seasons.



A **large-scale mushroom cultivation unit** maintained by a woman farmer was observed during the field visit.

During the interaction, she shared that mushroom cultivation has become a regular livelihood activity and that the produce is sold locally, generating recurring income across production cycles.



IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project demonstrated inclusiveness by reaching small and marginal farmers across diverse crops and livelihood contexts, including cultivators, landless households, women, and marginalised groups.
- Nearly balanced gender participation and engagement of landless beneficiaries through mushroom cultivation expanded access beyond land-owning farmers.

R

Relevance

- The project activities utilised targeted approach and were relevant to local agricultural context, addressing core challenges and such as labour-intensive paddy cultivation, rising fuel costs, mono-cropping risks, and limited livelihood options for landless households.
- Training content and technologies focused on water efficiency, cost reduction, soil health, and income stability, with strong adoption across activities validating close alignment between interventions and farmers' real constraints.

E

Effectiveness

- The project demonstrated effectiveness, evidenced by consistent yield improvements of 10-56% and net profit increases of 23-53% across crops and practices. Training translated into tangible behavioural change, with high adoption rates for technologies.
- Effectiveness was also reflected in parameters like, earlier sowing, reduced drudgery, improved soil condition, better weed & pest management, high satisfaction levels, demonstrating that training was applied in practice.

C

Convergence

- The project benefited from convergence with government scientific institutions, particularly Dr. RPCAU and KVK Samastipur, whose technical inputs strengthened credibility, contextual adaptation, and farmer trust in introduced practices.
- The project aligns with the Prime Minister Dhan-Dhaanya Krishi Yojana by strengthening agricultural productivity, diversification, sustainability, and irrigation-led development in targeted regions.

S

Sustainability

- Sustainability prospects are strong because most interventions improved both profitability and resource efficiency, creating incentives for continued adoption.
- Farmer intent to continue was high across DSR, ZT, and intercropping, while peer knowledge sharing in mushroom cultivation further indicates that these practices have moved beyond one-time trials and hold strong potential for sustained adoption.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project improved farm-level profitability and reduced production costs across major agricultural interventions. In addition to strengthening returns from conventional cropping, it expands livelihood opportunities for landless and marginal households through mushroom cultivation, thereby supporting income enhancement and reducing economic vulnerability.



The project enhances the productivity, efficiency, and resilience of smallholder farming systems. Through promotion of improved agronomic practices, water-efficient cultivation methods, intercropping, and scientific crop management, it supports more sustainable food production while strengthening the capacities of small and marginal farmers.



The project advanced climate-smart agricultural practices that improve resource efficiency and on-farm resilience. Interventions such as direct seeded rice, zero tillage, intercropping, and improved water & nutrient management help reduce pressure on natural resources while enabling farmers to better adapt to climatic variability and production risks.

Recommendations



- **Building market linkages and input supply chains for mushroom enterprises:** Establish structured market connections through local buyer aggregation, linkages with retail and institutional buyers, and reliable spawn procurement channels through registered vendors or FPOs, converting the strong cultivation capacity built by the project into sustainable income-generating enterprises for mushroom farmers.



- **Strengthening weed management advisory for Dry-DSR adopters:** Introduce targeted weed management support through seasonal herbicide application calendars, pre-emergence and post-emergence spray demonstrations, and linkages with KVK scientists for timely field-level advisory, ensuring that weed-related adoption risks do not undermine the strong cultivation gains achieved under Dry-DSR.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

From Homebound to Income Earner: Reena's Journey through Oyster Mushroom Cultivation



Reena (name changed), a resident of Samastipur, Bihar, found a meaningful livelihood opportunity through DRF's oyster mushroom cultivation training. After marriage, like many rural women, she remained largely confined to household responsibilities and had limited opportunities to contribute independently to family income. With little land access and few viable livelihood options available, she often felt constrained by the traditional roles around her. Her situation began to change when she learned about the mushroom cultivation training being organized in her area and decided to participate.

Through the training, Reena learned the complete process of oyster mushroom production using locally available agricultural waste and other low-cost inputs. Motivated by the practical nature of the activity and its low entry barriers, she started mushroom cultivation within her home by setting up two dedicated production rooms. Over time, she expanded her efforts and now procures around 50 to 100 kg of spawn each month in staggered cycles to maintain regular production. On average, Reena now earns around INR 10,000 to 15,000 per month from mushroom cultivation. This income supports household expenses and agricultural needs while also enhancing her confidence, financial contribution, and decision-making role within the family.

02

From Traditional Practices to Profitable Farming: Satish's Transformation through PoP Training in Wheat

Satish (name changed), a smallholder farmer from Samastipur district in Bihar, has long depended on wheat cultivation to support his family. Farming on a limited landholding, he followed traditional practices passed down over generations, relying on blanket fertilizer application, delayed sowing, and reactive pest control. Despite hard work, rising input costs and inconsistent yields often limited his returns. Satish's approach began to change after he participated in the Package of Practices (PoP) agronomic training conducted by Dr. Reddy's Foundation (DRF). Through structured sessions and field-level guidance, he learned scientific methods of wheat cultivation, including timely sowing, balanced nutrient management, efficient irrigation scheduling, and targeted plant protection. The training helped him understand how better decision-making, rather than higher input use, could improve productivity.

Applying these practices on his own fields, Satish observed healthier crop growth, reduced wastage of fertilizers, and fewer pest-related losses. Over the season, his wheat yields improved noticeably, and his cost of cultivation declined. As a result, his net income from wheat increased, easing financial pressure on his household. Beyond higher earnings, Satish gained confidence in scientific farming and now serves as a reference point for fellow farmers, demonstrating how PoP training can convert traditional agriculture into a more resilient and profitable livelihood.

Project 8

Community Health Intervention Programme (CHIP)

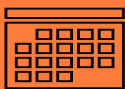


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

The Community Health Intervention Program (CHIP) implemented by NICE Foundation provides primary healthcare directly to rural residents, offering screenings, diagnosis, treatment, follow-ups, and referrals to reduce health disparities and enhance community health outcomes.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
158 villages in
Srikakulam and
Vizianagaram districts of
Andhra Pradesh



Implementing partner:
NICE Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 1.85 Cr

Project Activities

- Provided 14,928 Fixed Day Health Service (FDHS) sessions, where primary healthcare services were given to 199,752 community members from marginalised backgrounds, in collaboration with government health facilities.
- Offered doorstep healthcare to 16,559 immobile patients, including sick newborns, lactating mothers, elderly individuals, and those with injuries
- Gave 1,967 referrals to patients for advanced diagnosis or treatment to district hospitals.
- Conducted Behaviour Change Communication Sessions (BCCs) for 302,840 individuals and Participatory Discussion Groups (PDGs) for 23,699 pregnant women, lactating mothers, and adolescent girls.
- Held 30 health awareness events aligned with national and international health days.
- Facilitated a school health programme in 142 schools, imparting health knowledge to government school children.
- Collaborated with 473 frontline workers and 67 Gram Panchayats for local governance convergence and advocacy activities.

Methodology: IRECS– Qualitative Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 1 Focused Group Discussion with elderly community members
- 1 Focused Group Discussion with pregnant woman and post-natal mothers
- 1 Small Group Discussion with Fixed Day Health Service team members
- 1 In-Depth Interview with Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM) worker
- 1 In-Depth Interview with Head of School
- 1 In-Depth Interview with NICE Foundation representative

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

Prior to the Community Health Intervention Programme (CHIP), the following challenges were shared by various stakeholders:



Financial insecurity and lack of stable employment:

Most households relied on the informal sector, earning income through day wage labour and government livelihood schemes. Some households were engaged in fisheries, facing income volatility due to its seasonal nature. In the face of financial insecurity, health used to take a backseat.



Lack of convenient access to healthcare

The nearest PHC was between 5 to 15km away and the district hospital was 30-40km away. The lack of transport options for those who didn't own a vehicle made it difficult to access the Primary Health Centre (PHC)/ Community Health Centre (CHC). Relying on public transport required 3-4 hours of time and relying on shared transport like autos involved expenditure of INR 100 each time. Private hospitals, for those who could afford the care, were in Vizianagaram or Visakhapatnam, 30-50km away. For the elderly, the distance to health facilities meant that they had to be accompanied by a household member to visit, which was often inconvenient.



Lack of awareness about positive health seeking behaviour

Pregnant women and new mothers used to neglect their health due to insufficient awareness about good health practices and low prioritisation of maternal health needs. Visits to the hospital were undertaken only at the time of delivery or when the health condition was serious. Belief in myths and misconceptions and lack of routine checkups led to high Maternal Mortality Rates (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rates (IMR).

Among the general population, there was high prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) like hypertension and diabetes but lack of convenient access to the PHC meant that many did not get tested and even when tested, found it difficult to keep up the medication schedule.



Strained public health systems

Community members noted that the unavailability of medical staff at the PHC posed a challenge. While Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers and ANMs provided village-level support to the community, they were often stretched due to the need to deliver multiple health schemes and services, and lack transport to reach distant locations.

Analysis and Findings

Regular and predictable health care services

- FDHS team shared that a three-wheeler electric vehicle (EV) visited 12-14 villages per week. The **Anganwadi** was the chosen location for FDHS due to its **centrality and accessibility**. A siren informed community members of their presence.
- The outreach worker mobilised the community, while the NMWs conducted investigations and provided medication and counselling. All services were provided **free of charge**.
- The FDHS team shared that the vehicle is equipped with weight machine, height scale, stethoscope, thermometer, BP apparatus, doppler (foetal monitor), and equipment to test for random glucose and haemoglobin and **SOPs are in place for regular maintenance** of the equipment.
- Community members highlighted that **FDHS was regular, even in extreme weather, and timings were convenient, allowing them to pick up routine medication even if they needed to work**. None of the community members reported **foregoing income** to visit the FDHS.
- Elderly community members who had limited support from household members to take them to the PHC or district hospital shared that **they now received everything they needed in their own village**, a service they **highly valued**. Antenatal mothers who were recovering at home shared that they **continued to receive regular care** through FDHS home visits.
- For those issues which could not be treated through FDHS, such as thyroid problems, pregnancy scans, etc, referrals were given to the PHC. FDHS team shared that there was **good collaboration with PHC staff**, who were supportive of their work and responded effectively to referrals.



FDHS team

- Field supervisor
- 2 nurse midwives (NMWs)
- Outreach worker



Visit details

- Biweekly visits to each village
- 1 – 1.5 hours per village per visit



Reach

- 30-60 community members in the **morning session**
- 15-25 members in the **afternoon**
- 10-20 **home visits**

NEW PATIENTS

FDHS team did a checkup and observation and sent them to the PHC for consulting the doctor and receiving a prescription

REGULAR PATIENTS

NMWs did investigations, administered medication and provided counselling.

PREGNANT WOMEN

FDHS team did check-ups once a fortnight, including blood pressure, weight, foetal heartbeat, and blood and urine tests.

