

Impact Assessment of **Remedial Education** in Sapotra block of Karauli district 2023





The NSE Foundation, a Section 8 company, undertakes the CSR activities of the National Stock Exchange of India Limited. It initiated a program through its local partner, Plan India, a non-profit organization, to provide quality primary education to children from economically and socially disadvantaged communities. As a part of the program:

The program interventions comprised the following:

16 Siksha Mitras were recruited and trained to support weaker students in improving their linguistic and numeracy skills.

531 government school teachers were trained in Activity-based Learning (ABL) and the use of Teaching Learning Material (TLM).

92 Village Level Learning Centres (VLLC) were established to facilitate learning during the pandemic.

Children's Groups were formed in 170 schools to educate children on health, hygiene, and life skills.

NSE Foundation commissioned a study to understand the rationale, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence, and sustainability of the programme. CSRBOX was onboarded to undertake the study. Research design was based on a pre-and-post-intervention comparative approach. Stratified random sampling was adopted for the study along with mixed-method approach which included both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection.

For quantitative data, surveys were conducted among students and the households to which these students belong. For qualitative data collection, school staff (teaching as well as non-teaching), government officials, Panchayati Raj Institution members, Anganwadi workers, SMC members, Shiksha Mitras, NGO resource persons, and NSE Foundation resource persons were interviewed

Key Insights from Impact Assessment Study

Learning Outcome

- LO Assessment conducted reports that 70% of the sampled Grade 6 students have scored between 0% - 59%
- The assessment was conducted a year after the end of the intervention



Village Level Learning Centre

- 98% of the students enrolled attended classes through the VLLCs during the pandemic
- Levels of students were maintained and innovative teaching methods were used



Home Visits by SMs

- SMs conducted regular visits to the community
- 100% of the headmasters reported 0% drop-out as a result of the visits
- 750+ out of school children were re-enrolled



Bal Sansad and SMCs

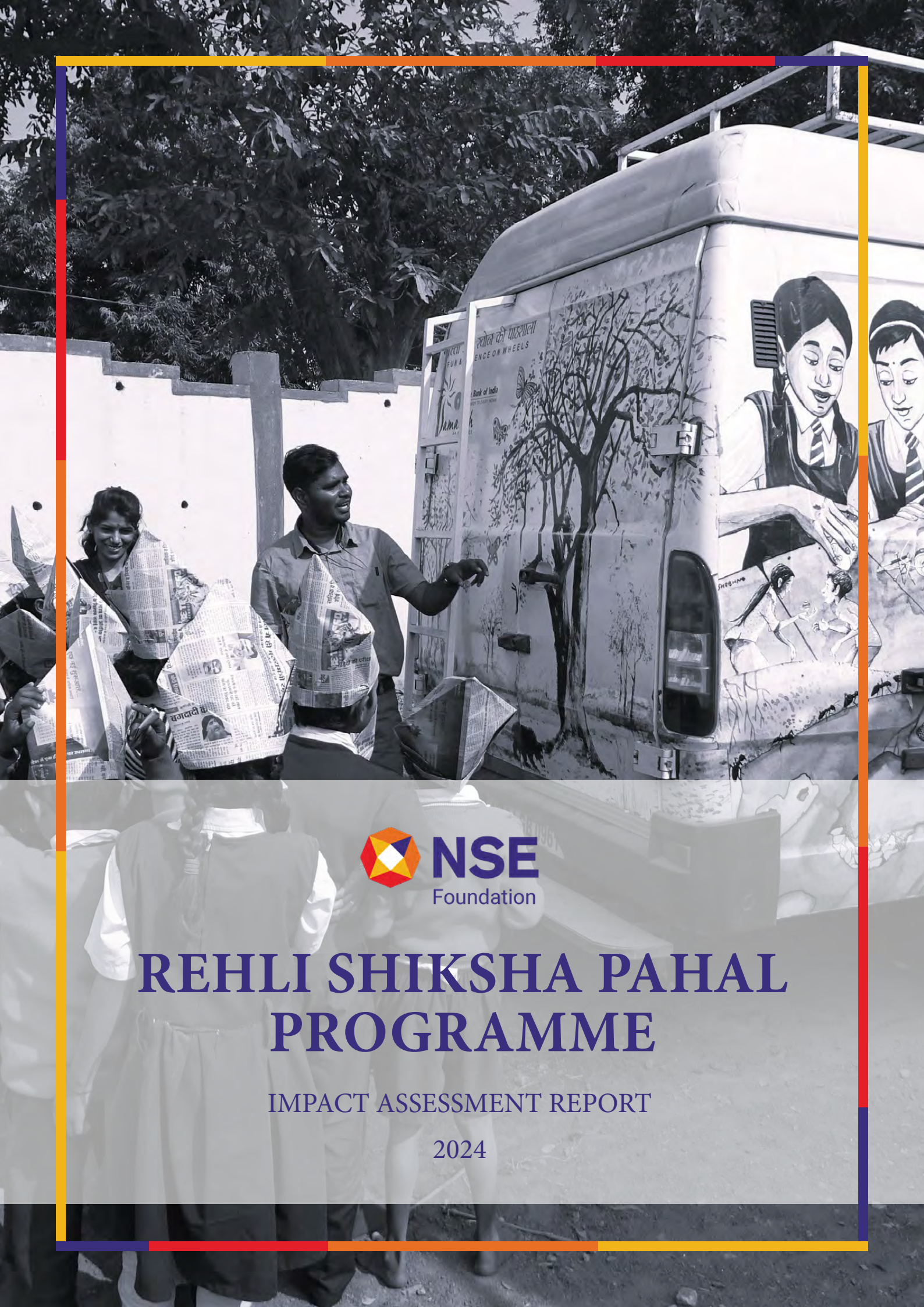
- Bal Sansad were formed in all 18 sampled schools
- SMCs across all 18 sampled schools were re-formed and strengthened





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NSE
Foundation

REHLI SHIKSHA PAHAL PROGRAMME

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

2024



Discussion with children about GK at CLC Samnapur



DPC Sagar and BEO Rehli Visited new developed Playground by Samavesh at Tikitoriya School

NSE Foundation, a Section-8 Company, is the implementing arm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives for the NSE Group. Through social interventions, it endeavours to include the most marginalized communities in the country's development story. In doing so, it plants the seeds of transformation and empowerment.

The Foundation partners with the government, non-governmental organizations, multilateral bodies, and academic institutions to inspire, nurture, empower, and sustain the aspirations of the communities it serves. NSE Foundation identified Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh to undertake its CSR program and implement the "Rehli Shiksha Pahal Programme" (RSPP) in its Rehli block. The goal of the program was to raise the academic standards of the elementary school students enrolled in public schools, and the students were primarily from underprivileged communities.

The objectives of the program were: 1. To build the capacity of the teachers to teach students through the ABL method of teaching, 2. Develop TLM kits for the students, 3. Build the capacity of local community groups (SHG members, VO members, PRI members), and parents, and 4. To strengthen the educational administration in the block. The program also helped build a cadre of community workers in education (Balmitras & Janmitras) who supported bridging the gap between the teachers, parents, community groups, and the block educational administration. The program was implemented in a phased manner across 150 schools located in 100 villages of Rehli block. The impact evaluation of the RSPP was undertaken to quantify the accomplishments of the program, identify the gaps, and recognize areas for improvement.

RESULTS

The key findings of the impact assessment are given below:

- 70% of children have achieved ASER level reading comprehension and arithmetic skills.
- 91% of teachers have received ABL training and TLM kits. 50% of teachers were making use of TLM kits in the classroom.
- 77% of teachers have a plan to continue the children's academic improvement after the exit of on ground partner.
- SMC meetings are taking place in 100% of the schools.
- An average of 50% women are attending SMC meetings regularly.
- 76% of parents said they are seeing changes in their child's education due to them regularly attending the PTM.
- The book 'mere bacche ne kya kya seekha' helps the parents keep track of their child's education.
- 54% of gram panchayat members are not aware about the problems related to education and schools.
- Programme innovations - Mohalla classrooms and Jhola Pusthakalaya

Fig. 1: Results of RSPP Programme





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EDUCATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

EQUIP

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT



NSE Foundation, a Section-8 Company, is the implementing arm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives for the NSE Group. Through social interventions it endeavours to include the most marginalised communities in the country's development story. In doing so, it plants the seeds of transformation and empowerment.

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NSE Foundation identified aspirational district of Ramanathapuram to undertake its CSR programme. It collaborated with Aid India to provide quality education to underprivileged students in Mandapam block of Ramanathapuram district. The Education Quality Improvement Project (EQUIP) aimed to transform the educational landscape by addressing systemic challenges and fostering a conducive learning environment for students.

This initiative targeted to ensure that 'no child is left behind!' through strategic implementation and stakeholder collaboration. It strived to create a replicable and sustainable model that focused on measuring children's learning levels by providing inputs based on children's learning needs and bringing out visible improvements in the learning levels of children.

The programme focused on providing engaging learning materials, including educational videos and inputs, to enable students from standards 3rd to 8th (7 to 13 years) achieve basic competencies in Math, English, and Tamil.



Photograph 1: Students engaged in classroom learning



Photograph 2: Students engaged in classroom learning

The initiative was implemented through school and after-school interventions. Government school teachers and local tutors received training on teaching-learning methodology as part of the programme. Sixty-six (66) government schools and sixty (60) after-school centres in 41 villages were covered, benefitting 12,384 students, 345 teachers and 200 Eureka tutors.

An impact assessment was carried out after the completion of the intervention. The impact assessment study evaluated outputs, outcomes, and impact of the programme. It also examined the role and involvement of the local community and stakeholders, recording their feedback and suggestions. The log frame approach was used to evaluate the impact and sustainability of the project.

The field investigators were jointly trained by SR Asia and on ground partner on the data collection, study tools and ethical considerations of the evaluation. A mixed-methods research design was implemented for the study to gather quantitative and qualitative data from key stakeholders.

Field data collection involved random selection of 22 schools with the sample of 382 students from the fifth to eighth grade. Subject wise learning level assessments were conducted with 120 students at 9 Eureka centres. Detailed analysis of field data and findings are provided in this report.

The key findings of the impact assessment are given below:

71% of students attended both classes in school and after-school centres whereas remaining students were either attending schools or Eureka centres.

99% of students indicated that they developed an interest in their studies, and 100% reported experiencing ease in understanding subjects when taught through play-way method. Additionally, school teachers noted increased student engagement and interaction during classes when implementing this method.

100% of students have shared that they participate in school activities.

93% of teachers, including school and Eureka teachers, had consistently adhered to the lesson plans. Adherence to lesson plans has also been evidenced through observation by field investigators during field visits.

96% of students reported their participation in the skill fest, while 87% of students disclosed that they received prizes and certificates during the skill fest.

87% of the school teachers reported regularly sharing student progress with parents.

97% of parents reported enhancement in their children's interest in education and learning skills such as improvement in speaking fluency and calculation skills.

58% of students reported receiving both work books and stationary material, whereas 12% and 5% students reported receiving only workbooks and only stationary materials respectively.

77% of students expressed that they were comfortable asking questions during classes.

99% of students had said they actively participate in classroom discussions after attending Eureka classes.

100% of students favoured the stress-free environment of the Eureka classes, creating an environment conducive to active student participation.

93% of students had confirmed joining online classes during COVID-19, while 7% of students who lacked access to personal mobile devices had utilised the tablets at the Eureka centre to participate in online classes.

86% of school teachers reported notable changes in their teaching skills and practices, such as adoption of TLMs after receiving Eureka training.



The programme's implementation was partly affected by Covid-19 owing to which technology solutions were leveraged by teachers to reach students. A software application was developed to facilitate the access of educational material. Additionally, students were engaged in learning through live virtual classes, WhatsApp-based tasks and online quizzes during this period.