IMMOBILE PATIENTS

Home visits were done for bedridden, elderly patients, high-risk pregnancy cases and post-natal mothers

Analysis and Findings

Improved health practices among community members

- The ANM highlighted FDHS was **accessible to all sections of the population** who needed predictable and affordable health care services. With government healthcare vehicles visiting only once a month, the community **preferred the more frequent services** offered by FDHS, to which the ANM often referred them. This **consistent access increased health seeking behaviour** and **reduced instances of neglected health** issues among the community.
- FDHS team shared that they kept **detailed health records** for each patient, noting their last visit and follow-up dates. If patients miss their appointments, the team conducted home visits. Biweekly FDHS check-ups helped **maintain continuity in treatment** and ensured **appropriate medication use**.
- Community members pointed out that previously, they were inconsistent with medication due to limited healthcare access. With FDHS in place, they now **regularly took prescribed medications** and changed their habits – for instance, those with diabetes cut down on sugar intake. Some members, however, shared that they found it challenging to maintain good health practices due to the demands of daily labour.
- Pregnant women expressed that, without FDHS, maintaining good health and consistent check-ups was difficult due to transportation issues. A systematic approach during FDHS visits – where overall foetal growth was monitored; haemoglobin, hypertension and blood sugar levels were tested, and 1:1 counselling was given – resulted in a **reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality rates to zero**, according to the FDHS team.
- For school students frequently affected by malnutrition, stomach infections, and seasonal illnesses, FDHS provided weekly check-ups, diagnosis, and treatment. ASHA workers communicated referrals to parents, thus **improving students' health-seeking behaviours**. The Head of School highlighted that CHIP helped **address minor health concerns without needing trips to PHCs** or district hospitals. Teachers reported that improved health and immunity **enhanced students' classroom focus and activity levels**. Furthermore, students now **exhibited greater health awareness**, conscientiously checking medicine expiration dates before use.
- While FDHS team provided referrals and ASHA workers assist community members in accessing treatment at PHCs and district hospitals, **not all patients visited these facilities promptly**. The team noted that there was a **need for additional efforts to encourage patients to seek timely referral treatments**, even in the absence of ASHA workers.

Analysis and Findings

Increased knowledge about health and wellbeing



- CHIP organised **monthly behaviour change sessions** for the general community, coinciding with international health days. Modules were **seasonally tailored**, such as emphasising fluid intake and preventing dehydration for daily wage workers during summer and avoiding vector-borne diseases during the monsoon.
- Individual sessions were held following regular checkups **based on patient needs**.
- Community members recalled learning about good nutrition, purifying water for safe consumption, handwashing, reduced intake of sugar, etc but shared that **not all of these could be followed due to financial and work-related constraints**. They shared that they were now aware of **the importance of timely checkups and regular medication** to manage NCDs and other health problems, which had improved their overall health.



- Participatory Discussion Groups (PDGs) were conducted every fortnight for pregnant women and new mothers, with **standardised thematic modules across locations**. On average, **women attended 4-5 sessions** before and after pregnancy, though relevance varied based on their joining stage and session topics. Discussions covered prenatal care, personal hygiene, danger signs, safe delivery, newborn care routines, breastfeeding, and more.
- Pregnant women and new mothers found the **PDG sessions extremely beneficial** for learning about misconceptions and risky practices to avoid, as well as **safe behaviours to follow**. Examples included avoiding heavy lifting, moderating physical labour during and after pregnancy, practicing spacing between pregnancies, and opting for institutional deliveries.
- When asked to **recall positive behaviours** they learned, **they highlighted several**, including taking iron supplements regularly, eating high-quality, nutritious food, monitoring blood pressure, keeping documents ready for delivery, maintaining records of those with the same blood group as them, etc.
- Even if some session topics weren't immediately relevant, women found that listening to others' experiences and advice **made the sessions relatable and boosted their confidence**. Previously, they depended on ANC or ASHA workers for knowledge during home visits, but now, with comprehensive and accurate information from the FDHS team, they **were better prepared**.



- The School Health Programme also had regular modules with a fixed schedule, where the FDHS team covered issues relating to **preventive health practices**. These monthly sessions, on topics such as handwashing, nutrition, general, dental and menstrual hygiene, administering first aid, etc, were held using posters, practical demonstrations and Smart TVs.
- The Head of School stated that the **sessions were effective** and students **paid attention**.

Analysis and Findings

Greater convergence contributing to universal health coverage

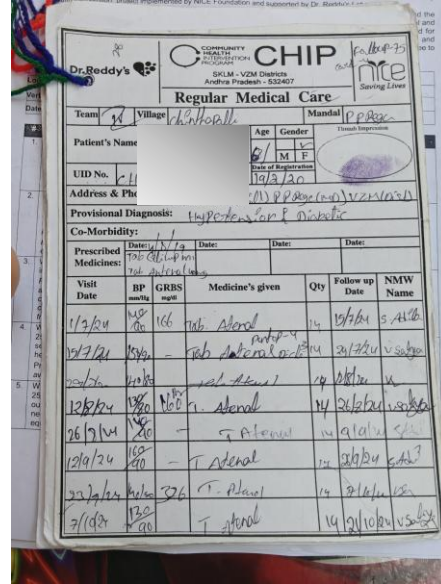
- According to the NICE Foundation representative, the focus from the beginning was on **convergence** with the PHC, ANM, Panchayat representatives and community leaders to **strengthen the existing system**, rather than duplicate it. These stakeholders were involved in the **selection of the venue** for FDHS to ensure that the **location was strategic and accessible** by all.
- Depending on the community profile and dynamics, FDHS team sometimes selected multiple locations in a village to ensure **all sections of society could access services**. In most villages, however, the Anganwadi was chosen because it is centrally located.
- NICE Foundation **built capacities** of PHC and CHC nurses through awareness sessions and gave them medical assessment kits so they could handle referrals easier. FDHS teams **involved PHC staff in routine programmes** and **supported them in implementing national and state health campaigns**, thereby **reducing their workloads and improving their reach**. They also shared their schedule with ASHA and ANM workers, who **often joined them and travelled together** to difficult-to-reach locations to address community needs.
- ASHA workers helped FDHS team mobilise pregnant women and new mothers and both **worked together to register them** in the early stages so that they got government benefits and regular health care. When ASHA workers implemented Home-Based Newborn Care for new mothers and ANM visited homes for immunisation, FDHS team joined them to **ensure comprehensive home care**. Community members understood this synergy and share that they could reach out either to the FDHS team or the ASHA/ ANM for any health issues or referrals. The ANM worker noted that this collaborative approach helped **streamline their work**.
- The Head of School mentioned that earlier, during monthly school visits, ANMs would identify health issues and refer students to PHCs but as there was no hands-on support, these issues remained unresolved. Now with weekly FDHS services, **immediate diagnosis and treatment** were given.
- The ANM shared that they joined awareness days organised by the FDHS team like Cancer Day, HIV Day, etc, and further, invited village leaders like the Sarpanch to ensure the message went out to a large number. They also attended PDG Sessions, which **help build their own knowledge**. Highlighting the **relevance of CHIP**, the ANM observed that in the absence of FDHS, they would work with **much less efficacy and reach**.
- Noting that CHIP has been able to bring about behavioural change in community members, who now accessed FDHS services regularly due to **proximity, frequency and convenience**, the NICE Foundation representative shared that their central focus was to **collaborate with frontline workers so that the public health system becomes more responsive over time**. By anchoring the programme in the Anganwadi and involving health workers in all activities, they expect that in the long-term, the **community would start demanding** health services and make the government system **accountable**.

Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field



Community members queuing up during FDHS visit



Health card maintained by FDHS team for each patient



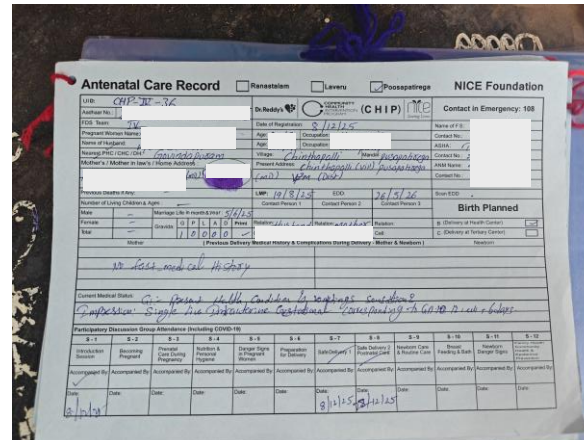
Fortnightly check up by NMW of a pregnant woman



Home visit for elderly and immobile patient



Awareness session being conducted for students as part of School Health Programme



Detailed records of pregnant woman maintained by FDHS including PDG sessions attended



Electronic Vehicle with Dr. Reddy's branding that travels to each village

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project was inclusive as FDHS services were available to all community members free-of-charge.
- The Anganwadi was selected as it was centrally located and depending on community dynamics, multiple locations were selected in a village to improve accessibility.
- FDHS team worked with ANM and ASHA workers to ensure all pregnant women and new mothers were covered.

R

Relevance

- FDHS biweekly services were highly relevant, given that the nearest PHC was 5-15km away and community members, especially the elderly, delayed checkups due to distance and transport constraints.
- The focus on supporting pregnant women and new mothers through different initiatives helped eliminate MMR and NMR in the intervention areas, making the project relevant.

E

Effectiveness

- CHIP effectively addressed various sections of society – pregnant women, new mothers, elderly, school children and those with NCDs – providing timely support through FDHS services and home visits.
- Awareness sessions brought about behaviour change, ensuring that community members proactively addressed health issues.
- Collaboration with frontline workers improved quality and efficacy of service delivery

C

Convergence

- CHIP converged with public health workers and focused on enhancing the and making it accountable.
- All activities were carried out in collaboration with ASHA workers, ANMs, PHC and CHC staff – with both groups providing support to improve health services.
- Referrals given by FDHS team were taken up by ASHA workers and ANMs, who ensured community members visited PHCs/CHCs for checkups or diagnosis.

S

Sustainability

- The project was able to bring about positive behaviour changes in the community, who began to proactively seek health services.
- Collaboration with frontline workers and building their capacities helped ensure that the community's health needs are addressed in the long-run.
- The absence of accessible public health services means that the community will face significant difficulty if FDHS were discontinued.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



Goal 3 focuses on ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being across all ages. By bringing healthcare services directly to villages, CHIP reduces barriers to access, ensuring that remote and underserved populations receive necessary medical attention, vaccinations, maternal care, and disease management which is crucial for achieving universal health coverage.

Recommendations



Building ownership within the community : The project can consider strengthening community ownership by creating local volunteer members/ groups in each village who support the activities of FDHS – mobilising pregnant women and new mothers, ensuring community members obtain health services and take their medication regularly, communicating with parents about their children’s health issues and accompanying elderly patients for referral services.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories



01

Timely and caring support

I prepare the mid-day meals for a government school, earning around INR 3,000 per month. I am 50 years old. I had an injury some time back, where a glass pierced my hand. When it was treated at the government hospital in Vizianagaram, they informed me that I have diabetes. They dressed my wound and gave me medication for diabetes and sent me home.

However, my injury did not heal and got infected. That is when I found out that the FDHS team was visiting my village. I came for a checkup and got my dressing replaced. They gave me antibiotics for the infection and regular medication for my diabetes.

I come every week to collect my medication. As the FDHS is centrally located at the Anganwadi, it is easy for me to access it even when I am working. The team explains the dosage clearly. The medication is in different colours so I can easily recognise which tablet to take at home.

Now I feel better health-wise. The wound is fully healed. The nurses are caring and come to my home for house visits in case I am unwell. Before, I was not serious about my health but now I take good care of myself.



02

A central lifeline

I am over 60 years old and I live alone. I used to engage in agricultural work when I was well, but now, I do not go out anywhere. I have hypertension, diabetes arthritis and a fractured leg that is healing.

Since the FDHS came to my village, I have been getting regular check-ups. I share my health complaints with them, and they give me the appropriate medication. Now I am better and I take medication regularly.

The nurses are very good. Without NICE, I would not be able to do anything – I have no money to go anywhere else and there is no one to take care of me. I am very thankful to NICE Foundation.

Project 9

Improving Services by Strengthening Health Infrastructure in Hospitals

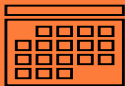


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

To strengthen public health infrastructure and service delivery capacity in rural areas by systematically **upgrading Primary Health Centres (PHCs)**, thereby reducing disease burden, improving health outcomes, and minimizing financial strain on rural families while ensuring alignment with National Health Objectives and UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Srikakulam, Andhra Pradesh



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 7.4 Cr.

Project Activities

- Upgraded 17 PHCs covering a population of 5,24,931.
- Renovation of PHCs with modernized laboratories, specialized diagnostic equipment, improved sanitation, water supply systems, and waste management facilities.
- Standardization of labour rooms per national guidelines, training of Skilled Birth Attendants, and implementation of emergency obstetric and newborn care protocols.
- Equipping PHCs for emergency stabilization and referral, implementing standardized drug classification systems, and establishing efficient inventory management protocols.
- Training programs for medical staff, partnerships with specialized institutions, introduction of patient management technology, and enhanced coordination with district health offices.

Methodology: IRECS– Qualitative Method Approach



Qualitative Interactions

As a part of the study, two upgraded PHCs were visited for the data collection. Following stakeholders were covered during the interaction:

- 2 Focused Group Discussion with Beneficiaries
- 1 Focused Group Discussion with pregnant women and post-natal mothers
- 2 In-Depth Interview with Chief Medical Officer, PHC
- 1 In-Depth Interview with DRF Project Team Member

*Source: As per documents (Memorandum of Understanding , Addendum signed between Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Dr. Reddy's Foundation, Annual Programme Reports, Beneficiary Data) shared by DRL and DRF, <https://drreddysfoundation.org/healthcare-interventions-of-dr-reddys-foundation/>

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

The following challenges were observed from discussions with various stakeholders including patients, PHC staff and Chief Medical Officers:



- **Limited Healthcare Access & Institutional Deliveries:** Absence of proper labour room facilities and diagnostic equipment at PHCs forced pregnant women and patients to travel to distant Community Health Centres (CHCs) for delivery and treatment, creating significant barriers to safe institutional births and timely medical care.



- **Financial Burden & Transportation Costs:** Families incurred high out-of-pocket expenses for transport to distant CHCs and private facilities due to inadequate local PHC services, placing significant financial strain on rural households and limiting healthcare access. In Patharpalli village, poor connectivity and reliance on a single morning bus service left patients with no option but to wait until the following day or arrange expensive private transport if the bus was missed. Accessing Ganeshthalam CHC required two auto-rickshaw transfers, making travel time-intensive and prohibitively expensive for most villagers.



- **Emergency Response Limitations & Critical Delays:** Long travel distances to healthcare facilities caused dangerous delays for emergency cases. PHCs lacked essential emergency equipment and standardized protocols, limiting staff capacity to stabilize critical patients in maternal emergencies, cardiac events, and trauma cases. Community members reported critical gaps in after-hours emergency care, especially for night-time snake bites and dog bites. Without emergency services and protocols, patients were forced to travel long distances to Government General Hospital (GGH), Guntur, during critical golden hours when immediate intervention was essential for life-threatening conditions.



- **Inadequate Infrastructure & Working Conditions:** Poor infrastructure including lack of proper sanitation, unreliable power supply, insufficient waste management systems, and absence of modern laboratory equipment created challenging working environments that affected staff morale, service quality, and diagnostic capabilities, forcing frequent referrals to higher-level facilities.

Project Activities Undertaken

Project Implementation and Institutional Strengthening

1

- Laboratory modernization with diagnostic equipment and cold-chain systems
- Facility renovation: sanitation, water supply, landscaping, waste management

2

- Maternal & child health upgrades per with EmOC (Emergency Obstetric Care) protocols
- Emergency readiness for maternal, cardiac, trauma, and poisoning cases.

3

- Standardized pharmacy management and inventory control
- Patient management technology and DM&HO (District Medical & Health Officer) coordination

4

- Intensive staff training in emergency handling, referral protocols, and cancer screening

Analysis and Findings

Enhanced Diagnostic & Clinical Capacity

- As part of the project, PHCs were equipped on a need-basis with **modernized diagnostic systems, cold-chain refrigeration, and specialized equipment** including Coagulation Analysers, Dry Bath Incubators, Blood Mixers, and Centrifuges. These upgrades **addressed long-standing gaps in laboratory functionality** and enabled **timely, accurate, and reliable diagnostics** at the primary care level.
- The availability of advanced diagnostic facilities at the PHC level significantly **eased access to healthcare** by enabling timely, accurate diagnosis and treatment of a wide range of conditions. Patients **no longer require referrals for routine tests, reducing delays, travel time, and out-of-pocket expenses**. Early detection of conditions such as thyroid disorders during pregnancy has helped **prevent complications including miscarriages**, while improved diagnostic accuracy has **strengthened clinical decision-making**, allowing PHCs to manage cases effectively and reduce pressure on higher-level health facilities.
- Before the intervention, most PHCs lacked laboratories, forcing patients to spend on an average INR 1,500 – 1,000 on diagnostics in private settings. Post-intervention, the availability of on-site testing has **reduced diagnostic cost to zero** as shared by patients, while significantly improving the speed and accuracy of diagnosis. This has strengthened the PHCs' ability to manage non-communicable diseases, pregnancy-related complications, and routine clinical conditions, **enabling earlier detection, better treatment outcomes, and reduced financial burden on rural households**.



Strengthen Maternal & Child Care Services

- **Improved Infrastructure for Safe Deliveries:** PHC labour room and maternity ward renovations with improved lighting, beds, & upgraded equipment **enabled safe normal delivery** management. As shared by MO, **normal deliveries increased from 1-2 annually to 1-3 monthly**, eliminating previous referrals for routine cases.
- **Enhanced Privacy and Dignity of Care:** Installation of ward partitions and **separators ensured privacy** for pregnant women during examinations, deliveries, and post-natal care, **significantly improving comfort, dignity, and patient satisfaction**
- **Increased Antenatal and Postnatal Coverage:** According to Staff Nurse, Srikurmam PHC, monthly antenatal registrations increased from approximately 20 to 60, reflecting **improved outreach, early detection of high-risk pregnancies, and better follow-up** for mothers and newborns.
- **Strengthened Clinical Capacity for Maternal Care:** Training of medical and nursing staff, supported by improved diagnostics (e.g., thyroid screening), **enhanced the PHCs' ability to manage pregnancy-related conditions and newborn care**, leading to improved maternal and child health outcomes.



“Earlier, I was staying in Hyderabad, but when I became pregnant, I came back to my village specifically for my delivery because this PHC now has advanced facilities. I visit this PHC regularly to receive iron injections, which had cost me around ₹1,700 during my previous pregnancy when I was taking treatment at a CHC. Earlier, this PHC was in very poor condition and hardly anyone wanted to come here because there were no services available. Now, the situation has completely changed every pregnant woman in our village comes here for care.”

- As shared by Pregnant women coming to Srikurmam, PHC for her delivery

Analysis and Findings

From Referral Points to Efficient First-Contact Care Facilities & Improved patient experience and reduced financial burden

- One of the most visible outcomes of this enhanced diagnostic capacity was a sharp rise in patient footfall. According to Medical Officers at both the PHCs visited, OPD visits **increased from 30-40 patients per day to 90-100 patients daily**, reflecting renewed community confidence in PHC service quality. With advanced laboratory tests such as HbA1c and thyroid screening now available locally, patients **no longer need to travel to distant CHCs** or private facilities for essential diagnostics.
- **Timely Access to Care:** Upgraded infrastructure and improved workflow enabled PHCs to **provide faster consultations**, on-site diagnostics, and **prompt initiation of treatment, reducing delays** caused by referrals and travel to distant facilities.
- **Effective and Comprehensive Treatment at PHC Level:** Strengthened clinical and diagnostic capacity allowed PHCs to manage a wider range of conditions locally, transforming them from referral points into effective first-contact treatment centres.
- **Improved Availability and Use of Essential Medicines:** Better facility readiness and pharmacy management systems ensured **consistent availability and timely dispensing of essential medicines**, improving treatment adherence and health outcomes.
- **Streamlined and Patient-Centric Service Delivery:** Enhanced physical environment, ward segregation, and better staff coordination **improved patient flow, reduced waiting time, and increased satisfaction**, contributing to higher daily OPD utilisation and sustained community trust.



Patients and staff reported that PHCs, which were earlier perceived as poorly maintained and uncomfortable, are now **clean, orderly, and welcoming, encouraging repeat visits** and higher utilisation.



Local availability of services reduced travel to distant CHCs (often 30 km or more away), **saving transport expenses**, time, and daily wages, especially for daily wage earners. Women and **elderly patients no longer need to depend on multiple transport modes** or attendants, significantly easing access and reducing opportunity costs.



Introduction of **QR-code based patient feedback** systems reflected high satisfaction levels, with **nearly 90% positive responses**, as shared by MO, Patharpally. Patients frequently expressed willingness to recommend the upgraded PHCs to family and neighbours, indicating **restored community trust** and perceived service quality.



“With the availability of thyroid testing at the PHC, we are now able to detect thyroid disorders early in pregnant women. Earlier, these conditions were going undiagnosed, which led to miscarriages and pregnancy complications. Timely diagnosis has helped us prevent such outcomes.”

- As shared by CMO, PHC

Analysis and Findings

System Readiness and Emergency Care

- **Expanded Access to Emergency Care, Including Night-Time Services:** Strengthened infrastructure and staff availability enabled PHCs to function as reliable first-response facilities during night-time and urgent situations, ensuring patients could access care without waiting until the next day or travelling long distances.
- **Life-Saving First Response for Acute Emergencies:** Upgraded PHCs provided immediate primary treatment for snake bites, dog bites, poisoning, and trauma cases, including stabilisation and basic life-saving interventions before referral, reducing risk during critical early hours.
- **Improved Community Confidence in Handling Emergencies Locally:** Villagers increasingly approach PHCs during emergencies due to visible readiness, trained staff, and availability of equipment, reinforcing the perception of PHCs as dependable centres for urgent care, not just routine services.
- **Reduced Mortality and Distress Through Timely Stabilisation and Referral:** Early intervention at PHCs particularly in trauma and bite cases helped control complications, minimise delays, and support safer referrals to higher facilities, contributing to better clinical outcomes and reduced patient distress.

Operation & Maintenance of Equipment

- Medical and support staff received basic orientation in diagnostic equipment usage and standardized protocols. All equipment is covered under Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) with quarterly technician visits for equipment inspection and maintenance.
- Staff training encompasses clinical management of maternal & newborn care, breast cancer screening, and poisoning case management.
- However, the Medical Officer at Srikurmam identified a critical gap, recommending that staff also receive hands-on training in basic equipment maintenance to enhance operational sustainability and reduce dependency on external technicians.



“Earlier, whenever there was an emergency, we had to take patients all the way to the GGH hospital because the nearby CHCs and health facilities were either closed or too expensive. In accident cases or snake bites, there was no proper transport or emergency care available, and because of that, sometimes we even lost lives in the village. Now the situation has changed. This PHC is open 24 hours, emergency treatment is available here itself, and an ambulance is also provided. Because of this, people are getting timely care and we feel much safer.”