The intervention emphasised a graded approach and interactive classroom sessions all of which proved effective in fostering students' interest and foundational skill enhancement. ExpertPage 6 of 57 teachers' dedication and community involvement through village tutors contributed to a sustainable model for improved learning outcomes of students. School teachers and parents have reported that students attend school more regularly and their attendance has improved. However, enrolment and attendance related data has not been shared by school administrations with impact assessment agency. Given these positive outcomes, especially considering the programme's app-based intervention and tablet-based teaching, this model has the potential to be replicated and scaled-up.



Photograph 3: Teacher facilitating group learning with flash cards



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Evaluation and Assessment Report of NSE Foundation-CSR Intervention

Project on

GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAMME



2023




implementation of the project. The programme aimed at mainstreaming the out-of-school / irregular-to-school girl-child to formal schools.

The programme not only focussed on improving the quality of education, furthering their enrolment in the formal schools but it also focussed on the overall personality development of the girl-child. The programme enabled the girl-children to aspire for a brighter future. In the execution of the programme, the on-ground partner involved the services of the girl-child parents, community members, PRI members, other important stakeholders, school teachers, and para teachers.

The present assessment study was executed to evaluate the outcomes and impact of the

programme on primary beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The objectives of this assessment exercise were to gauge the effectiveness of the programme, the role and engagement of the parents, local community members, and other stakeholders of the project, and document their perceptions and feedback. The approach adopted for the evaluation included five key principles, viz., relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Further, a mixed method research design was adopted for the data collection and included both quantitative survey and qualitative interviews and FGDs with key stakeholders. The evaluation study included a control group for a better understanding of the performance and learning outcomes of the experimental group.

Project impact

3,076 
female students were enrolled in the programme against the target of 3,000 during the five-year project period.

LCs at Purulia enrolled
1,579
girl-child and remaining
1,479
were enrolled at LCs of Bankura

The average number of enrolled children in LCs of Purulia district is
32and31
for the LCs of Bankura district.

The average attendance of 100 LCs recorded at
70%
and the highest is being at the Purulia district (73%).

99%
of those who existed were mainstreamed into formal education.



75% 
of girls believed LCs provide better educational learning than the schools.

59%



of the respondents strongly agreed, 26% of the respondents agreed that innovative course curriculum and personal attention of teachers motivated the girl-child to attend classes regularly.

Activity-oriented learning facilities, viz., drawing competitions, and dance at LCs help the girl-child for better learning.

99%



of girl-child attended the LCs because of their interest in studies.

96%



strongly agree/agree that center teachers give personal attention.

86%



of the teachers at LCs helped the children to become creative and curious.

33%



of the students enrolled at the center reported that they were among the toppers in their class in the school.

In the assessment test,

60%



and 66% girls from experimental and control group respectively scored more than 50 marks in mathematics.

In the Bengali test assessment,

84%



of girls secured more than 50% whereas 88% of girls from the control group secured more than 50% marks.

67%



of girls secured more than 50% marks in English tests while 68% of girls in the control group were in the same category.

About

17%



(strongly agree) and 25% (agree) report that several girls drop out of school because they get married.

About

11%



(strongly agree) and 22% (agree) report that many girls drop out of school because they must work on agricultural lands or other household work, including taking care of younger siblings, etc.

78%



of girls go to the LC because their parents asked them to go (increased awareness among the parents of girl-child).

72%



of girls believe that there is no discrimination between male and female children in a family.

75%



of parents feel strongly that their daughters learn better in the LC.

77%



of parents believed that there was very much improvement in their daughters' performance in education

87%



of parents strongly agree or agree that the NSE Foundation's girl-child programme changed their perceptions towards the girl-child education.

More than the majority of parents are assured that their girl child will pursue higher education.

84%



of the respondents agree that there is a shift in the parents' attitude towards providing equal treatment for their sons and daughters (84% strongly agree).

NSE Foundation's intervention also delayed the marriage of girl-child, parents believed (74%). Due to the NSE Foundation's intervention, girl-child marriage declined in the study region, according to parents' perceptions.



Drawing competition at LCs during Covid-19

80%



of the parents strongly agree that they want to see their daughter become a doctor, engineer, (or job holder) in their life.

Teachers through the teachers' training programme are now better trained.

The project directly and indirectly fulfilled many UN Sustainable Development Goals.

The programme has a significant and positive impact on the parents and community members. They understand the value of education for the girl-child and they believe that they will treat their daughters like their sons. No discrimination will be there between boys and girls.

On an overall basis, the evaluation study of the impact of the NSE Foundation's CSR programme on girl children's education reveals that there has been a significant positive impact on the girl children enrolled, their parents, and the local community where they belonged.

Assessment of the programme indicated positive results on all parameters. The programme was relevant for its intended beneficiaries as it has been successful in mainstreaming the out-of-school and irregular-to-school girl-child to the formal school. The programme minimized the gap between formal education and girl-child. The

programme has been effective in increasing the enrolment of female students in formal schools and changing the perceptions of the parents and community members towards girl-child education. The programme has also changed the mindset of the girls towards higher education. Para-teachers, teachers in the formal schools, parents, and community members had contributed significantly and in a meaningful way in educating the girl-child. The robust convergence of the stakeholders in the programme enabled the attainment of programme objectives. This convergence was the key to sustaining the ethos of the programme.

Given the large scale and scope of CSR activities at NSE Foundation, a comprehensive impact assessment of this key CSR project has many benefits. It helps the implementing partner to understand the overall social impact it is creating through its CSR while understanding the gaps and areas of improvement for the on-ground partner.



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SHIKSHADEEP PRAKALPA

CSR project at **Khoyrasole Block**, Birbhum, West Bengal

Impact Assessment Report

2023



Name of the project

**ShikshaDeep
Prakalpa**

Project duration

**March 2019 to
June 2022**

On-ground partner

**Vikramshila
Education Resource
Society**

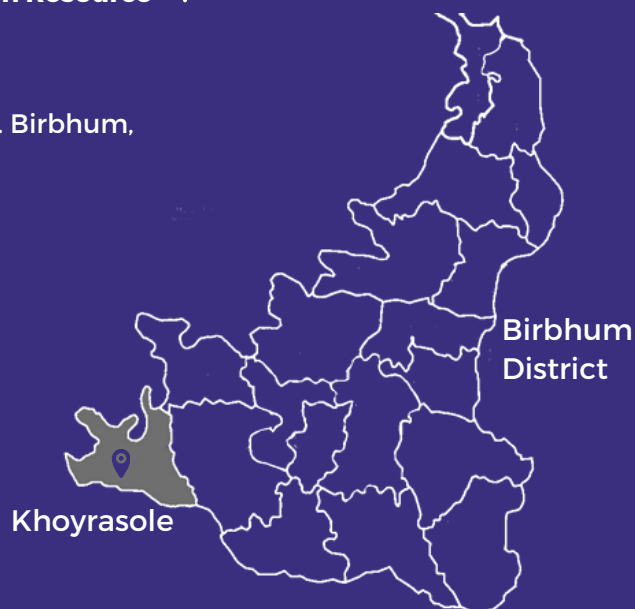
Independent Impact Assessment by



Ten gram panchayats under the Khoyrasole Block. Birbhum,
West Bengal

GPS of Khoyrasole

- Babuijore
- Barhra
- Hazratpur
- Kendgore
- Khoyrasole
- Lokepur
- Nakrakonda
- Panchra
- Parsundi
- Rupaspur



Beneficiaries

130

Villages

8865

Students

16000

Parents

480

School
teachers

10

Supervisors

75

Shikshan
Mitras

10

Government
officials

Sampling size **370**

170

Students:
CLCs

120

Students:
Learning
Camps

30

Students:
Shiksha Mela
participants

10

Parents

20

School
teachers

15

Supervisors/
Shikshan
Mitras

5

Government
officials/Gram
Panchayat

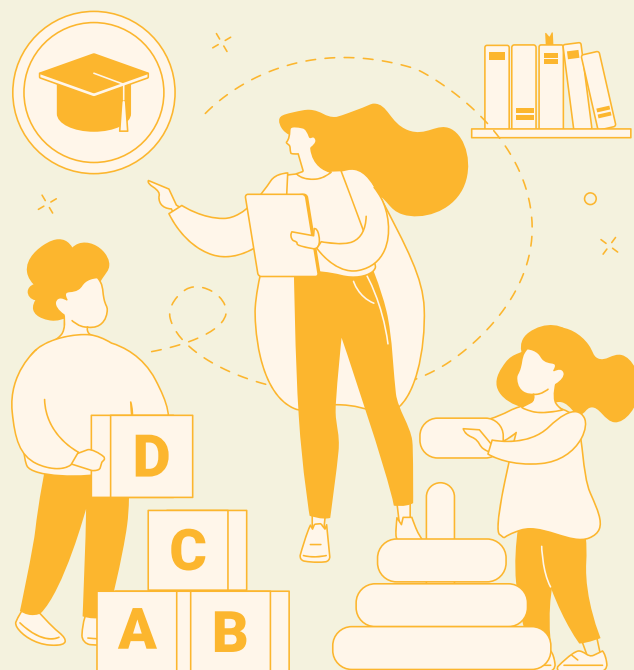
Project objectives:

To improve literacy and numeracy skills in children aged 6 to 12 years by 80-90% compared to the baseline level and by 30-35% based on their grade-level learning.

To promote higher enrollment rates, student retention, and consistent school attendance.

To empower educated young people in the local community with effective pedagogical techniques and subject-specific interventions, particularly in Mathematics and Languages (Bangla and English), to enhance the learning centres and promote the adoption of best practices in nearby schools and communities.

To establish models of educational excellence in every GP, to effectively raise awareness and empower the local community, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), and the formal education system on the best practices for providing a child-friendly and efficient primary education, and to emphasise the significance of school attendance and completion.



Key interventions

75

75 CLCs and 65 LCs were set up in 130 villages of 10 gram panchayats.

75

75 centre teachers and 10 supervisors were recruited and trained.

2300

Around 2,300 students were reached annually through these CLCs and LCs.

56

56 Bal Melas were organised each in the programme's first and third years.

1209

1,209 interactions between parents and the centre teachers were organised.








55

55 briefing meetings with the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) members were organised.






Study methodology

The methodology adopted for the study was based on both the qualitative and quantitative indicators spread over three stages.




Stage I: Planning

-  Inception meeting to understand project context, objectives and approach
-  Desk research of secondary sources and project documents shared by NSE Foundation and Vikramshila
-  Identification of stakeholders, beneficiaries and areas of enquiry
-  Preparation of sampling plan with target sample size and types of survey tools to be used
-  Preparation and submission of the draft inception report
-  Preparation and submission of the draft survey tools
-  Finalisation of the survey tools with inputs from NSE Foundation and Vikramshila

Stage II: Data collection

-  Training of enumerators
-  Field survey
-  Rapid assessment of students at the time of the survey
-  Photo/video documentation of the project
-  Virtual discussion session with the head teachers and the teachers in charge of the schools

Stage III: Reporting

-  Collation of collected information and analysis
-  Preparation and submission of draft report
-  Preparation and submission of the final report after incorporating suggestions

Key findings

Improving literacy and numeracy skills

- All the interviewed parents believed that the programme helped their children in foundational learning.
 - The students' performances were found to be better during the endline survey and the rapid assessment conducted during the field visit, compared to the baseline survey.
- The percentage of students securing more than 75% increased significantly in the endline and rapid assessment compared to the baseline. The improvement is captured in the following table:

Subjects / Test Period	Baseline	Endline	Rapid Assessment
Bengali	1.00%	81.06%	68.27%
Mathematics	0.50%	83.68%	77.31%
English	NIL	71.37%	77.66%

- 70% of interviewed teachers attributed the improvement in students to the programme.
- No significant difference was found between the performance of CLC and LC students in the rapid assessments conducted during the field visit. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts were intensified to provide out-of-school children with an opportunity to continue their learning. This eventually brought down the difference in learning outcomes between the students of LCs in comparison to their CLC counterparts.