- As shared by elderly patient coming to Patharpally, PHC

Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field



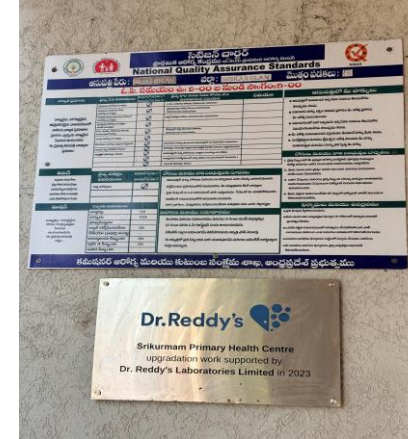
Labour Room



Diagnostic Lab



Centrifuge- to be used to separate blood components



Entrance- National Quality Standards

PHC Patharappalli

LABORATORY REPORT

Test Name : Mrs. Surya Kumari G Age / Gender : 37Y / Female
 Ref No : CPH07007403 MFI No : MB007007340
 Ordered By : Dr. Lakshmi Gowjanya K | MBBS Reg Date : 21-03-2026 03:51 PM
 Printed On : 21-03-2026 10:12 AM Printed Date : 23-03-2026 09:27 AM

DEPARTMENT OF HAEMATOLOGY
COMPLETE BLOOD PICTURE

Name	Result	Units	Reference Ra
Hb (%)	11.3	%	Male - 13.0 - 14.5 Female - 11.0 - 14.5
HbC count	8000	count/millimicron	4,000 - 11,000
HbC %	3.7	%	3.5 - 5.5
HbC	30	g/dl	Male - 4.1% to 5.6 Female - 36% to 49%
HbA	94	g/dl	89 to 100
HbB	27	g/dl	27 to 31
HbE	33	g/dl	32 to 36
HbF	13.6	%	11.7 - 15.4
WBC (Count)	1.75	Lake /cumm	1.5-4.5
D	10.3	%	5.0 and 11.0
V	22	%	8.1-25.0
PLT (Count)	0.3	Lake /cumm	0.2-0.4
PLT	19	%	15%-30%
PLT	22	%	15-30%
PLT	56	%	55 - 70%
PLT	32	%	25 - 40%
PLT	6	%	01 - 05%
PLT	4	%	02 - 05%
PLT	1	%	00 - 01%

GENERAL BLOOD SMEAR

Sample of Blood test report



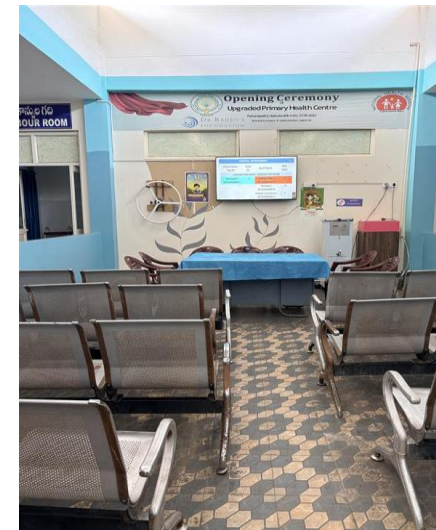
PHC Pharmacy Inventory



Emergency ward with Partitions



Electrolyte Analyser- diagnosis of KFT & other blood tests



Waiting area with digitised system



Equipment to provide respiratory support to newborn or mother

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project was inclusive in nature because it strengthened PHCs in rural and high-need areas, ensuring equitable access to quality and affordable healthcare for vulnerable populations such as women, pregnant mothers, the elderly, daily wage earners, and low-income households. By reducing dependence on private facilities and distant CHCs, the intervention helped overcome geographic, financial, and social barriers to healthcare access.

R

Relevance

- The project was relevant in nature because it addressed critical, locally identified gaps in primary healthcare infrastructure, diagnostic services, maternal and child care, and emergency readiness. The need-based design ensured that interventions responded directly to community health priorities and aligned with existing public health objectives of the state.

E

Effectiveness

- The project was effective in nature because targeted infrastructure upgrades, advanced diagnostic facilities, and staff capacity building led to measurable improvements.
- OPD footfall increased from 30-40 patients per day to 90-100 patients per day, antenatal registrations rose from approximately 20 to 60 per month.
- Diagnostics tests became available locally eliminating referrals & reducing costs for patients from ₹1,000-₹1,500 to zero, thereby demonstrating effective delivery of project.

C

Convergence

- The project demonstrated convergence in nature because it complemented and strengthened the government healthcare delivery system rather than creating parallel structures. Alignment with district health authorities, frontline health workers, and referral protocols reinforced public-private collaboration and improved continuity of care across levels of the health system.

S

Sustainability

- The project was sustainable in nature because upgraded infrastructure, equipment, and systems were integrated within government-owned PHCs with a strong focus on capacity building of existing staff. This approach fosters institutional ownership, supports long-term service continuity, and enables replication and scale-up within the public health system.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project strengthened primary healthcare delivery by improving PHC infrastructure, diagnostics, maternal care, and emergency services, enabling timely, affordable, and quality healthcare for rural communities.



The project enhanced access to safe, dignified maternal and child healthcare through upgraded labour rooms, privacy measures, and improved antenatal and delivery services for women.



By strengthening healthcare access at the PHC level, the project reduced disparities between rural and urban populations and improved access for remote and marginalised communities.

Recommendations



Ensuring Sustainability through Staff Training on Equipment O&M: To sustain the gains achieved through infrastructure and diagnostic upgradation, it is recommended to strengthen ongoing training of PHC staff on the operation, maintenance, and basic troubleshooting of the equipment provided. While Medical Officers and staff have demonstrated improved clinical use of diagnostic and emergency equipment, stakeholders like Medical Officers highlighted the need for structured orientation on routine maintenance, calibration, cold-chain management, and handling of consumables and reagents to ensure uninterrupted functionality. Regular refresher trainings and integration of O&M responsibilities within existing workflows will help prevent equipment downtime, protect investments made under the project, and enable consistent delivery of quality services within the public health system.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Timely and Affordable Maternal Care at the Local PHC



Indu (name changed due to anonymity), a 19-year-old pregnant woman from a rural village, earlier had to travel long distances to CHCs or private hospitals for routine antenatal check-ups and diagnostics. Limited transport options often only one bus a day meant missed appointments, delayed care, and out-of-pocket expenses of ₹1,000-₹1,500 per visit. After the upgradation of her local PHC, Indu could access on-site antenatal services and diagnostic tests such as thyroid screening, without travelling far. Improved infrastructure, privacy partitions, and trained staff provided a safer and more dignified care experience. Early detection of health risks helped ensure timely management during pregnancy. The availability of free diagnostics and reduced travel led to significant financial relief for her family, while continuous access to care increased confidence and reduced anxiety. The strengthened PHC enabled timely, affordable, and dignified maternal care close to home, highlighting how improved primary healthcare infrastructure can directly improve patient outcomes and reduce rural healthcare barriers.

02

Transforming PHC Srikurmam into a Trusted First-Contact Care Centre

PHC Srikurmam serves a large rural population and earlier faced poor infrastructure, inadequate sanitation and lighting, lack of laboratory services, and limited emergency readiness. Patients were forced to travel long distances to CHCs or private facilities often with poor transport connectivity leading to high costs, delayed care, and low community trust, particularly during night-time emergencies such as snake bites, trauma, and maternal complications. Under the CSR initiative, the PHC received need-based infrastructure upgrades, including renovated wards and labour rooms, improved sanitation and privacy arrangements, and installation of advanced diagnostic and emergency equipment. The PHC was strengthened to provide 24x7 services. Post-intervention, OPD footfall increased from 30-40 to 90-100 patients per day, reflecting renewed community confidence. On-site diagnostics eliminated routine referrals, saving patients ₹1,000-₹1,500 per visit and reducing treatment delays. Antenatal registrations increased from ~20 to ~60 per month, and normal deliveries are now conducted locally. The PHC has also emerged as a reliable first-response centre, managing night-time emergencies through timely stabilisation and referral, significantly reducing health risks and financial burden for rural families. The intervention transformed PHC Srikurmam from a referral-dependent facility into a trusted, accessible, and cost-effective primary and emergency care centre, strengthening public healthcare delivery at the community level.

Project 10

Action for Climate and Environment (ACE)



Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

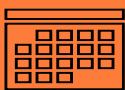
Project Objective

The Action for Climate Change and Environment (ACE) project focuses on **reducing the environmental footprint of agriculture by promoting climate-smart and regenerative farming practices**. It aims to lower greenhouse gas emissions and improve water-use efficiency while enhancing soil health and farm productivity. The project also supports ecological restoration through agroforestry, mangrove regeneration, and biodiversity-led interventions, alongside capacity-building to enable sustained farmer adoption.

Project Activities

- ❑ Over 60,000 farmers benefitted across multiple locations through various Climate Smart Agriculture interventions.
- ❑ Promote climate-smart and regenerative agricultural practices, including Direct Seeded Rice (DSR), Zero Tillage (ZT), Alternate Wetting and Drying (AWD), soil biologics, and cover crops to reduce emissions and water use.
- ❑ Improve soil health and farm productivity through soil testing, distribution of soil health cards, and site-specific nutrient and crop management interventions.
- ❑ Implement ecosystem restoration measures such as agroforestry, social forestry, mangrove restoration, and biochar application to enhance carbon sequestration and biodiversity.
- ❑ Introduce biodiversity-led interventions, including pollinator support and integrated ecological practices, to strengthen farm-level resilience.
- ❑ Build farmer capacity through structured training, field demonstrations, and continuous advisory support to enable sustained adoption of climate-resilient practices.
- ❑ Shift 1,20,000 acres to Zero Tillage in maize & wheat, cover 50,000 acres under DSR, develop 5,000 soil health cards, and implement AWD on 20,000 acres with 2,000 acres under cover crops and 10,000 acres under soil biologics.
- ❑ Enable 5 Cr. KL water savings, reduce 65,000 tCO₂e, restore 500 acres mangroves, expand 1,500 acres agroforestry, apply biochar on 1,500 acres, initiate biodiversity efforts with 300 farmers, and train 6,000 farmers in regenerative agriculture.

Project Overview



Project period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation



Project outlay:
INR 16.05 Cr.

Methodology: IRECS– Qualitative Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 2 Focused Group Discussions each with Farmer Groups in Srikakulam (Andhra Pradesh), Siddipet (Telangana)
- 1 In-Depth Interview each with Broadcast Farmer/ Lead Farmers in Srikakulam and Siddipet
- 1 Key Informant Interview each with Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) scientist in Srikakulam
- 1 Key Informant Interview with Agriculture Extension Officer (AEO) in Siddipet
- 1 In-Depth Interview each with DRF representatives in Srikakulam and Siddipet

*Source: Memorandum of Understanding signed between Dr Reddy's Laboratories and Dr. Reddy's Foundation (DRF), Dr. Reddy's Foundation's Annual Report, and project documents as received from DRL

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project



1. Labour-Intensive Farming

- Before the project, farmers **depended heavily on manual labour** for crop establishment, particularly in paddy cultivation.
- In Srikakulam and Siddipet, traditional nursery raising and transplanting **required large labour groups (often 15–20 labourers per acre)**, leading to high costs and uncertainty due to labour shortages.
- This pattern was universal across each location, where labour-intensive practices **significantly increased establishment costs**, directly affecting farm profitability for small and marginal landholders.