Enrolment, retention, attendance and dropouts

- 90% of teachers affirmed that the programme had a positive effect on student enrollment in their respective schools.
- All of the teachers interviewed in FGDs (15) confirmed that the enrolment rate had increased in 2022-23 over the previous academic year.
- During FGDs, 81.82% teachers reported significant improvements in school attendance. They attributed this to increased interest in education from both parents and students.
- 63.64% teachers who participated in FGDs representing three schools - one in each of the Panchra, Kendgaria, and Hazratpur GPs - reported a significant reduction in dropout rates after the implementation of the ShikshaDeep Prakalpa.

Empowering educated young people

- The earnings of the local youth who participated in the programme increased substantially.
- Private tutors usually earned from ₹ 3,000 to ₹ 5,000 a month in Khoyrasole. The community volunteers under the programme were earning from ₹ 3,000 to ₹ 12,000 every month, of whom the supervisors were earning between ₹ 9,000 to ₹ 12,000.

Awareness generation and empowerment

- The programme catered to the marginalised and underprivileged section of the society.
- Out of the interviewed respondents, the majority (55.6%) were daily wage labourers.
- All of these respondents had educational qualifications below Class 10.
- 89% respondents reported a monthly income of less than Rs. 5,000.
- The Shikshan Melas aimed at reaching a wider audience not covered by CLCs and LCs. Students from classes 1 to 5 in surrounding villages participated in the Melas.





Photograph 1: The survey team engaging in a discussion over the programme benefits with the community members.



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Impact

Making the communities aware of the importance of education

66.7% parents confirmed that they assisted their children with studying at home. Despite having educational limitations, they encouraged their children to set aside a specific time of day for studying and completing homework.

44.4% of the interviewed parents reported that their children studied at home every day of the week.

80% of the interviewed school teachers agreed that the parents were taking an increased interest in their children's education. 20% of them were absolutely certain of this impact, while 60% somewhat agreed with the proposition.

Inspiring the teachers to adopt TLMs

The school teachers complimented the programme and said they were inspired to adopt new child-friendly techniques, such as using teaching/learning materials, to engage their students.

Sustainability

Steps were taken to lead the sustainability of ShikshaDeep Prakalpa towards sustainability without external assistance. Meetings and awareness programmes were organised involving community members, parents, children, PRI and GP representatives, SHGs, and teachers. A contribution of Rs 10/- per student per month was decided to run the CLCs after the programme ends.

Although stakeholders and beneficiaries were sensitised about foundational learning, only 43% of fundraising target was fulfilled, indicating that most parents did not contribute Rs 10 per month. As a result, only 11 CLCs were found to be operational during the field survey. Focused community intervention would be required to change the mindset and understand the importance of education.

Best practices and innovation

Handing over the project to the communities in a self-sustaining mode

Implementing a foundational learning programme with financial contributions from the community is an example of collaborative education. The element of receiving monetary contributions from the communities was introduced into the programme in September 2021. This was done with the intent of transferring the project to the communities in a self-sustaining mode. Although it experienced limited success, there is good reason to believe that the communities will wholeheartedly participate in this endeavour with continued advocacy over a period of time.

Convergence to the existing government schemes

The Government of India has launched several schemes aimed at enhancing foundational learning and improving educational outcomes across the country. These schemes collectively strive to strengthen the foundation of learning, enhance educational facilities, and equip students with essential skills, ensuring a brighter future for India's youth and contributing to the nation's overall development.

Designing a social project to complement existing government schemes is important in fostering holistic and sustainable societal development. While government initiatives provide a foundational framework, targeted social projects can address specific gaps and tailor interventions to the unique needs of communities.

The results of the interviews with members of the 9 gram panchayats showed that 88.9% of respondents, or 8 out of 9, agreed that the project complimented the efforts of the state and national governments. They believed that the local schools could benefit greatly from adopting the best practices of the programme, which would also benefit the children.



Adapting to the challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a significant loss of learning opportunities. Learning support was provided during this period over the phone and home-based support was provided to the children who were in the close vicinity of the Shikshan Mitras. 1968 students were reached through phone and home visits.

15 audiovisual pieces based on stories and poems in Bengali were created and shared with the children through various modes, especially through Vikramshila's YouTube channel. 100 worksheets on three subjects were distributed to the children whose families could not access digital devices. The children with digital device access were sent the worksheets through messaging applications. Movie shows were organised in 12 centres across 10 GPs, which received positive feedback from children and the community.

Around 66.7% (6 out of 9) of parents interviewed individually confirmed that their children could successfully continue their studies during the pandemic-induced lockdown due to the effective interventions implemented by Vikramshila. 88.2% students (from CLCs as well as LCs) confirmed that they continued their education during the lockdown. Further, 70.6% students confirmed that the supervisors and Shikshan Mitras helped them study during this challenging period. Of the 123 students interviewed in Focus Groups, 81.3% students, confirmed that they could continue their studies during the lockdown with the help of the supervisors and Shikshan Mitras. 64.29% interviewed CLC students mentioned the 'community blackboard' initiative undertaken under the programme during this period.





Photograph 2: Students participating in the Rapid Assessment during the field survey

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Longitude: 87.318069
29-04-2023, 08:01 am GMT+5.30



Lessons learned and the way forward

Between the CLCs and LCs, the former were more resource and effort-intensive. LCs were rolled out later to widen the coverage of the programme. The number of sessions attended by students enrolled in the CLCs was much more than those enrolled in the LCs. Yet, the results of the rapid assessments did not indicate any significant difference between the performances of the students. Therefore, there may be a scope to further review the pedagogy and curriculum of the CLCs so that they can be made more effective for foundational learning.

Despite undertaking several advocacy programmes, it is evident that the communities adopted the model only partially. There could be a number of factors like lack of awareness and economic hardships contributing to the lukewarm acceptance by the communities. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive outreach, awareness campaigns, and engagement efforts to emphasise the value of foundational learning and encourage community involvement for the holistic development of their children.

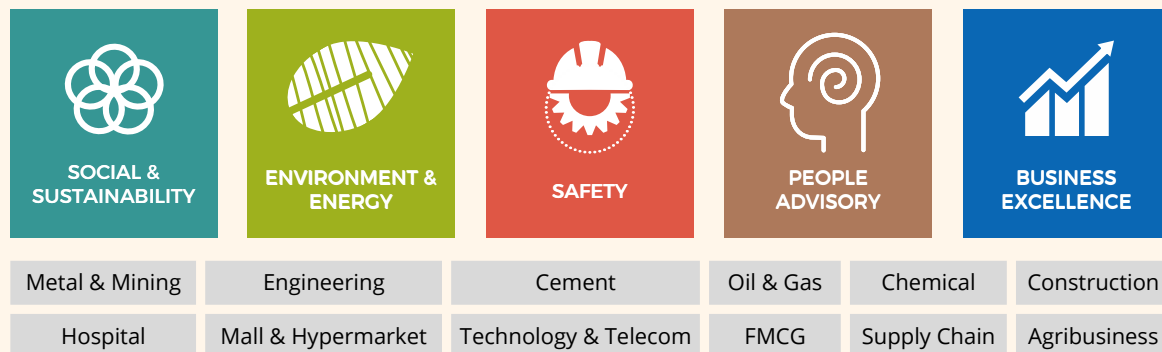
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Project Outcome Report of **SHIKSHADEEP PRAKALPA SURI II**



Program mission

The primary mission of the Shikshadeep Prakalpa Suri II Program, implemented by the NSE Foundation was to enhance school readiness and grade-appropriate foundational learning outcomes, prevent school dropouts and ensure school continuity for the underprivileged children (aged 5 to 11 years) in the Suri II block, Birbhum district (West Bengal, India). NSE Foundation engaged the on-ground partner Vikramshila Education Resource Society (VERS) to establish a supplementary system of quality Early Child Education (ECE) and capacitate local youth on best child-centric pedagogical practices. The mission was to advocate and demonstrate an inclusive and supportive learning environment across the community at the village, Gram Panchayat (GP), block, and district levels.

Background

Though India's literacy rate has grown to 74% (according to the census 2011), children's grade-appropriate learning outcomes for linguistic and numeric abilities remain poor. The New Education Policy (NEP) 2020, by the Ministry of Education, the Government of India (GoI) felt the need for improving foundational literacy & numeracy among children at the primary education level.

In West Bengal, barely 27% of grade 3 students could comfortably read a passage or make 2-digit basic Math calculations (ASER 2021), whereas the literacy rate was 76.3% (as per census 2011). Birbhum district's average score for Math was reported to be 26.5 and for Bengali 18.4 (according to a CSSSC-SRTT study) despite the literacy rate of 70.7%. Suri II, the chosen area for intervention is a rural agricultural-based economy and was among the poorly developed blocks of the district with an Education Index (EI) of 0.4665.



Children attending a Shikshan Mela, an annual event to promote quality ECE among children, teachers, parents and community members



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PROJECT
OUTCOME REPORT



Atikranta - An Initiative Towards Transformation

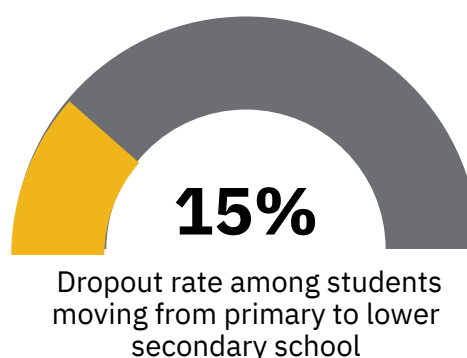


Kolkata, one of India's densely populated metro cities, has witnessed a surge in urban poor settlements in recent decades. These settlements are typically characterised by households, accommodating families with 5-6 members. Access to water, electricity and gas remain a challenge, and most families are unable to avail of government schemes and subsidies. The pandemic has exacerbated these challenges, and significantly impacted the lives of children.

A situational analysis conducted by CINI in 2020 highlighted significant socio-economic challenges faced by under-resourced families in such settlements in the project locations identified in Kolkata. The study found that during the lockdown, nearly three-quarters of households experienced a drastic income reduction due to lack of opportunities. The financial strain on families impacted children's education, bringing non-enrolment in 27 schools up to 3%. The pandemic also resulted in an increase in absenteeism, poorer quality of learning, and higher rate of dropouts. CINI's analysis found that as a result, fifth-grade students were only reading at second-grade levels, while third-grade students experienced significant challenges in solving basic mathematical problems. This learning gap increased with each grade, which resulted in a dropout rate of 15% among students moving from primary to lower secondary school.

The project 'Atikranta – An Initiative Towards Transformation', implemented by NSE Foundation in collaboration with CINI as its on-ground partner, was implemented in 27 schools of Kolkata to address the deteriorating quality of learning among primary school children during the pandemic, and improve school infrastructure to improve WASH outcomes.

The project supported primary school children using various education delivery methods, including online learning and telephone-based content delivery. It also focused on preparing for the resumption of school activities, re-enrolling and retaining students in addition to enhancing WASH facilities in 22 schools to promote better hygiene practices and overall well-being.



Education support

Through this project, 1,920 primary school students (class 1-5) from 27 schools were provided age-appropriate academic support which includes reading, writing and numeracy. This was achieved using a model focused on digital and home-based interventions during and post COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the learning level identified in the baseline assessment, children were organised into groups and academic plans were developed for each group.

1 Bag & Seth: Understanding Standard of Living and Correlates in Slums: An Analysis using Monetary Versus Multidimensional Approaches in Three Indian Cities, 2016, 9

2 CINI Rapid Assessment Survey, 2020

As part of life skills training of children and parents, resource materials were developed on cyber safety, community mobilisation, first level counselling, child rights, accelerated learning methodology, assessment methodology and COVID safety protocols. More than 900 Teaching Learning Materials (TLMs: worksheets, posters, question cards, digital workbooks etc.) were developed on mathematics, language, and life skills for children as part of the programme. Posters on COVID protocols, cyber safety and road safety were also developed and displayed in 27 schools.

Shiksha Mitra and school teachers were oriented on academic and non-academic aspects such as child rights, child safeguarding and protection in schools and community, tracking of irregular children, re-enrolment and retention of children at formal schools.

WASH infrastructure support

The project supported 22 schools with retrofitting of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) facilities. Facilities such as gender specific washrooms and changing rooms, washrooms for children with disabilities and hand washing facilities were integrated in each school. As per the endline assessment, 83.17% of children enrolled in the programme were provided trainings on cleanliness and hygiene, especially related to WASH. Additionally, training sessions were also conducted with parents on WASH components. The assessment also revealed that 54.54% of children enrolled under the project felt they benefited from these WASH facilities.

Learnings

Programmatic

Orientation and training on safe use of digital devices and the internet was useful in mitigating potential risks to personal safety and inappropriate content consumption by children

Technical and Sectoral

- Educational outcomes were affected by factors such as health and hygiene. Integration of WASH and education was required for holistic development of schools.
- Life skills were found to be valuable for students and their parents

Institutional and Policy

- The project's alignment with government policies enabled capacity building of teachers for maintenance of WASH infrastructure.
- Capacity within government schools required enhancement.

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PROJECT
OUTCOME REPORT

NSE Foundation Urban Learning Improvement Program





The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, particularly on low- and middle-income households, was profound. Extended school closures and the challenges of transitioning to remote learning created educational disparities. In India, with schools being among the first to close and the last to reopen, access to school and classroom learning were interrupted for over 18 months.

This occurred in a context where, even before the pandemic, a majority of children in primary and secondary grades struggled with basic reading. India achieved near-universal school enrolment, but learning outcomes stagnated, with a significant deficit in foundational skills.

Despite the pandemic, school enrolment rate was on the rise among students in the 6-¹ to 14-year age group and the out-of-school rate among 15- to 16-year girls reduced. However, there were substantial reductions in standardised test scores across all ages during this time. Among students in grade 8, the proportion of those who could read basic text (grade 2 level) reduced by 3.4%, while in younger grades, the reduction in reading capability was even higher. In Tamil Nadu, estimated COVID-related learning losses of 67% and 56% for mathematics and language respectively among 5- to 7-year-old students were observed between August 2019 and December 2021.²

The decline in learning outcomes, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitated action to address the widening gap in learning among school children. In response to these critical challenges, targeted interventions were imperative to uplift educational standards and support students who struggled. Recognising the urgency of the situation, a collaborative effort implemented by NSE Foundation and supported by Pratham Education Foundation was initiated in Chennai.




The project was designed to stabilise post-COVID educational landscapes and focus on systematically enhancing access to quality education and develop foundational skills for children in grades 1-5 through a strategic two-phase approach. The project was initially planned to span three academic years, with a focus on community engagement, school-based interventions, and capacity building of staff and stakeholders.



¹ Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023

² Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2023



The interventions worked towards building foundational learning skills at community level and at school level. At the community level, interventions included formation of community-based learning groups, periodic assessments and report cards, sensitisation of mothers to ensure continued education, and awareness events at community level. Community based learning groups were composed of students across grades 1 to 5, who were equipped with teaching learning materials to motivate learning and reading related activities among them. Community report cards provided information on children's schooling and learning status, fostering community awareness and involvement in children's education as a priority issue.

Mothers of children in grades 1 and 2 were engaged through assessment fairs and group meetings to orient them on age-appropriate learning activities. 30 mothers' groups were created to enhance community-based learning activities for children through intervention post schooling hours with their support. Periodic community events, such as math and science melas (fairs), performances, competitions, and exhibitions, showcased children's abilities and indicated progress towards the project goals. Mohalla camps were also organised with community volunteers, to ensure all students were able to learn and improve grade-level learning.

These community engagement activities, especially the mothers' groups were found to be beneficial in the pursuit of improving learning outcomes for the students, as per the feedback received from the students as well as school staff.

At the school level, key activities of the project included organising and facilitating learning camps, where students received extensive support and attention from teachers. School-based interventions focused on grades 1 to 5, providing support for strong foundational skills and grade-appropriate activities were conducted to improve learning outcomes including activities such as Math melas, to strengthen foundational skills in the subject and involve the community in children's learning.

Assessments were conducted for each learning camp at the baseline and endline stages. Baseline assessments that a significant number of students struggled with number recognition, addition, subtraction, and reading and writing at the beginner level. In the initial assessment, 2% of students were at the beginner level in recognising numbers from 1 to 9, while 10% could identify numbers between 1 and 9. 26% recognised numbers from 10 to 99, and 62% could perform two-number additions. After receiving programme support, students showed significant improvement. In the endline final assessment, no students remained beginners in number recognition (1-9). The percentage of students capable of subtraction increased by 79%.




2312

children covered
under the project



mother's group formed
for community-based
learning

30



A similar trend was observed in Language Mohalla Camps (LMC), focusing on reading and writing proficiency. Initially, 29% were beginners, and 30% could identify individual letters, while 37% could read simple words. Only 5% could read paragraphs, and none could read complete stories. However, in the final assessment, only 3% remained beginners, and 11% could read and comprehend stories. The percentage of students able to recognise words rose from 42% to 83%, and those reaching at least the paragraph level increased from 5% to 42%.

Learnings

Programmatic

- Community events served as platforms to showcase children's abilities and created a motivating learning environment.
- Linking the project to government initiatives for remedial learning helped scaled up the overall outcomes.

Technical and Sectoral

- Building capacity of mothers created greater accountability within the community.

Institutional and Policy

- Government schools were selected for the programme for improving the capacity within these schools, enhancing their ability to handle and integrate holistic programs into their curriculum.



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PROJECT
OUTCOME REPORT



Creating and Enabling a Learning Environment for Academic Excellence



The 2011 Census reveals that India has approximately 13.7 million households in informal settlements, including migrants and economically disadvantaged individuals. Over 8 million children under 6 reside in these settlements nationwide, and 22.72 million urban children aged 5-18 are not attending school. Children, mainly in informal urban settlements and remote rural areas, are still out of school due to factors like child labour, lack of healthcare, poor sanitation, and nutrition.¹ In case of children beyond the age of 14, the attendance rate in schools also drops significantly as they take on household responsibilities.²

The project 'Creating and Enabling a Learning Environment for Academic Excellence' was implemented by NSE Foundation in collaboration with on-ground partner Katha, a non-profit organisation working towards bringing children living in poverty into reading and quality education since 1988 through its innovative pedagogy. The programme was implemented in 25 primary schools to improve education and sanitation in Delhi's informal settlements. Many children attending these schools were first-generation learners and did not attend school regularly due to migration and household responsibilities.¹

The objective of the programme was to improve Hindi reading comprehension, writing, and numeracy skills of 7,000 children aged 5 to 9 studying in classes 1-5 in the selected municipal schools in Delhi and transform government schools into dynamic learning spaces. This was done through development of libraries by refurbishing classrooms into creative and child-centric reading libraries equipped with books. Teaching & Learning Material (TLM) including activity sheets, workbooks and worksheets, puzzles, mind maps, board games and placards were also created under the programme. Shiksha Mitras were assigned with schools, who were responsible for conducting sessions with students using the TLM. Teachers were also trained to systematically get acquainted to the methodology and framework of Katha's Story Pedagogy.

Additionally, it addressed the lack of adequate WASH infrastructure through retrofitting and maintenance of sanitation facilities like repair of toilets, urinals, hand washing stations and drinking water points/station.

Behaviour Change Communication was also undertaken through sessions on hand washing, safe hygiene practices, other hygiene norms in light of COVID-19, menstrual hygiene, food etiquettes and reduction of wastage, waste management and transmission of infectious diseases etc. Furthermore, student groups called 'WASH Committees' were established in each school to spread and propagate better health and hygiene practices.

1 Bag, Seth, Gupta: A Comparative Study of Living Conditions in Slums of Three Metro Cities in India, 2016, 9

The project exceeded its planned targets by engaging 8,738 children through educational initiatives and WASH BCC and reaching out to 38 communities in and around the schools shortlisted for the project for engaging with parents as well as conducting community classes during the COVID-19 lockdown. 19 libraries were set-up out of the 25 libraries initially planned; however, training was not conducted for the Master Student Librarians (MSL), representatives among students to manage these libraries. Training was conducted for 27 staff members on using TLMs and Katha's story methodology.

The retrofitting the WASH infrastructure and setting-up of WASH committees was completed in all 25 schools. 440 members across these committees were felicitated for their contribution to managing the facilities in their schools.

As part of the project, baseline and endline assessments were conducted for 5410 students across the selected schools. The results revealed that there was an improvement in Hindi reading, writing, and numeracy skills of children. In the baseline assessment, only 56% of children were at or above the grade-specific beginner level in Hindi reading, while 51% reached this level in Hindi writing, and 52% in numeracy. Following the programme's implementation, the endline assessment showed progress, with 95% of children achieving or surpassing the beginner level in Hindi reading, 82% in Hindi writing, and 96% in numeracy.

Personal hygiene practices also improved significantly from baseline to endline assessment with the percentage of students practicing it increasing from 40% to 80%. Similarly, handwashing before and after meals rose from 60% to 90%, and post-toilet handwashing increased from 70% to 98%. However, addressing WASH issues in School Management Committee (SMC) meetings remains an area that requires further attention and regularity.

Overall, the project was able to achieve the desired objectives to a large extent and was able to develop sustainability mechanisms through asset creation for schools, capacity building of relevant stakeholders and development of resources in the form of TLMs and libraries to improve reading outcomes through provision of contextualised reading material and creating awareness on the importance of reading. Katha plans to develop operating procedures for libraries and link the activities with government programs post the completion of the project to facilitate replication of its model with the assistance of other agencies and funders.



Fig. 1:WASH sessions during COVID-19 lockdown

Learnings

Programmatic

- Adaptability of the project during the COVID-19 pandemic by incorporating community outreach and relief activities resulted in greater acceptance of the project among community members.
- Capacity-building initiatives and WASH committees, improved the effectiveness of project by creating accountability toward both WASH infrastructure and educational support.

Technical and Sectoral

- The use of Katha's Story Pedagogy as a teaching methodology was an effective way to make classroom teaching more engaging for children, as evidenced by the endline assessment findings.
- Providing training on behaviour change communication helped improve hygiene practices among children based on the feedback received from students & teachers.

Institutional and Policy

- The implementation of programme's model was aligned with the guidelines and objectives (e.g., libraries, TLM etc.) of the National Education Policy 2020 and National Curriculum Framework.²
- Supporting government schools resulted in improving of capacity within these schools, enhancing the ability of students and teachers to integrate holistic programs into their curriculum.

² National Curriculum Framework
National Education Policy, 2020: https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

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“Ankuram” Foundational Learning Enhancement in Primary Classes [1 to 5] in Government Schools in (Todabhim) Karauli, Rajasthan

2023
Outcome Report



The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the education worldwide, with approximately 1.6 billion children, including around 250 million in India, experiencing school closures. This has exacerbated the existing learning losses caused by the pandemic and inequitable access to remote learning since early 2020.¹

According to the National Achievement Survey (NAS) in 2021, Rajasthan outperformed the national average across all class levels. The gender-wise performance in Rajasthan has also been noted to be better than the national average, with male students achieving 54.3% compared to the national average of 46.6%, whereas the female students achieved 55.4% compared to the national average of 47.1%.

Although Rajasthan's performance surpasses the national average, there has been an overall decline since the NAS conducted in 2017. The state average dropped from 63.3% in 2017 to 52.96% in 2021, indicating a decline in learning levels, with a significant portion of this decline likely attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2019 School Quality Index by NITI Aayog, Rajasthan is recognized as one of the best-performing large states, achieving an overall performance score above 60%. However, the state scored below 60% in governance processes. Additionally, Rajasthan faces the challenge of a high dropout rate, which stands at 6.40%.²

The project "Ankuram" Foundational Learning Enhancement in Primary Classes [1 to 5] in Government Schools was implemented by Centre for microFinance in Todabhim block of Karauli district, Rajasthan between 1st March 2021 to 28th February 2023. The broad objectives of the project were to improve literacy and numeracy competencies, provide teaching-learning inputs, strengthen School Management Committees (SMCs), and promote a conducive learning environment.