2. Inefficient Water Use

- Conventional cultivation practices were **highly water-intensive**, especially for transplanted paddy.
- Farmers across Srikakulam and Siddipet **relied on flood irrigation and lacked mechanisms for uniform or regulated water application**, resulting in wastage and uneven crop growth.
- In water-stressed pockets of Telangana, this **increased vulnerability to rainfall variability** and constrained farmers' ability to manage crops efficiently throughout the season.



3. Delayed Crop Establishment

- Prior to intervention, crop establishment was often **delayed due to dependence on labour availability and sequential processes** such as nursery preparation and transplanting.
- Field interactions in Siddipet highlighted how these delays pushed sowing beyond optimal windows, **affecting yield potential and compressing time available for subsequent crops**.
- In project locations, delayed field readiness similarly **reduced flexibility in crop rotation**, particularly for wheat after paddy.



4. Low Precision Input Use

- Farmers largely followed broadcasting or non-calibrated sowing practices, leading to **excessive seed use and uneven plant populations**.
- Across locations, this resulted in **poor crop uniformity**, making irrigation management, weeding, and intercultural operations more difficult.
- In maize and paddy fields observed in Srikakulam, **irregular spacing directly translated into higher input use without proportionate yield gains**.



5. Limited Machinery and Advisory Access

- Before the project, farmers had **limited access to modern machinery**, such as seed drills or zero-tillage equipment, and lacked affordable custom-hiring options.
- Exposure to scientific practices was fragmented, with **minimal on-field demonstrations or stage-specific advisory support**.
- Field interactions from Srikakulam and Siddipet indicate that while farmers were aware of alternative methods, **low confidence and lack of practical guidance hindered adoption at scale**.

Analysis and Findings

Adoption of Climate-Smart Crop Establishment and Water-Efficient Practices

Reduction in crop establishment costs

- Farmers adopting machine-based sowing reported substantial reductions in establishment costs compared to conventional transplanting. In project locations, paddy establishment costs were **reported at approximately INR 6,500 per acre under manual transplanting, compared to ~INR 2,300 per acre under machine sowing**, indicating a cost reduction of nearly 65% at the establishment stage.

Reduction in irrigation demand in paddy systems

- Farmers associated direct seeded rice practices with lower irrigation requirements relative to puddled transplanting systems. In Srikakulam and Siddipet, field interactions revealed **irrigation savings of up to ~30%, attributable to reduced standing water and elimination of puddling operations.**

Improved timeliness of sowing operations

- Direct seeding reduced dependence on nursery preparation and peak-season labour availability. In both Siddipet and Srikakulam, farmers reported **earlier and smoother crop establishment**, particularly during periods when transplanting is typically delayed due to labour constraints.

Earlier crop maturity and improved cropping flexibility

- In Siddipet, farmers reported **crop maturity occurring approximately 10 days earlier under direct seeding systems**, enabling earlier harvest and facilitating timely preparation for subsequent crops within the same agricultural cycle

Indicative reduction in resource and emission intensity

- Reduced tillage operations, lower fuel use, and shorter flooded periods in paddy fields suggest **a reduction in water and energy intensity of cultivation, with potential emission co-benefits.** The extent of these outcomes varied by field conditions and management intensity.

65% Cost reduction at crop establishment stage

30% Irrigation savings due to direct seeded practices

10 Number of days saved in crop maturity



“Sowing is completed on time as it is no longer dependent on labour availability, and the crop matures about 8–10 days earlier, which helps in preparing the field for the next crop. Overall, fuel use and field operations have reduced, lowering both input costs and water use compared to earlier practices.

— As narrated by a Farmer in Srikakulam

Analysis and Findings

Improvements in Soil Management and Field-Level Productivity

Improved crop stand uniformity

- Line sowing and row-based establishment **improved field organisation and plant population uniformity**. In Srikakulam, farmers reported that structured row geometry enabled easier irrigation flow and inter-cultural operations compared to broadcasting methods.

Reduced cost of land preparation and sowing

- Zero tillage practices reduced repeated soil preparation. In both the locations, farmers **reported sowing cost reductions as compared to manual transplanting**, reflecting a cost reduction of around 30%.

Increased use of soil information in nutrient decisions

- Soil testing and soil health card distribution increased farmer awareness of soil condition and nutrient requirements. Across project locations, farmers reported a **gradual move away from uniform fertiliser application toward more site-specific input use**, though the degree of change varied.

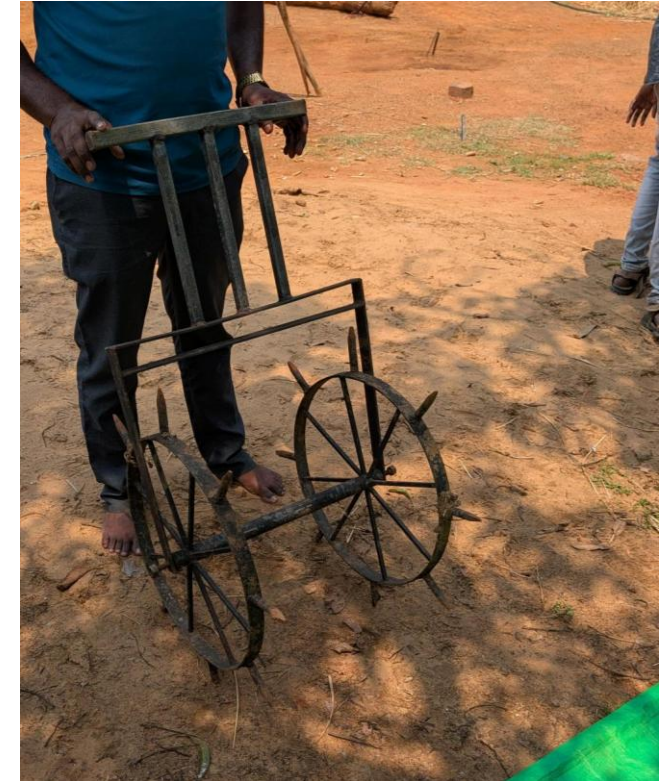
Improved soil workability during the cropping season

- In Srikakulam and Siddipet, reduced land preparation passes were **associated with improved soil workability**, allowing farmers to conduct crop operations without repeated tillage during the season.

Productivity outcomes dependent on follow-up management

- In some cases, some farmers perceived **yield improvements under precision establishment practices**; however, weed management was consistently identified as the most critical factor influencing realised productivity, indicating that yield outcomes were conditional rather than automatic.

Farmer showcasing a Double Wheel Marker



Analysis and Findings

Ecosystem Restoration and Circular Soil Practices

Reduction in agricultural residue burden

- Residue management interventions **promoted conversion of crop residues into soil amendments**. In Srikakulam, practitioners noted a reduction in residue burden of approximately 40–50% where biochar conversion and residue utilisation practices were discussed or piloted.

Introduction of biochar as a soil amendment

- Biochar prepared from locally available biomass (e.g., maize stalks, cobs) was introduced as a soil conditioning input. Farmers associated its use with **potential improvements in soil moisture retention and nutrient holding capacity**.

Integration of tree-based restoration practices

- Agroforestry and social forestry interventions were initiated to integrate tree cover on farm boundaries and community land, positioning these actions as **longer-term contributors to soil conservation, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration**.

Landscape-level restoration in coastal regions

- In coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, **mangrove restoration activities formed part of the intervention portfolio, linking agricultural livelihoods** with ecosystem protection and resilience at a landscape scale.

Restoration practices viewed as long-term investments

- Farmers largely **perceived ecosystem restoration and residue-based practices as medium- to long-term interventions**, with uptake influenced by short-term operational and cost efficiencies achieved through climate-smart cultivation practices.

Cashew saplings ready for plantation



Biochar Preparation



Analysis and Findings

Biodiversity-Led Interventions and Farm-Level Resilience



Diversification of production systems to strengthen ecological resilience

Farm-level diversification measures were introduced to reduce dependence on single crops and enhance ecological balance within agricultural landscapes. In Srikakulam, intercropping was adopted within small average landholdings of 1-2 acres, **enabling more efficient land use and diversification of returns from the same plot.**

Integration of pollination practices alongside cropping systems

In Srikakulam, beekeeping was introduced as a complementary activity within the farm landscape, intended to **support pollination services and broader biodiversity outcomes.** The intervention was aligned with diversified and mixed cropping contexts, positioning managed bee colonies as an **ecological input** alongside cultivation practices rather than as a standalone livelihood activity.

Risk distribution through non-land-intensive and diversified interventions

Beekeeping contributed to diversification by providing a non-land-consumptive activity, allowing farmers to engage without reducing cultivated area. Along with intercropping, this **supported household-level risk spreading by reducing reliance on a single crop or seasonal income source**, particularly relevant in smallholder contexts.

Management intensity and technical requirements recognised by farmers

Farmers across locations reported that diversification-oriented interventions require closer monitoring and management. In Srikakulam, the sustainability of beekeeping outcomes was **recognised as dependent on technical capacity** related to colony management and access to appropriate inputs.

Improved field stability under reduced disturbance and ecological integration

Reduced soil disturbance under zero tillage and direct seeding practices in Srikakulam and Siddipet contributed to more stable field conditions, which, when combined with diversified cropping and pollination-supportive interventions such as beekeeping, **supported overall farm-level resilience to climatic variability.**

Analysis and Findings

Strengthening of Farmer Capacity and Practice Adoption

Enhanced ability to manage seasonal risks

Earlier sowing and crop maturity reported in Siddipet (by ~10 days) **improved farmers' ability to manage seasonal and weather-related risks** within existing cropping calendars.

Increased confidence through economic evidence

In project locations, quantified reductions in labour and establishment costs (up to 60–65% at crop establishment stage) were repeatedly cited by farmers as a key factor influencing **continued adoption of DSR and zero tillage practices**.

Improved technical understanding of climate-smart practices

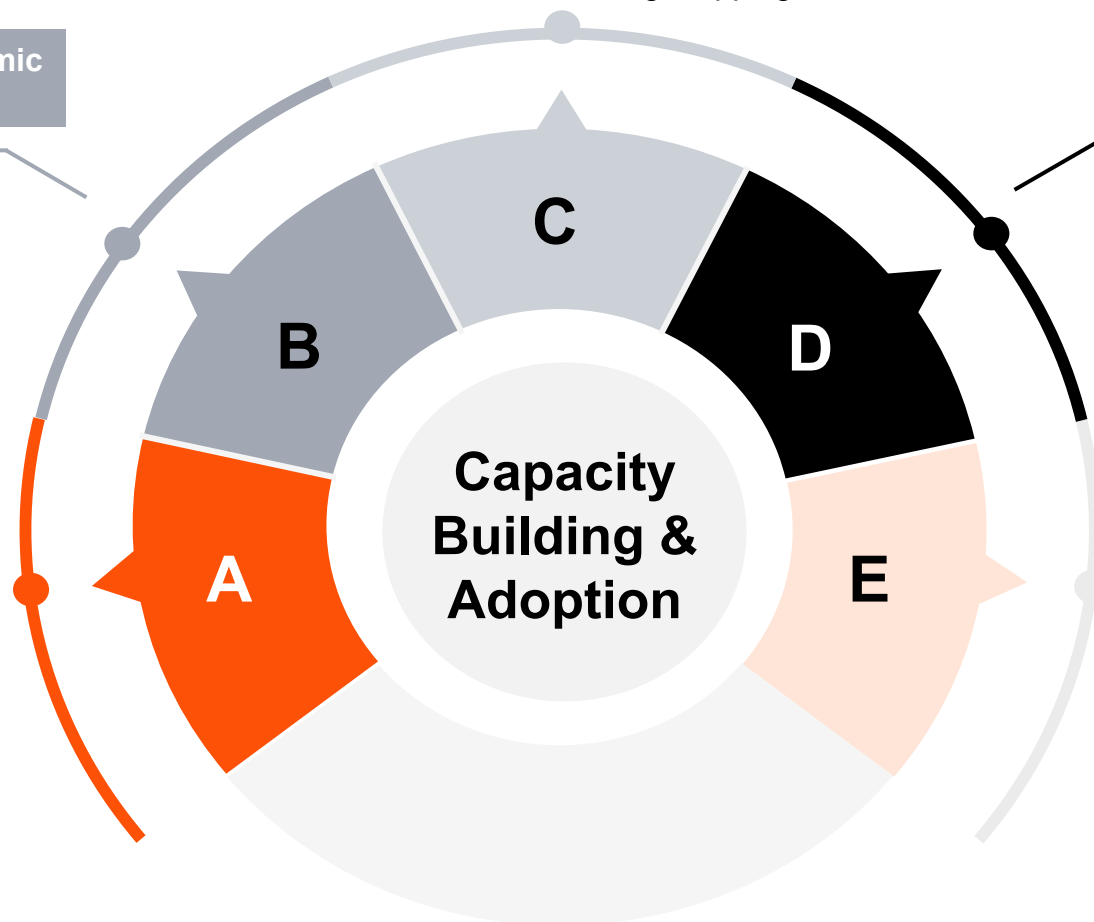
Training, demonstrations, and exposure visits strengthened farmer **knowledge of sowing calibration, spacing, timing, and crop-stage management** across project locations.

Recognition of management dependencies

Farmers across locations acknowledged that **benefits from new practices depended on correct execution**, particularly weed control in DSR systems, highlighting the role of continuous advisory support.

Increased capacity for informed decision-making

Overall, capacity-building efforts **improved farmers' ability to assess practices** based on net cost savings, operational feasibility, and risk reduction, rather than yield outcomes alone.



Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field

Bee Boxes for pollination



Napier Grass Plantation



Proper spacing pattern in Maize crops in Srikakulam



Injection Well for Water Recharge



Bio-char bags



Agro-forestry plantation



Paddy through DSR in Siddipet



Double Wheel Marker



IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- Adoption of machine-based sowing and direct seeding reduced dependence on large labour groups, **enabling participation by small and marginal farmers** who were earlier constrained by labour shortages and high establishment costs.
- Biodiversity-led interventions such as beekeeping were implemented as non-land-intensive activities, **allowing farmers with very small holdings to participate without compromising cropped area.**

R

Relevance

- Project interventions directly **addressed key pre-project constraints** identified by farmers, including labour-intensive transplanting, delayed crop establishment, inefficient irrigation, and imprecise input use.
- Water-efficient practices such as direct seeded rice and reduced flooding were **relevant to the water stress and rainfall variability** reported in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

E

Effectiveness

- Farmers reported significant reductions in crop establishment costs (up to ~65%), indicating **effective conversion of climate-smart practices into economic savings.**
- Irrigation demand in paddy systems reduced by up to ~30%, **reflecting measurable improvements in resource-use efficiency.**
- Earlier crop maturity (by ~8–10 days in Siddipet) **improved timeliness of harvest** and enabled better planning of subsequent crops.

C

Convergence

- The project is aligned with the urgent national priority of climate action and **works around a persistent problem of greenhouse gas emissions** from agriculture practices.
- Regular farmer interactions with KVK scientists and Agriculture Extension Officers indicate **alignment of promoted practices with formal extension and scientific advisory systems.**

S

Sustainability

- Continued adoption of DSR and zero tillage was driven primarily by recurring labour, fuel, and cost savings, suggesting **economic sustainability beyond the project period.**
- Ecosystem and biodiversity interventions were **perceived as longer-term investments in soil health, resilience, and environmental stability** rather than short-term gain measures.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project improved farm-level profitability by reducing production costs through climate-smart practices such as direct seeding, zero tillage, and improved water management. It also supported income diversification through complementary biodiversity-led interventions, including beekeeping, helping small and marginal farmers reduce livelihood risk.



The project improves the productivity, efficiency, and resilience of smallholder farming systems through the adoption of climate-smart and regenerative practices. By promoting water-efficient cultivation, precision crop establishment, diversification measures, and improved soil and crop management, it supports more sustainable food production while strengthening the adaptive capacity of small and marginal farmers.



The project promoted climate-smart and regenerative agricultural practices that improved resource-use efficiency and farm-level resilience. Interventions such as direct seeded rice, zero tillage, improved water management, residue-based soil practices, and diversification measures helped reduce pressure on natural resources while enabling farmers to better manage climatic variability and production-related risks.

Recommendations



Structured Market Linkages: With improved productivity reported under climate-smart practices, structured linkages with local traders, millers, and institutional buyers may be strengthened further to absorb higher and more timely marketable surplus.



Collectivization of farmers: Scale-up can be supported through collectivized mechanisms such as Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs), producer groups, custom-hiring and input/output aggregation clusters, or SHG-based produce aggregation models.

Limitations

There were no study limitations

Case Stories

Paddy Field in Srikakulam



01

Improving Timeliness and Efficiency in Paddy Cultivation



Ramesh (name changed for anonymity) has been cultivating paddy for several years on his small holding in Srikakulam, where farming traditionally relied on manual transplanting and continuous flooding. Seasonal labour shortages often delayed his sowing, increasing both uncertainty and costs. Through the project, he shifted to direct seeded rice, which allowed him to prepare and sow his field on time without waiting for large labour groups. Over the season, Ramesh observed fewer field operations, lower water use, and quicker crop establishment, even during periods of uneven rainfall. The crop matured earlier than his earlier experience with transplanting, giving him more flexibility to prepare for the next agricultural cycle. For Ramesh, the practice lowered production stress while making paddy cultivation more manageable under changing climate conditions.

Zero Tillage Maize plantation with spacing



02

Reducing Costs through Zero Tillage Adoption

Ravi (name changed for anonymity) lives in Srikakulam and belongs to a smallholder farming household where rising input costs and unpredictable rainfall often affected maize yields and income stability. Through the project, he was introduced to Zero Tillage (ZT) in maize along with improved row spacing practices to reduce cultivation costs and enhance productivity. With training on using multi crop planters and guidance on optimal plant spacing and residue management, Ravi adopted ZT on his field without prior land preparation. The shift helped him significantly reduce fuel use and labour required for plowing, while timely sowing improved crop establishment. The improved spacing also ensured better plant growth, efficient nutrient use, and higher yield potential. As a result, Ravi observed lower input costs and more uniform crop stands. Over time, adoption of ZT maize with proper spacing emerged as a more efficient and reliable method, helping him stabilize farm income and reduce dependency on resource intensive practices.

Project 11

Integration of Evidence-Based Nutrition

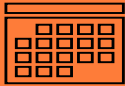


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

The project aimed to train doctors from various specialities and based in different parts of the country, and equip them with the skillset to actively advocate for evidence-based nutrition as the primary line of health management and thus facilitate a more sustainable and equitable healthcare system.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2024-25



Location:
Pan India



Implementing partner:
Ahimsa Trust



Project outlay:
INR 1 Cr.

Project Activities

Ahimsa Trust drives the Physicians Association for Nutrition India (PAN), which raises awareness about evidence-based and plant-based nutrition and its positive impact on promoting health and preventing and treating diseases. In 2024-25, PAN undertook the following activities:

- Conducted 18 in-person Continuing Medical Education (CME) events in 9 states for 4,759 physicians and medical students on evidence-based nutritional science
- Held 22 online sessions for medical professionals with 2,764 registrations and 1,332 live participants on various topics
- Set up and launched 3 City Chapters in Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad – which involved onboarding core teams and aligning them with PAN's vision – to execute context-specific initiatives aimed at promoting evidence-based nutrition
- Ran 18 journal clubs for medical students where peer-reviewed research was presented and discussed, building critical appraisal skills among participants

Methodology: IRECS– Qualitative Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 2 In-Depth Interviews with physicians who led city chapters (ambassadors)
- 2 In-Depth Interviews with physicians who conducted training sessions
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a physician who attended PAN events (network member)
- 1 Small Group Discussion with medical college students who were part of the journal club
- 1 In-Depth Interview with the founder of PAN

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

As shared by multiple stakeholders during interactions, the following challenges were observed specific to the Indian context:



Rising trend of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and inadequate treatment options

Lifestyle-related diseases have increased due to fast-food habits, irregular eating and sleeping patterns, and high stress. Choosing healthy food is challenging because options available are often ultra-processed or high in oil and dairy. Current treatment options for NCDs have not reduced incidence, which remains high, indicating that current strategies are not working.



Lack of integration of nutrition in medical studies

Nutrition isn't given sufficient focus in medical studies programmes, leaving physicians with limited knowledge beyond treating common vitamin and mineral deficiencies. As a result, physicians primarily focus on disease management and emphasise drug-based treatments. While information on plant-based diets is accessible to physicians on the internet, practical guidance and support on how to incorporate them are missing. Consequently, patients often get nutrition-related advice from nutritionists, influencers, and health coaches, who lack formal qualifications.



Mental barriers regarding lifestyle medicine among physicians

Nutrition is a complex subject, with many studies yielding conflicting or ambiguous results, leading physicians to stick with current treatment strategies. Embracing evidence-based nutrition requires rethinking long-held beliefs and shifting priorities. Much of this involves reassessing Western notions of protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and correcting misconceptions that a plant-based diet causes nutritional deficiencies. Many physicians are hesitant to explore dietary changes and integrate traditional Indian knowledge, which is well-suited to the local terrain and climate. Not all physicians are receptive to discussing lifestyle medicine, and mental barriers persist which take a long time to overcome.



Lack of macro-level efforts to address misconceptions relating to NCDs

Packaged foods, often with refined ingredients, do not come with clear warnings to inform the public about their health risks. The public also lacks awareness that current spending on whole foods and plant-based foods can reduce long-term health spending. There is strong lobby promoting animal-based foods as essential for protein and claiming plant-based diets are insufficient – and the resources needed to counter this viewpoint are not available currently. Despite raising the importance of evidence-based nutrition in medical conferences and other platforms, there has been no clear progress at the policy level.