Key findings

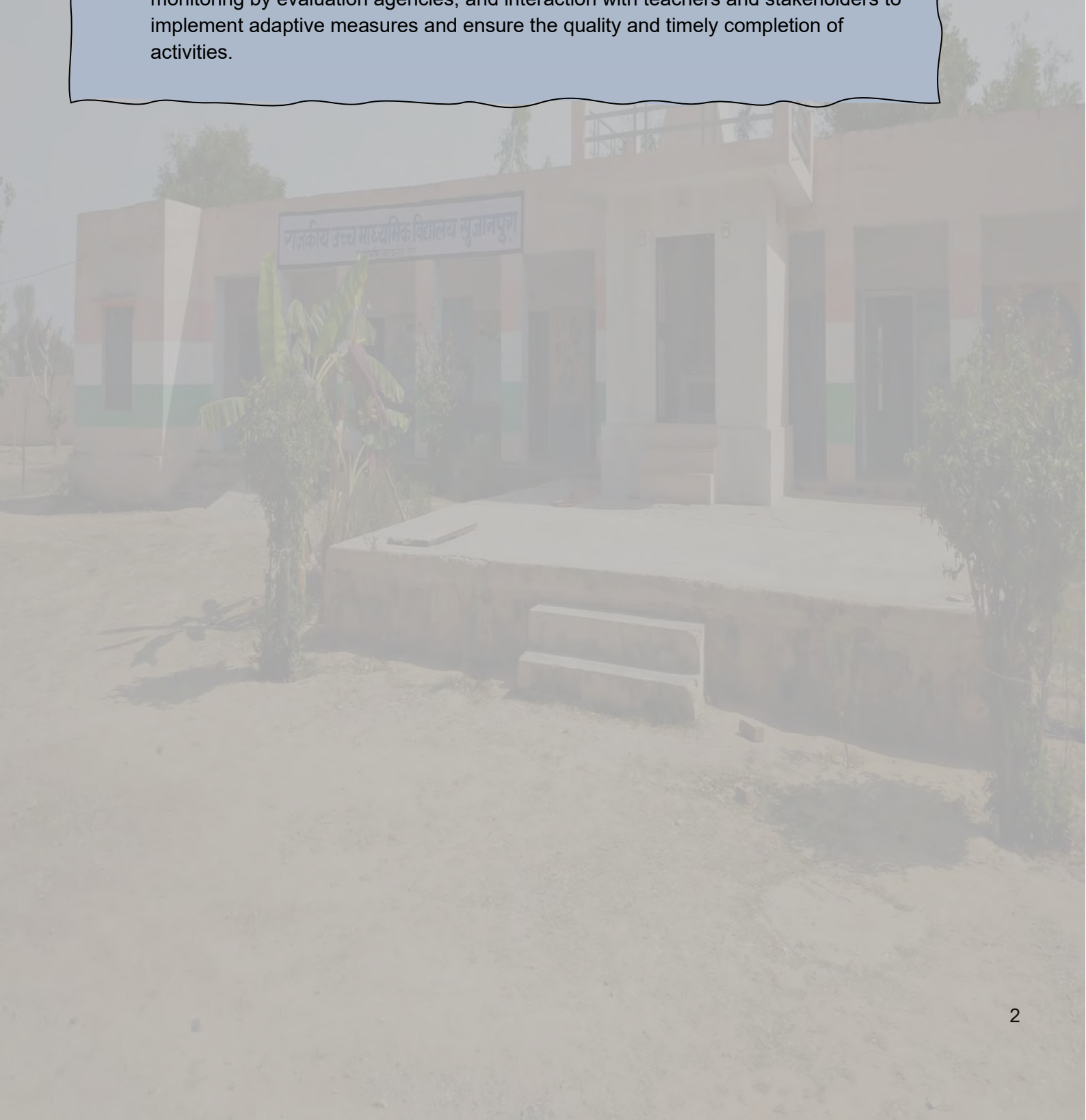
- The project at its inception, aimed to reach 15,000 school children (6,000 from classes 1 to 2 and 9,000 from classes 3 to 5) with grade-appropriate inputs in language and mathematics. By the end of year 2, the project had reported reaching 11,622 children, achieving 77.5% of the target.
- Subject teachers received capacity building sessions and trainings on language and mathematics. A total of 602 trainings were conducted for subject teachers across 200 schools.
Periodic review and orientation meetings were conducted with Panchayat Elementary Education Officers (PEEOs), Head Teachers (HTs), and subject teachers. A total of 192 trainings were conducted with PEEOs and HTs, and 602 trainings were conducted for subject teachers.
- The Early Childhood Education (ECE) component was introduced, targeting 7,000 children, and developing 40 model Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). By the end of the project, 7,884 children were reached through ECE activities, and 40 model AWCs were developed.
- Capacity building activities were conducted with School Management Committee (SMC) members, aiming to reach 1,500 members. By the end of the project, a total of 1,636 SMC members were reached out to, through capacity building measures and this was achieved through 701 SMC meetings that were conducted.
- Capacity building measures were implemented for Anganwadi Workers (AWWs), helpers, mentor teachers, and supervisors. A total of 247 individuals (176 AWWs, 65 mentor teachers, and 6 supervisors) received capacity building inputs.

¹ Pratham, [ASER \(Rural\) 2020 Wave 1 \(Rural\) findings – India](#), Mumbai, Pratham Resource Centre, 2020.

² Gol, National Achievement Survey, 2021

Key recommendations

- To continue on boarding with the local cadre of School Facilitators, to build rapport with the community and form strong relationships with stakeholders.
- To implement adaptive measures with changing policies and realign the program strategy; accordingly, as well as collaborating with government officials to avoid duplication and strengthen classroom-level inputs.
- Develop and utilize assessment tools, MIS data collection systems, and supporting documents that facilitate data collection, help to review project activities, and identify the needs and gaps.
- Maintain a “bottom-up” approach to monitoring through regular follow-up visits, external monitoring by evaluation agencies, and interaction with teachers and stakeholders to implement adaptive measures and ensure the quality and timely completion of activities.





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NSE Foundation Block Educational Transformation Karauli (B.E.T. Karauli)- Gyayanoday (ज्ञानोदय)

Outcome Report 2023



Education worldwide has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to severe consequences for children's access to schooling and their learning progress. One in every six children have reported to have missed school owing to the COVID-19 outbreak. The statistics include over 250 million kids in India and almost 1.6 billion kids worldwide, thereby highlighting the significant challenge faced by the education system.¹

According to UNICEF's assessment, 286 million enrolled children, ranging from pre-primary to upper secondary education, faced disruptions in their education due to widespread school closures in response to the pandemic.² Even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector in India was dealing with significant problems. The dropout rates for girls in primary school average at 1.4% , slightly lower than boys at 1.6%. Moving on to upper primary, girls have a dropout rate of 3.3%, whereas boys' dropout rate stands at 2.7%. Similarly, in secondary school, the dropout rate for girls is 12.3%, while boys' dropout rate is slightly higher at 13%.³

Ministry of Education, Government of India, conducted the NAS in November 2021, which involved 3.4 million students from various types of schools across 0.1 million schools in both rural and urban areas. The survey aimed to evaluate learning achievements among students in Classes 3, 5, 8 and 10. The findings revealed significant declines in education levels across the country, with certain areas and grade levels being particularly affected. Girls, on average, performed better than boys in most subjects and at both the national and state levels. However, students from marginalized categories, such as SC, ST, and OBC, exhibited lower average performance compared to the General category students. The NAS survey also highlighted several challenges faced by the education system during the pandemic. Teachers reported being overwhelmed with work and facing inadequate access to workspace. Students faced difficulties with remote learning, finding it burdensome and challenging. Additionally, limited availability of digital devices for online education hampered access to digital services for a significant portion of students.⁴

While the overall performance of states fell below the national average, Rajasthan stood out as an exception. However, despite this achievement, there was an overall decline in learning levels compared to the previous NAS survey conducted in 2017, primarily due to the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The district of Karauli falls under the aspirational districts identified by the NITI Aayog's 'Transformation of Aspirational District Programme'. Karauli's average literacy rate is comparatively low, and according to the ASER 2018 assessment, student proficiency in reading and mathematics is low as well.⁵

NSE Foundation, in collaboration with Jatan Sansthan Railmagra, implemented the "Project Gyanodaya (गानोदय)- NSE Foundation Block Educational Transformation Karauli" between 1st December 2020 to 30th November 2022.

¹ Pratham, *ASER (Rural) 2020 Wave 1 (Rural) findings – India*, Mumbai, Pratham Resource Centre, 2020.

² UNICEF India, *Rapid Assessment of Learning During School Closures in The Context of Covid*, 2020.

³ Education for all in India, *Dropout Rates in Schools in India: An Analysis of UDISE+ 2021-22 Data*

⁴ GoI, National Achievement Survey, 2021

⁵ School Quality Index, 2019, NITI Aayog.

Key findings

- The project aimed to assess a total of 27,000 students through baseline and end line and covered 38.9% of the target.
- The IAL program reached a total of 10,200 students, benefiting 37.7% of the overall target.
- The project conducted a 21-day program called HAUSLA for teachers' mental well-being and reached out to 91 teachers.
- Home visits were conducted to engage with students who had dropped out, and their communities, reaching a total of 10,681 students.
- Learning outcomes in phase 2 schools decreased marginally by the end of the project, indicating the need for a full course of intervention for improvement.
- 95 SMCs were reached out to by the end of the project, reporting improvement in participation and awareness of SMC members.

Key recommendations

- Focus on vulnerable students during community engagement and work closely with the SMCs to improve their attendance and learning outcomes.
- Include students who were not part of the baseline assessment (due to irregular attendance) in future assessments to track their progress and gather reports on their learning levels.
- Maintain regular monthly review meetings to ensure proper project planning and effective review.
- Develop and utilize tools for monthly, quarterly, and annual MIS updates, ensuring comprehensive collection and consolidation of project-related data and information for real-time updates and feedback.
- Continue conducting monitoring visits by external monitoring and evaluation agencies to observe classroom teaching-learning processes, interact with stakeholders, and receive recommendations from sector experts. Implement these recommendations to improve the quality and timely completion of project activities.



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Project Outcome Report for

Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) Strategy and Plan for Talode(Pilot Town), and implementation of SLWM Interventions to help Talode achieve its goal of becoming ODF++



District: Nandurbar

Taluka: Talode

August 2023

Project Overview

About the project

The project, 'Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) Strategy And Plan for Talode (Pilot Town), And Implementation Of SLWM Interventions' was brought to inception to help Talode, a town in Nandurbar district, achieve its goal of becoming ODF (Open Defecation Free). This project intended to create and implement a planned intervention to strengthen the existing solid waste management system in Talode.

Summary of Findings

- The project fundamentally had five elements-waste water management, sanitation system, solid waste management system, public toilets, and strategy and implementation plan.
- The objectives focused on developing a solid and liquid waste management plan, achieving odf++ status, mitigating groundwater/surface water contamination, and developing a model framework, especially one which can easily be replicated in similar towns.
- The project aimed to benefit 35,000 persons, directly and indirectly, in Talode.
- For an effective implementation of SLWM project, the strategy reports, project designs etc were handed over to the Urban Local Body of Talode to facilitate an efficient and effective implementation.
- The kick-off meetings were conducted between the NSE Foundation and Talode Municipal Corporation in the presence of the District Collector and Chief Officer of TMC to finalise the framework, the scope of the project, and in getting the approval for the construction.
- Stakeholder investigation was completed with five district officials and community members. The sanitation survey covered four community toilets through the investigation. In addition, four outfalls were also surveyed to understand the load capacity.
- A situation assessment report was prepared, as planned, and this mentioned the gaps and challenges of solid waste management of Talode town. In addition to this, a SLWM strategy plan was prepared and shared with NSE Foundation which included interventions in five areas.
- Field surveys and sanitation surveys were conducted covering various households, commercial establishments and hospitals. Additionally, to ensure inclusive and participative planning, stakeholder consultation and surveys were carried out in Talode.