Analysis and Findings

Created multiple platforms to bring physicians together to understand and adopt evidence-based nutrition

- PAN India enhanced knowledge of evidence-based nutrition by **setting up multiple networks**, according to a city chapter lead. The focus was on **sharing research that has been validated** and proven effective. The platforms set up by PAN **fostered collaboration** among physicians from various specialties. Participation on all platforms was **free-of-charge and voluntary**, and included the following:

01	Continuing Medical Education (CME)	02	City Chapters	03	Webinars	04	Virtual Discussions	05	Journal Clubs
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 18 sessions were conducted at medical colleges and hospitals to facilitate interactive learning discussions on topics such as clinical nutrition for NCDs, cardiovascular health, cancer care, gut health, etc.• Typically, 100-200 physicians attended each CME in 2024-25, which were activity-based and interactive.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• City-based events to strengthen the network were carried out through CMEs, workshops, training sessions, awareness drives, etc.• Physicians who attended city chapter events shared that it allowed them to find other like-minded individuals which reinforced their passion to take their work forward.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Webinars and online events featured top speakers who deliver clear and impactful talks, as noted by a trainer.• They were interactive, allowing space for participants to raise practical questions and seek advice on various issues.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In groups for “patrons”, who were interested in learning about evidence-based nutrition and participation was kept alive through polls, knowledge sharing, and discussions on various topics.• There were separate virtual groups for “ambassadors”, who led city-specific engagements		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online sessions, where students across medical colleges in India took up research papers related using plant-based diets to manage specific diseases and presented the findings.• Through this, medical students shared that they learned to develop critical thinking, analytical and communication skills, while also developing understanding of evidence-based nutrition.

- According to the Director of PAN-India, events **gathered a diverse network of physicians** and medical students. About **20 percent of attendees became trainers and ambassadors** for evidence-based nutrition. However, PAN has not tracked how many members have clinically integrated these practices and systematically spread the message to their patients.
- A trainer shared that while online platforms were useful to sustain dialogue, participation was **unpredictable and not as effective** as in-person sessions, where **cooking demonstrations** on plant-based meals played a huge role in convincing physicians that whole foods could also be made tasty and interesting. She also observed that **more resources were needed to have frequent in-person events** to build momentum and strengthen engagement.

Analysis and Findings

Equipped physicians to understand the role of nutrition and secured their buy-in



- A city chapter lead shared that current unhealthy and unsustainable diets and lifestyle practices and neglect of traditional practices have significantly affecting people's health. In this context, she pointed out that it was crucial for **physicians to move beyond merely prescribing** "lifestyle change, exercise, weight loss" and instead **develop a deeper understanding** of the role of nutrition.
- Often, physicians **outsourced nutritional guidance to dietitians** and failed to connect diet with health outcomes. PAN stepped in to fill this gap by spreading awareness about evidence-based nutrition through its different platforms. Multiple stakeholders shared that in a short period of time, PAN was able to create a **positive view around plant-based diets** by hosting events where the content presented was thoroughly researched and engaging. During these events, **PAN advocated for physicians to empower their patients** so that they prioritise diet and lifestyle changes over medication. This was a **long-term approach**, requiring openness first on the part of physicians, who had earlier been reluctant to accept that there were problems with the existing treatment protocol.

- A trainer shared that the greatest impact occurred when **physicians personally embraced lifestyle changes** by trying plant-based diets themselves and experienced health improvements, such as reversal of diabetes, reduction in cholesterol and autoimmune disorders. PAN's trainers **ensured they were accessible** to provide guidance, clear doubts and help physicians navigate challenges during this transition. A city chapter lead also highlighted that they had created a **virtual group**, where physicians were guided during their journey and shared photos of their modified platters, resulted in **more than 90 percent of them successfully adopting plant-based diets**. Both suggested that **more effort should be directed towards micro-level handholding**, rather than focusing entirely on large-scale events.
- A trainer noted that although PAN has effectively reached doctors in the older age groups, **more focus was needed to engage younger physicians**. This required **fresh strategies and formats**, such as focusing on fitness and preventive health, and organising events with compelling topics to attract doctors in their 30s and 40s.
- The director of PAN expressed that setting up **journal clubs for medical students** was meant to **plant an early seed in their minds**, so that they understood that medicine went beyond hospital walls and was closely connected to diet and lifestyle. Medical students **gained in-depth knowledge about evidence-based nutrition**, which they planned to incorporate into their clinical practice later on. One student shared that while initial participation was high among students, involvement dwindled over time on the online platform. She believed that more in-person events were needed to sustain motivation and buy-in from students.



Analysis and Findings

Developed credible content and expert speakers to facilitate events

- **Developing content was the highest priority for PAN.** Trainers were usually physicians who had attended PAN events and were **passionate about** addressing knowledge gaps in various areas through awareness sessions. One trainer pointed out that PAN supported them in developing fool-proof content, **helping them source research articles and relevant resources.**
- A city lead highlighted that given trainers' busy schedules and the fact that they were practicing physicians themselves, **PAN needed to actively develop a second line of speakers** who could take up existing and new topics. This was key, given that PAN had started to receive more invitations from satellite cities but had **limited bandwidth** to take it up.
- PAN's trainers and those involved in content creation **received an honorarium for the time they devoted**, the amount being decided on a case-by-case basis. Questions raised and feedback received during sessions were used by trainers to **alter content** and add new areas of content. This practice helped PAN's trainers **fine-tune their presentations** and **develop a complete package of talks on multiple topics.**

Mainstreamed the discourse and developed sustainability in programming

- PAN ensured that **all talks were recorded and made available through various virtual platforms** or the public domain.
- The Mumbai city chapter lead shared that PAN had been **recognised by mainstream organisations like the Medical Council of Maharashtra, Indian Medical Association, etc.,** who **accredited their speakers**, and invited the chapter to **collaborate with them for events.** Other physicians also shared that PAN members **regularly participated in mainstream CMEs** and events for the medical community to gain greater accessibility.
- Trainers shared that **members did not need to be nudged anymore and enthusiastically registered for and attended events** when they put up notifications. However, a city chapter lead pointed out that while 200-300 physicians registering for PAN's events, only **70 percent actually attended.** She shared that hosting all events with zero registration charges **hindered motivation to attend** and PAN should consider charging nominally for all events.
- Various stakeholders highlighted that officials from health departments participated in events and showed enthusiasm to adopt plant-based diets in their personal lives; however, PAN has faced **limited success in breaking through the policy advocacy space** to get nutrition embedded in the medical curriculum across specialisations and domains. Medical students echoed this thought, sharing that PAN **should connect directly with college administration** to get more students to understand evidence-based nutrition.
- The director of PAN acknowledged that as it is in the initial years, the critical focus was to spread awareness about evidence-based nutrition. As momentum builds, **PAN hopes to create an ecosystem where multiple partners** come together to create better health and wellbeing for all citizens.

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

- The project was inclusive, as it brought together physicians across domains and experience levels as well as students from medical colleges.
- All events were free-of-charge and talks were made available on the public domain.

R

Relevance

- The project was relevant, given the increase of NCDs in India, excessive reliance on prescription medication to treat health problems, and the lack of integration of nutrition in medical curriculum.

E

Effectiveness

- The content prepared by trainers was based on credible research studies and feedback given was used to refine them – making them effective and engaging.
- Handholding offered by existing members to new members who tried plant-based diets were effective in helping them understand the importance of nutrition and make lifestyle changes.

C

Convergence

- PAN routinely invited officials from government departments to participate in its events.
- In certain cities, PAN's speakers have been accredited by mainstream government organisations.
- Efforts have been taken, with limited success thus far, to impact policies on incorporating nutrition into the medical curriculum.

S

Sustainability

- PAN created virtual groups to sustain participation and interest among physicians and share relevant information on evidence-based nutrition.
- The journal clubs for medical students fostered an early understanding of the evidence-based nutrition, which students could take into their clinical practice into the future.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project emphasises preventive healthcare through nutrition and lifestyle changes to reduce incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases. By educating doctors on nutrition, it empowers them to guide patients towards healthier lifestyle choices, enhancing overall well-being.

Recommendations



Tracking impact beyond attendance: As physicians become more aware about evidence-based nutrition, the project can track how many of those who become network members have clinically integrated evidence-based and plant-based diets and the extent to which they have done so. This will also provide input on more effective ways of changing mindsets and practices.



Create an open repository with relevant resources: The project can set up an open-access repository with papers, presentations and links, for anyone interested in exploring links between nutrition and health. They can also create modules that compile data from studies into easy-to-understand capsules, so that doctors could review them at their own convenience.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Finding a community of passionate and like-minded individuals

I have been a faculty member for the last eight years and I am working in the field of public health research. With my research interests and personal interests in the area of evidence-based nutrition, I attended a CME organised by a city chapter of PAN and eventually joined a virtual group where there were intense discussions and debates on a variety of topics.

Later, I moderated a panel discussion at a symposium organised at my medical college and the response was fantastic! It created huge impact and many remembered the key points of the event. It was most gratifying that faculty members from my department who attended the symposium got introduced to these concepts, did their own research and transformed themselves. Although nutrition is not mandatory in the medical curriculum, I ensure that I incorporate concepts in my teaching and motivate students to take it up further. PAN has given us a platform to be part of a larger community sharing similar goals and working towards creating more evidence on plant-based nutrition. It has helped me further my passion in many ways and I'm sure this movement will grow exponentially in the coming years.

02

A platform to develop cutting-edge knowledge and skills

I'm a final year medical student and have been a part of journal club at PAN and have also participated in some PAN events. I joined as a member and observed the first few journal club meetings. Eventually, I started presenting at online sessions and over a period of time, I became the student lead of the journal club. PAN helped me understand the importance of evidence-based nutrition and preventive medicine, which are areas not much prioritised in our medical education. In addition to learning about this area, I got exposed to a lot of research at the undergraduate level itself, looking at evidence on whole foods and plant-based diet and how they are linked to NCDs. Not only have I gained knowledge from all these presentations, but I have also learned how to analyse a paper and started writing research papers myself on these topics. Taking months to prepare and refine presentations and learning how to analyse and write articles has made me competent, and I am sure that this will give me an edge when I apply to universities for further studies.



Project 12

Construction of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV)

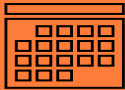


Project Overview, Approach and Methodology*

Project Objective

Construct the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) school building to support provision of residential education for girls from rural communities.

Project Overview



Review period:
FY 2022-2025



Location:
Nalgonda, Telangana



Implementing partner:
Dr. Reddy's Foundation
(DRF)



Project outlay:
INR 2.4 Cr.

Project Activities

- Constructed a new school building, including classrooms, dormitories, administrative spaces and washrooms for around 220 students.
- Developed residential infrastructure to enable safe and structured accommodation for students across upper primary and secondary grades
- Installed drinking water infrastructure to ensure continuous access to safe water for students
- Enabled safety and security infrastructure, including surveillance systems, boundary safeguards.
- Extended support beyond construction through repair works, infrastructure improvements, and other support in response to school requirements

Methodology: IRECS – Qualitative Approach



Qualitative Interactions

- 1 Focused Group Discussion with school students
- 2 In-Depth Interviews with teachers
- 1 In-Depth Interview with head of school
- 1 In-Depth Interview with a parent
- 1 In-Depth Interview with government line department representative

*Source: Memorandum of Understanding signed in November 2022 and Amendment to MoU signed in March 2023.

Analysis and Findings

Challenges Prior to the Project

As shared by multiple stakeholders during interactions, several challenges existed prior to the intervention:

- **Poor and unsafe infrastructure:** The school was previously operating from an old building that was in an unstable condition. In some instances, students had to sit in open spaces or under trees due to inadequate classroom infrastructure, affecting both safety and learning continuity.
- **Limited access to adequate learning spaces:** The earlier facility lacked sufficient classrooms and dormitory spaces, restricting the number of students who could be accommodated and limiting the overall learning environment.
- **Inadequate sanitation and water facilities:** Basic infrastructure such as toilets, drinking water, and storage facilities were either insufficient or not adequate to support a residential school model.
- **Distance and accessibility challenges:** Prior to the intervention, students relied on distant schools after completing primary grades. Parents indicated that this created challenges in continuing education, particularly for girls from nearby rural areas.
- **Lack of safe residential facilities for girls:** The absence of secure, well-managed residential infrastructure limited opportunities for girls, particularly from rural and underserved communities, to pursue education beyond primary schooling
- **Low attractiveness of existing school infrastructure:** The earlier infrastructure was not conducive to learning and did not instil confidence among parents or students, affecting enrolment and retention.