Had the project continued according to the initial plan, it may, very likely, have helped Talode to achieve ODF++ status, improve the overall public and environmental health in the town, improve the town's ranking in Swach Survekshan Survey, improve the sanitation and hygiene conditions of the town thereby improving the health of the people, and finally enabling an effective operation and maintenance of the model toilet.



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Project Outcome Report for

Collective for Integrated Livelihood Initiatives (CINI) - Integrated Safe Drinking Water Project in partnership with Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)



Maharashtra, Nandurbar

September 2023

Project Overview

About the project

Nestled in north-western Maharashtra, Nandurbar is one of the aspirational districts identified by the Government of India for rapid socio-economic transformation. Predominantly a tribal area and housing a population of around 16 lakhs, this district faces challenges in infrastructure development, particularly in the areas of road connectivity and access to clean drinking water. To address the challenge of safe drinking water, an initiative 'Integrated Safe Drinking Water' was envisaged by NSE Foundation.

The project objective was to ensure adequate supply of safe and clean drinking water to rural households and in turn, improve the quality of life in 850 habitations of 3 blocks namely Dhadgaon, Akkalkuwa and Taloda in Nandurbar district, Maharashtra. The project focused on creation and maintenance of functional household tap connections for every rural household, with particular emphasis on hamlets affected by drought and water scarcity.

Summary of Findings

Awareness generation and capacity building of the community members:

- Almost 70-80% of the sample respondents were aware of the interventions carried out as part of the project.
- About 60-70% of the respondents stated that they have attended the awareness activities conducted as a part of the project.
- One third of the PRI respondents was aware about the programme.

Ownership creation by WUG formation and technical trainings:

- Two thirds of the respondents had knowledge about the clean and sustainable water sources.
- 100% of the respondents were aware about the Water User Group (WUG) formation in the hamlet.
- 80% of the WUG respondents reported equal participation of female members. About 50-60% of the WUG respondents had an understanding about the independent functioning of the WUG, and two thirds of the WUG respondents were aware about their roles and responsibilities.
- 60-70% of the respondents were aware about the O&M of the infrastructure to be constructed by DWSM in the future.
- 70% of the respondents understood the VWSC's roles and responsibilities involved in the project.
- 50-60% of the respondents had developed the capability to sustain the project in the long run.

Behavioural change observed amongst community members:

- One third of the respondents (community members) confirmed that they had adopted messages and practices communicated to them by the programme team.



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Project Outcome Report for

Technical support to two districts for effective implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0 Project



Project Location:

Karauli district, Rajasthan and
Ramanathapuram district, Tamil Nadu

October 2023

Project Overview

About the project

NSE Foundation's project aimed to provide WASH support to 10 GPs in the Karauli district of Rajasthan and 20 GPs in the Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu in India. Over a period of three years, the project aimed to enhance the capacity of the government to effectively implement JJM and SBM 2.0 on the ground. The targeted beneficiaries were rural communities, particularly those who were underserved and lacked adequate access to WASH services.

In the project area of 24 villages in 10 Gram Panchayats of Karauli District, 1157 women and youth were trained on water security and water quality (including the use of Field Testing Kits), 483 water source tested were on water quality parameters, 115 women were mobilised to actively participate in Gram Sabha and raise water-related issues, and 35 members from 10 Gram Panchayats trained on water security and water quality aspects. Further, the water point baseline survey and WASH assessment in schools and anganwadis were completed, and 27 units of Leach/Soak Pits were constructed at HH level. 28 Jal Choupals were also organised at the community level to encourage water conservation. In Ramanathapuram District, technical support was provided to the VWSCs by providing 22 FTKs in project areas. 10 VWSCs were oriented on Jal Jeevan Mission, Village Action Plan, and O&M. Handholding support was also provided in 10 Gram Panchayats for developing water quality monitoring systems. Additionally, capacity building of women and youth collectives/SHGs on water security and water quality issues was completed in 10 villages.

Summary of Findings

- The findings shows that women and youth groups actively participated in the capacity-building sessions on WASH which includes 43% participation of SHG members, 34% VWSC members and 23% women and youth collectives. This has enabled the stakeholders to recognise their crucial role in water management for enhancing the quality of life.
- The facilitation of Gram Sabha discussions on water budgeting and conservation through Jal Chaupal led to increased collaboration and solidarity among stakeholders in decision making at the gram panchayat level, with 74% of the respondents understanding the importance of water quality testing using FTKs.
- The programme effectively built the importance of ownership by strengthening VWSC and providing technical training among other stakeholders including them. Finding indicates that 90% of the respondents were aware about the role and responsibilities one should have as a VWSC member.
- It was understood that through water quality management and further infrastructure support there was an increased understanding and behavioural change among the beneficiaries regarding to WASH practices. Finding shows that 50% of respondents availed retrofitting services of drinking water sources, 41% respondents availed leach pit & soak pit services.
- There has been a greater comprehension and recognition of water security and quality management need, resulting to an improved water governance and sustainable water resources. Finding shows that 63% of the respondents reported that they participated in capacity building conducted on water security and water quality (including use of FTKs).

The programme successfully raised awareness about WASH facilities by providing infrastructure support and conducting capacity building sessions, collaborating with government departments, and strengthening VWSCs and Gram Panchayats. These activities fostered leadership and ownership among the beneficiaries, resulting in an effective outcome during the project period.



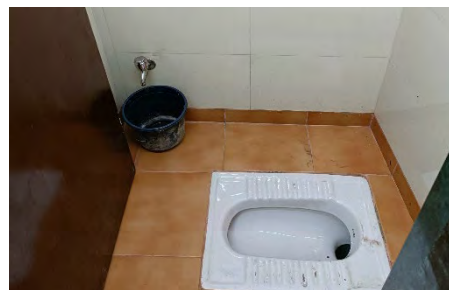
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Project Outcome Report for

Americares India Foundation: School Health Program



Maharashtra, Mumbai

September 2023

Project Overview

About the Project

NSE Foundation's 'School Health Programme' was envisioned to address the problems that ensue as a consequence of having inadequate toilet and sanitation facilities in schools across India. 'Swachh Bharat: Swachh Vidyalaya', the national campaign that inspired this project, has laid out the importance of combining the human development and technical components to the achievement of this target. The technical component of this project focused on the provision of toilets, hand-washing stations, and drinking water filtration systems in the schools for the welfare of the students. The human development component of the project enabled students to learn about the importance of handwashing, and of using toilets to eliminate bodily wastes. This component focussed on teaching students about the importance of maintaining cleanliness and the need for prevention of water, hygiene, and sanitation related diseases. Under this project, WASH upgradation was done in 9 MCGM schools and BCC activities were done in 30 schools in the L-ward area of Mumbai. More than 5000 students benefitted from these BCC activities and infrastructure upgradations.

Summary of Findings

- 97% of the students found their new toilet block more functional, and easy to use than their previous facilities.
- All students were able to access their new water purifier and cooler to drink clean water. This was supplemented by anecdotal evidence from teachers and some students that they were happy with the provision of cold water especially in the hotter months of the year. About 97% of the students found water from these to be of better quality than what they previously had access to.
- Almost 91% of the students had made it a habit to follow WASH practices taught to them on a daily basis. This is a consequence of the IEC materials provided to the school, as well as the BCC sessions conducted.
- 78% of the teachers stated that they had observed a considerable reduction in student absences on account of falling ill due to common water-borne illnesses after the students attended the BCC sessions conducted under this project. This shows progress of the project in achieving its targeted objectives – to reduce school dropouts and school absences due to lack of appropriate WASH facilities.

Overall, the project was successful in creating a healthier and more conducive learning environment in schools for the children by providing them with proper and sustainable WASH infrastructure, supplemented by WASH IEC materials, and teaching them about behaviour change to enable a life-long habit of maintaining hygiene and sanitation, and remaining disease-free, especially with respect to easily preventable diseases like water-borne diseases.



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Integrated Solid and Liquid Waste Management in Urban and Rural Areas of Karauli, Rajasthan

Outcome Report

2023



Solid Waste Management (SWM) is a significant issue in India due to urbanization, industrialization, and economic growth. Despite significant development in social, economic, and environmental areas, SWM systems have seen little to no changes. The informal sector plays a crucial role in extracting value from waste, but there is immense scope for improvement. About 90% of residual waste is currently dumped rather than properly landfilled. There is an urgent need to move towards more sustainable SWM, which requires improved management systems and waste management facilities.

The current SWM systems are inefficient, negatively impacting public health, the environment, and the economy. The Ministry of Environment and Forests introduced Waste Management and Handling Rules, but their compliance is variable and limited. The status of SWM in India is poor due to lack of training, availability of qualified waste management professionals, and accountability. Municipal authorities have insufficient budgets to cover costs associated with proper waste collection, storage, treatment, and disposal.

Limited environmental awareness and low motivation have inhibited innovation and the adoption of new technologies that could transform waste management in India. Public attitude toward waste is also a major barrier to improving SWM. With the increasing population and urbanization, waste management has become a huge challenge in the country. An estimated 62 million tonnes of waste are generated annually, with only 75-80% being collected and processed. Poor waste management methods affect various aspects of life, perpetuating an intergenerational cycle of poverty and deprivation.

To address the issues of waste management challenge in the Karauli district of Rajasthan, FINISH Society in partnership with NSE Foundation implemented “Integrated Solid and Liquid Waste Management in Urban and Rural Areas of Karauli ” project in 20 wards from 1st July 2021 to 30th November 2022.

Key findings

- Total 127 meetings conducted (45 in Municipality and 52 in Sanet Gram Panchayat) with concerned stakeholders i.e., households, department officials, elected representatives, PRI members and others
- The project reported leveraging the support of the local government where the Municipal Council passed a sanction order on deploying 2 sweepers in every parishad at the remuneration of INR 8,000 per person
- 426 HHs in Municipal wards out of 904 HHs in 4 wards of Municipality and 510 HHs in 3 wards in Sanet Gram Panchayat reported segregating their household wastes
- 4252 HHs reported willingness to pay fee charges for waste collection
- 13 Green workers trained in Municipal ward and 5 Green workers trained in GP Sanet
- 73 HHs reported to have started home-composting by the end of the project





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Bhu-Jal Dhaara - a livelihood improvement project through integrated watershed development

Outcome Report 2023



Water is the most important component in driving forward social and economic development, but at the same time, the availability of it is a pressing issue in India. The scarcity of water resources in the country is projected to increase to 60% by 2030.¹ This scarcity, compounded with climate change and growing competition over limited resources, has severe implications for food security and farmers' livelihoods. Rajasthan, the largest state in India, faces critical water challenges as it is the most water-deficient state with limited surface water and alarming groundwater conditions. The condition has further declined in the last two decades. The state has been severely affected by drought, leading to economic losses, reduced agricultural output, and forced migration. Karauli, an aspirational district in Rajasthan, is particularly vulnerable, with over-exploited blocks and strain on water supply systems.

The project “Bhu-Jal Dhaara” - A livelihood improvement project through Integrated Watershed Development, was implemented in 60 villages in Karauli block of Karauli district in Rajasthan by NSE Foundation and ISAP between March 2020 to February 2024.

Key findings

- There was inadequate staffing initially, with delays in hiring field coordinators and limited orientation and capacity building provided to staff.
- Baseline study was conducted only for statutory data and documents.
- The intervention was reported in the selected villages for the first year only.
- Sensitization meetings and awareness campaigns were conducted over telephone due to COVID-19.
- Wall painting and slogan writing executed in all 30 villages of phase 1, focusing on water conservation, soil erosion, environment, and good agriculture practices.
- The project faced significant delays to obtain approvals and NoC from NABAD, which was a prerequisite of the project.

Key recommendations

- Provide rigorous training and exposure visits to enhance the skills and knowledge of field coordinators and project coordinators.
- Establish the presence of critical project staff in the field for regular monitoring.