Project Activities Undertaken

Project Implementation (Process Lens) as shared by stakeholders:



04

DRF continued to provide post-construction support, including minor repairs and water system upgrades

03

The project followed a handover-based model, where infrastructure was constructed and transferred to the government for operation.

02

Site selection and infrastructure planning were led by government authorities, ensuring alignment with public education systems

01

Construction was undertaken as per KGBV norms, including layout, number of classrooms, dormitories, and sanitation facilities

Analysis and Findings

Improved access to safe and structured residential education for girls

- KGBV school primarily caters to students from surrounding areas with limited access to secondary education, including those from **vulnerable backgrounds**.
- The intervention addressed gaps in **access to residential secondary education for girls** by constructing a dedicated school facility with academic and residential infrastructure.
- Prior to the intervention, the school operated from an old building with limited infrastructure. Teachers reported that classrooms were few and, in some cases, the same spaces were used for both learning and rest, leading to congestion and disruption. Students indicated that space constraints affected their ability to attend classes comfortably.
- Post-construction, the new facility **provided 5 classrooms and 5 dedicated dormitories**, enabling a structured environment for academic and residential activities. The school currently accommodates students from classes 6 to 10.
- School authorities reported that student strength increased from approximately **170–180 students in the earlier premises to around 220 students after shifting to the new campus in 2024**. They also indicated that admission requests from nearby villages increased after the new campus became operational, with enrolment exceeding the intake capacity, reflecting higher demand for education at KGBV.
- Parents indicated that improved infrastructure and availability of **facilities influenced their decision to enrol children in the school**. Teachers highlighted that **some households who normally consider private schools** showed interest in admitting their children to this school.

- The project contributed to addressing **social challenges related to girl student dropout and early marriage**.
- During interactions, stakeholders reported that in the absence of accessible secondary education facilities, students in the region often discontinued education after primary levels. School authorities indicated that in some cases, this led to early marriage.
- With the availability of a residential school providing education from upper primary to secondary levels, **girls were able to continue their education** within the local area in a safe and structured environment.
- Stakeholders indicated that continued enrolment during critical schooling years reduced drop out and potential early marriage, while also **supporting greater engagement of families** in girls' educational attainment.

“This new building is really nice. There's space for everything, separate classrooms, places to eat, space to keep belongings, and a big assembly area.”

- As shared by students

Students indicated that improved infrastructure and dedicated spaces supported better daily routines and increased motivation to attend classes.

Analysis and Findings

Enhanced safety and security in the school environment

- During interactions, parents highlighted that safety was a key consideration, particularly given the school's location in a relatively remote area.
- To address these concerns, structured safety measures were established, including, **installation of CCTV cameras, and boundary protection around the school premises.**
- In addition, context-specific measures such as installation of protective barriers to prevent entry of insects and snakes were **implemented considering the surrounding geography.**
- Parents specified that these arrangements contributed to increased confidence in sending children to the school for residential education.

Enabled utilisation of government-supported digital learning infrastructure

- Head of school indicated that digital learning resources were available through government support; however, constraints in the earlier premises, including limited classroom space and shared use of rooms for dormitory purposes, **restricted effective installation and utilisation** of such facilities.
- With the creation of **dedicated classrooms and a separate computer room under the project**, the school was better positioned to operationalise available digital equipment and utilise technology-enabled learning resources in a more structured manner.

Improved infrastructure and living conditions



The project improved basic infrastructure and living conditions within the school by strengthening sanitation, water, and residential facilities



The school was equipped with **17 toilet and bath cubicles**, compared to **4 cubicles in the earlier premises**, which stakeholders indicated improved access to sanitation facilities and reduced overcrowding during daily routines.



A water purification system with a capacity of approximately 500 litres supported by storage capacity of around 6,000–7,000 litres, ensured **availability of water for drinking and daily use.**



With the kitchen room constructed in the new building, **meals were cooked in a hygienic manner and provided on-site** under government-supported schemes.

- **Availability of facilities enabled students to manage personal routines independently**
- **Improved access to water and space supported activities such as washing and drying clothes**



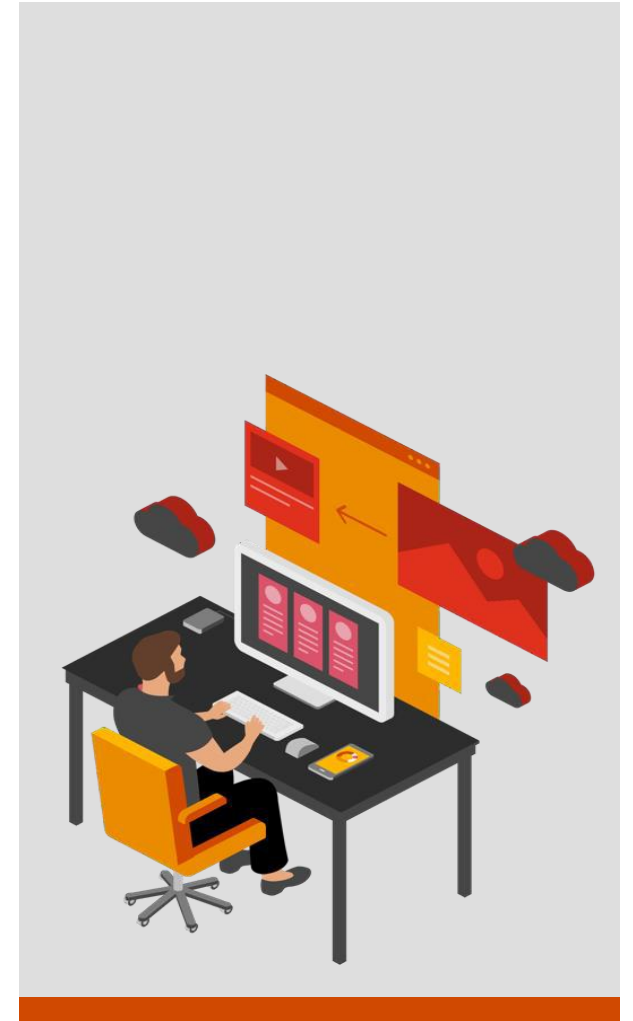
Students and parents reflected that the improved residential infrastructure and availability of a government schooling facility reduced household expenditure associated with access to education, including travel and related schooling costs.

Analysis and Findings

Strengthened institutional systems and sustainability

- The project created a functional campus through which the existing government education system was able to **operate in a structured manner**, supporting both academic delivery and residential management.
- Teachers indicated that availability of **dedicated classrooms, dormitories, kitchen, sanitation facilities, and administrative spaces enabled smoother implementation of routine school processes**, including monthly Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs), student assessments under Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE), and day-to-day residential supervision.
- The improved premises also **supported deployment of approximately 10 teachers and over 20 support staff** responsible for academic delivery, food services, hygiene management, and student care within the residential setting. School-level committees, including food committees and student leadership groups, were reported to be functional within the organised campus environment.
- Government representatives indicated that the earlier premises was inadequate and that a new facility was required to support effective functioning of the residential school. They reported that the timely construction and handover of the new campus allowed for efficient set up at the improved facility.
- It was further indicated that, beyond the initial construction, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories also supported maintenance works on a need-basis, ensuring continued usability of the infrastructure.
- From a sustainability perspective, stakeholders indicated that the permanent infrastructure continues to be utilised efficiently, indicating continuity beyond the project period.

Parents highlighted that **children are showing more interest in studies and basic communication skills after joining the school**



Analysis and Findings

Snapshots from the Field



Foundation stone at the school entrance



Assembly area



Kitchen room



Dormitory with storage racks and mattresses



Drinking water facility



Water filter for drinking water



After filtration, the wastewater flows out through this pipe



Tanks for storage of water for regular use

IRECS Analysis

I

Inclusiveness

The intervention enabled inclusive access by providing a residential schooling for students from rural and underserved areas with limited access to secondary education.

Dedicated facilities for girl children created a safe and structured pathway for continued schooling during critical adolescent years.

R

Relevance

The project addressed identified gaps related to limited access to secondary education, inadequate infrastructure, and absence of safe residential schooling options, which affected continuation of education for girls. It also responded to parental concerns regarding safety and distance to schools after primary education, which had contributed to dropout in some cases.

E

Effectiveness

Improved access to structured residential education reflected in increased enrolment and demand from surrounding areas, and continued participation in secondary schooling.

Strengthened overall learning and residential environment through improved infrastructure, safety and supervision, availability of basic facilities (sanitation, water, and meals), and access to digital learning resources supporting classroom learning.

C

Convergence

The project demonstrated convergence as the infrastructure support was extended to an existing government residential school based on requests raised by district-level administration for improved school facilities.

S

Sustainability

Sustainability is reflected through ongoing maintenance and incremental infrastructure support and need-based assistance.

Alignment with UNSDGs, Recommendations and Limitations

Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals



The project contributes to strengthening access to inclusive and quality education by providing safe and structured residential schooling supported by improved infrastructure, digital learning resources, and institutional systems. The availability of a conducive learning environment and access to additional learning materials supports continued education and improved participation in secondary schooling.



The project contributes to promoting gender equality by enabling access to safe residential education for girls from underserved communities. By supporting continued education and reducing risks of early school dropout, the intervention facilitates greater participation of girls in education during critical schooling years.

Recommendations



Extended maintenance support: As stakeholders indicated that repair and maintenance support were needed on an ongoing basis post handover, a structured periodic maintenance mechanism may further support sustained functionality of the infrastructure.

Limitations

There were no study limitations.

Case Stories

01

Improved learning environment and daily comfort



A Class 7 student shared that before joining the current school, she studied in a different institution where infrastructure was limited, and spaces were not well organised. She mentioned that classroom areas were small and did not provide a comfortable environment for learning.

After enrolling in the newly constructed KGBV, she experienced a noticeable change in the school environment. She highlighted that the classrooms are now spacious and separate dormitories are available for staying, unlike earlier where such arrangements were not adequate.

She also noted improvements in basic facilities, mentioning that drinking water is easily available and that there are separate spaces for bathing, handwashing, and toilets, which has made daily routines more convenient without long waiting times. She shared that these improvements have made her feel more comfortable in the school and helped her concentrate better on her studies, increasing her interest in attending classes regularly.

02

Increased trust in safety and continued education for daughters

A parent from a nearby village enrolled her elder daughter in the school when she entered Class 6 and later admitted her younger daughter based on the positive experience. She shared that earlier schooling options had limited facilities and required adjustments, but the new school offered a safer and more structured environment.

She particularly highlighted safety arrangements, which gave her confidence to send her daughters to a residential school. She also mentioned that the school provides adequate drinking water and maintains clean facilities, including separate toilets and bathing areas, which were not available earlier.

Observing improvements in her elder daughter's interest in studies and overall confidence, she decided to continue education for both her children. The parent expressed that the school environment feels secure and supportive, encouraging families to prioritise girls' education.



Thank you

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