¹ India Groundwater: Valuable but Diminishing Resource (worldbank.org)



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Scoping study for Solid and Liquid Waste Management for Rejuvenation of Bhadravati River stretch along Karauli Town

2023
Outcome Report



Solid Waste Management (SWM) poses a significant challenge for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) in India as a result of urbanization, industrialization, and economic expansion. The rise in Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) has affected the existing SWM systems, leading to inadequate landfilling and high dependency on the informal sector for waste extraction. This has resulted in adverse effects on the environment, human health, and sustenance. The contamination of water bodies due to the discharge of untreated industrial water and municipal wastewater further intensifies the environmental challenges faced by India. The lack of proper sanitation facilities and wastewater treatment infrastructure in many areas contributes to the widespread use of untreated or partially treated wastewater for irrigation, posing risks to the environment and public health.

India's current waste management systems are unable to cope with the increasing waste generated by the growing urban population. Despite being one of the fastest developing economies, India lags behind in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) indicators, highlighting the urgent need to address the sanitation issues.

Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) is a crucial component of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM-G), which aims to improve cleanliness, hygiene, and overall quality of life in rural areas. It incorporates the systematic handling of waste material through collection, transportation, processing, recycling, treatment, and proper disposal using scientific methods.

Karauli, a backward district in India, faces various challenges pertaining to SWM, including citizen participation, indiscriminate dumping, and lack of trained human resources. The Karauli Municipality and nearby rural areas have implemented SWM activities, but its effectiveness remains a challenge. The Bhadravati river, a major river in the region, suffers from pollution caused by wastewater discharge. The town's sanitation situation varies, with the newly developed area having a sewer system, while the old town relies on On-site Sanitation Systems (OSS) and drains that discharge waste into the Bhadravati river. Inadequate wastewater and solid waste management poses risks to public health and the environment in Karauli. These challenges get further compounded due to groundwater contamination and water scarcity. With the district being classified as a water-scarce region, reckless waste disposal affects the river's ecosystem and the downstream Panchana Reservoir.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that integrates waste management, wastewater treatment, sanitation infrastructure, and sustainable water resource management.

To address some of the pertinent challenges, NSE Foundation in partnership with CDD Society initiated "Scoping study for liquid and solid waste management for rejuvenation of Bhadravati River stretch along Karauli Town", with a specific objective to develop a comprehensive River Rejuvenation Strategy and Plan for pollution mitigation for the Parkote area.

Key findings

- Most households had single pits, even though SBM guidelines prescribe twin pits.
- Except for a few, none of the HHs had a sanitary containment unit - a septic tank with a soak pit.
- Many households located along the Nadi gate drains, discharged their raw toilet wastes directly into the drains.
- Certain households had built containment systems underneath the street/road which made accessing them for desludging, difficult.
- For households that were not accessible even by private operators, manual scavengers were hired to clean the containments.
- Within the fort area, 60% of HHs had access to desludging vehicles.
- One government desludging vehicle with 2 KL capacity and a suction machine with pipe length of 70 feet has been installed in the town.
- A private cesspool operator, providing desludging services in Karauli, had a 3 KL capacity suction machine with 200 feet of pipe length. Due to extended pipe length, many households prefer private operators over public ones.
- A sewer network and a 5 MLD STP had been constructed, covering only 30% of the town area. In 5% of the Parkote area, HHs did not have sewer network connection, resulting in the sewer overflowing on the streets.
- 3 to 6 KL of faecal sludge per week is generated in the town, which was discharged directly in open environment and at landfill site without treatment. At the current STP, out of 8 existing SDBs, only 2 SDBs are operational.
- All Greywater (bath, cloth wash, vessel wash and kitchen water) was discharged into the drains. Also, the wastes from slaughterhouses, sweet shops and beedi-making industries are discharged into the drains.
- There were 7 outfalls within a 1 km stretch discharging wastewater into the river. During monsoons, 3 outfalls were found susceptible to flooding as their bed level gets submerged.
- Around 20 metric tons per day of solid waste was reported to be generated from the Parkote area – 35% of which is dry waste and 65% of it is wet waste.

Key Recommendations

- Usage of a cesspool truck with a narrow wheelbase. The vehicle will have a 1 to 1.5 KL capacity with a suction machine, and a 100 feet pipe length must be used to access narrow roads for desludging services.
- It becomes a necessity that the Nagar Parishad issues a prohibitory order on manual scavenging and penalize the HHs violating the order.
- The waste dumping operator can be mandated to install GPS devices on all its pickup trucks so that their movements can be tracked, and no waste is dumped along the river banks.
- As part of managing bio-medical wastes, a medical waste incinerator along with sanitary pad incinerator can be installed at each PHC located inside the Parkote so that women's' menstrual hygiene can also be safely managed.
- A dedicated truck may be deployed to collect waste from bulk generators and in collaboration with the generators. The installation of large capacity waste bins near the source is also recommended, so that during non-operating hours, the generated wastes can be collected at one location rather than being dumped in the drain.



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Impact Assessment of **WASH Interventions** in Sapotra block of Karauli district 2023



The NSE Foundation, which is a Section 8 company that undertakes the CSR activities of the National Stock Exchange of India Limited, partnered with PLAN India, to transform the Sapotra block of Karauli district into an ODF block by improving the availability of water, sanitation, and hygiene facilities in government schools. Further the programme worked on behaviour change and raising awareness among the community to ensure sustainability of the programme.

The programme interventions comprised the following:

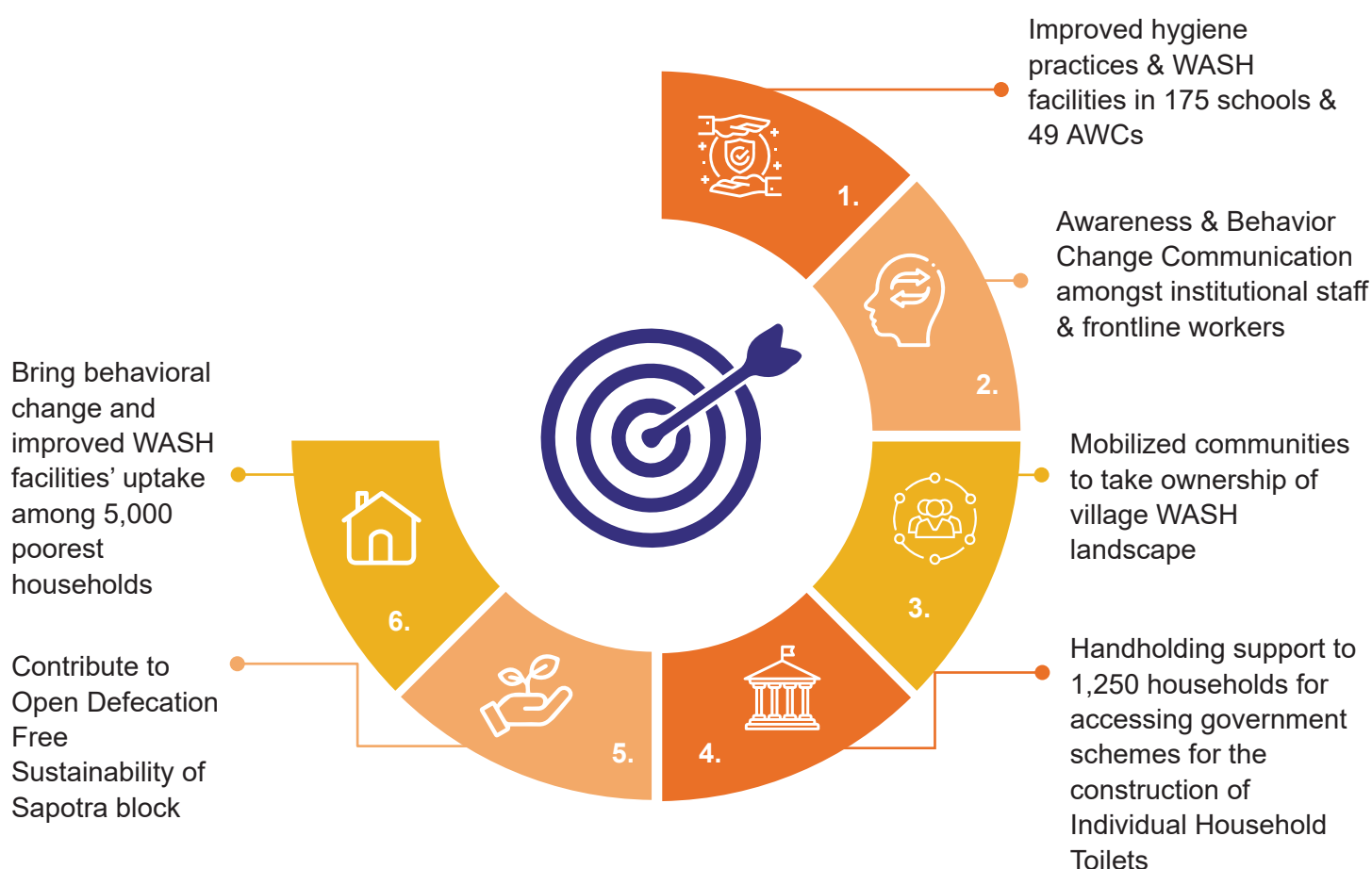


Figure 1: Activities undertaken for the WASH intervention

NSE Foundation commissioned a study to understand the rationale, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence, and sustainability of the programme. CSRBOX was onboarded to undertake the study. Research design was based on a pre-and-post-intervention comparative approach. Stratified random sampling was adopted for the study along with mixed-method approach which included both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection.

For quantitative data, surveys were conducted among students and the households to which these students belong. For qualitative data collection, school staff (teaching as well as non-teaching), government officials, Panchayati Raj Institution members, Anganwadi workers, ASHA workers and PHC doctors, SMC members, NGO resource persons, and NSE Foundation resource persons were interviewed.

Key Insights from Impact Study



Water Availability

- Over 91% of the schools have availability of drinking water
- Around 90% of the households have piped water supply



Behavioural Change

- WASH committees monitor handwashing practices, toilet usage habits, & hand washing practices
- The nails, uniforms, and hair of students are kept clean, owing to WASH rules in school



Handwashing Intervention

- 95% of the schools have separate handwashing facilities
- 95% of the households are aware of proper methods on handwashing
- 80% of the households benefitted from safe handwashing practices



Functional Toilets

- 95% of the schools have functional toilets
- 69% of the students are able to regularly attend classes
- 87% of the households have functional toilets
- Households with piped water supply are more likely to use toilets at home



CSRBOX & NGOBOX

806-808, Shivalik Satyamev
Near Vakil Saheb Bridge, Bopal Rd,
Bopal, Ahmedabad, Gujarat 38005

Swachh and Swasth Thirupullani Block

Ramanathapuram (Tamil Nadu)

Impact Assessment Report

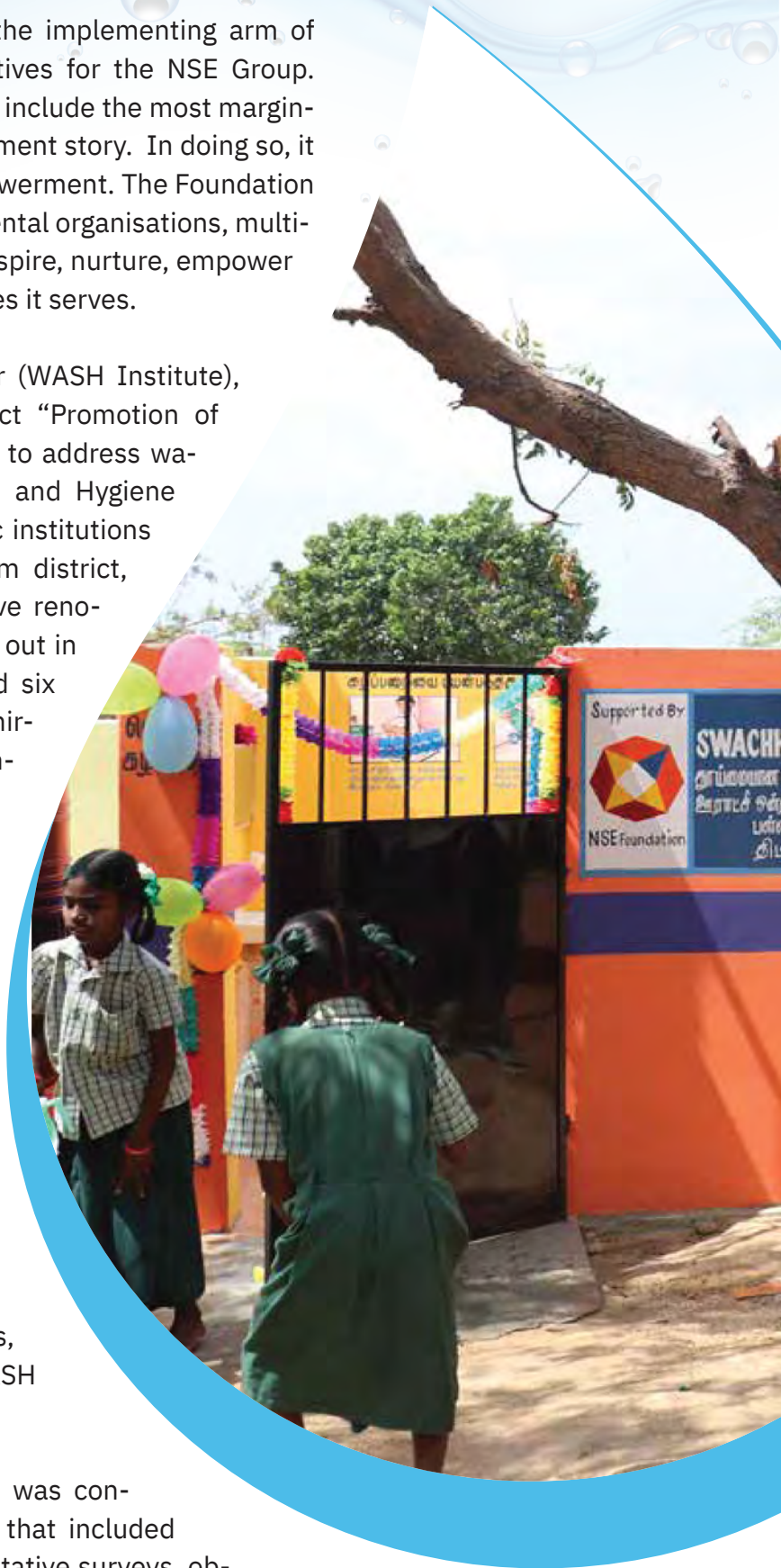
2023

NSE Foundation, a Section-8 Company, is the implementing arm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives for the NSE Group. Through social interventions it endeavours to include the most marginalised communities in the country's development story. In doing so, it plants the seeds of transformation and empowerment. The Foundation partners with the government, non-governmental organisations, multi-lateral bodies and academic institutions to inspire, nurture, empower and sustain the aspirations of the communities it serves.

In collaboration with the on-ground partner (WASH Institute), NSE Foundation has undertaken the project "Promotion of Thiruppullani as Swachh and Swasth Block" to address water scarcity and improve Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) facilities for communities and public institutions in the Thiruppullani block of Ramanathpuram district, Tamil Nadu. As part of the project, extensive renovation and retrofitting activities were carried out in 65 government schools, 51 Anganwadi, and six Primary Health Centres (PHCs) within the Thiruppullani block. Through community intervention, various infrastructure elements were added, such as 18 new wells, four infiltration gallery wells, and nine mini-water stations. Additionally, 30 drinking water wells were renovated, and seven existing mini water stations were refurbished, enhancing access to safe drinking water across the targeted areas.

The project spanned over three years, during which all assigned tasks were accomplished and positively impacted 34,500 individuals, including 6,215 students. This culminated in successfully handing completed facilities to village communities, ensuring sustainable access to improved WASH facilities in the block.

An impact assessment study of the project was conducted through a comprehensive approach that included desk study, field visits, qualitative and quantitative surveys, observations, and stakeholder consultations. The study's objective was



to understand and analyse the social and economic benefits experienced by primary beneficiaries. During the field visits, the survey team engaged with relevant government officials at district and block levels and public representatives to gather feedback and insights regarding the programme. These interactions provided crucial perspectives from administrative and policy-making levels.

Furthermore, the assessment process involved extensive engagement with stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in the project. This included surveys and interactions with 200 government school students, 101 community members, 20 teachers, 18 principals, 13 members of WATSAN committees, etc. These consultations allowed for understanding of the project's impact on different target groups and facilitated collecting first-hand experiences and feedback. The combination of desk research, on-site visits, surveys, observations, and stakeholder consultations formed a robust foundation for a thorough impact assessment, ensuring an evaluation of social and economic benefits. The log frame approach was used to derive sustainability aspects. The impact findings of the hardware and software intervention of the project are as follows:

Community water facilities and supply:



81%

of the community members reported the availability of fully functional water facilities.

73%

of the respondents expressed a consistent water supply throughout the year from the water sources (retrofitted/newly constructed).



Community water usage and safety:

Before the intervention, only 50% of the respondents consumed boiled drinking water; post-intervention, 72% adopted this practice, while 14% employed cloth filtration for water purification.

The practice of consistently washing hands before and after eating was maintained by 92% of community members.

Community water facility-proximity and cost:

70%

of the respondents cited that they have sufficient water for household utilities from the water sources.





84%

of community members now have water facilities within 500 meters of their homes.

82%

of the respondents further reported a reduction in water purchasing costs.



Community engagement and WATSAN committees:

75%

of the community members shared they have observed active participation from the WATSAN committee.

Operation and management checklists were followed by 92% of WATSAN members.

83%

of the respondents reported active community involvement in WASH infrastructure upkeep.

School water, sanitation and hygiene:

98%

of the students confirmed the availability of water in school toilets.

98%

of students reported regular drinking water supply in schools.

92%

of students reported no illness from drinking water from school.





Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in schools:

Female students demonstrated an increased understanding of Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) in 55% of cases.



67% of female students reported attending school during menstruation.

44% of the students acquired information about taking iron supplements.



Most (78%) female students reported not having urinary tract infections.

The interventions undertaken within the project have yielded encouraging outcomes. One noteworthy accomplishment was the significant increase in water availability, which has greatly benefited the community. The enhanced water quality has played a pivotal role in curbing waterborne diseases. Furthermore, the renovation of school toilet facilities, access to clean water, and handwashing facilities had a positive impact, particularly on student health and school attendance. The water management and distribution models were accepted by the community, further opening up the scope for their adoption into various government-sponsored initiatives. The success achieved in the Thiruppulani block can serve as a model for other regions to replicate, providing valuable insights into achieving drinking water sustainability.



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Impact Assessment Report

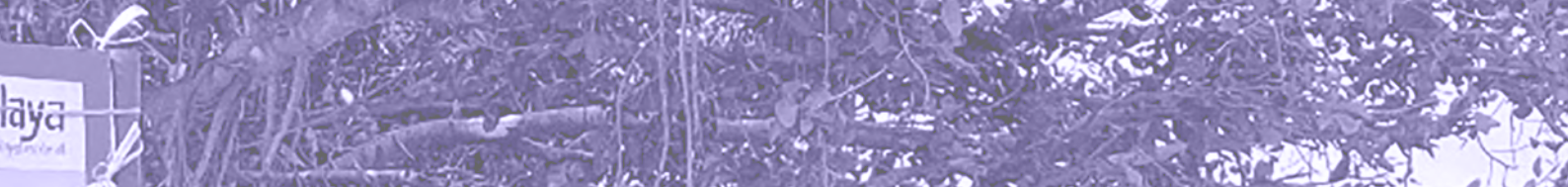
Sustainable Community ODF Programme

Mandapam Block, Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu



2023





NSE Foundation, a Section-8 Company, is the implementing arm of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives for the NSE Group. Through social interventions it endeavours to include the most marginalised communities in the country's development story. In doing so, it plants the seeds of transformation and empowerment. Its CSR programmes aim to empower economically and socially backward communities. One such programme was the Sustainable Community ODF Programme, implemented in Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu.

The programme's primary objective was to achieve sustainable open defecation-free status within the Mandapam block of Ramanathapuram district. This was performed by retrofitting an individual household latrines (IHHLs), school toilet complexes, Anganwadi toilet complexes, and Integrated Water Sanitation Complexes (IWSCs) to create model villages and promote convergence among villagers.

The programme was focused to ensure hygiene practices in schools and villages through continued education on sanitation, nutrition, and personal hygiene. The WASHMAN committees formed in all panchayats provided uninterrupted monitoring, conducted awareness among villagers, and ensured the usage and maintenance of created assets.

NSE Foundation appointed SR Asia (Social Responsibility Asia) to conduct an impact assessment of Sustainable Community ODF Programme for Mandapam block. The study aimed and assessed the outcome and impact on key beneficiaries and stakeholders covered in the project, using the OECD-DAC assessment framework and Log frame for analysis.

The study found that the programme had positive impact, with key findings including:

- ▶ 89% women beneficiaries report improved health and time savings to have clean toilets in their home.
- ▶ All (100%) respondents confirmed regular usage of the retrofit toilets, with 97% no longer defecate in the open.

- ▶ Community members maintained the toilets regularly, with all reports on daily cleaning. They recognised the link between cleanliness and disease prevention.
- ▶ Waterborne and open defecation-related diseases significantly contained, according to 79% of community respondents.
- ▶ Improved sanitation facilities in schools benefited the girls and adolescents, reduced inconvenience and positive impact on their health and well-being.
- ▶ According to school teachers, clean and safe toilets in schools increased female students' attendance and enhanced their educational experience.
- ▶ 96% of students expressed satisfaction with the fully functional toilets equipped with piped water supply.
- ▶ 97% of students had access to both home and school toilet facility, indicated no open defecation practice among those children.
- ▶ Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) activities, wall paintings and posters, raised awareness of washing hands and hygiene practice among students.
- ▶ 99% of students were aware of the appropriate time for washing hands, both before and after having food.
- ▶ WASHMAN committee members actively engaged in monitoring and maintaining clean toilets, ensuring sustained usage of the facility.

The Sustainable Community ODF Programme demonstrated success in achieving its objectives, with improved sanitation facilities, increased awareness of hygiene practices, and positive behavioural changes were observed among the target population. The programme's comprehensive approach, encompassed infrastructure development, education, and community engagement, contributed to sustainable outcome and improved overall health and well-being within the community.



Project Outcome Report for NSE Foundation

Technical Support Unit to Mainstream Elder Collectives



Background

Globally the demographics are shifting towards an ageing population due to better healthcare, improved longevity, and reduced fertility rates.

- India is home to 138 million which is the world's 1/8th of the elderly population
- According to LASI 2020, 36% of the elderly population above 60 years of age in India are working

Given the general mindset of relegating the elderly to the periphery, and specific issues concerning their physiological, socio-economic, physical, and mental well-being, it was pertinent to bring them to a dignified mainstream status by generating livelihoods for them.

Programme overview

The programme to mainstream elder collectives sensitized & worked towards elderly inclusion in state & national-level government plans and aimed at providing livelihoods and productive engagements to the underprivileged elderly population. The programme functioned through advisory & advocacy, and capacity building. It offered handholding support to the Programme Management Unit (PMU) and the on-ground government functionaries. PMU was a part of the National Institute of Social Defense (NISD), under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE). In collaboration and coordination with the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), the resource persons from National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and respective State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM) were trained to roll out the Action Groups Aimed at Social Reconstruction (AGRASR) programme for the Elderly Self-Help Groups (ESHG). The Technical Support Unit (TSU) team intervened through capacity building and handholding across all levels right from elderly inclusive policy-making up to on-ground ESHGs formation (by SRLMs) and their sustenance, at the village level. The ESHGs were based on the theme of Elders for Elders so that a larger set of elder collectives could benefit from better access to resources.



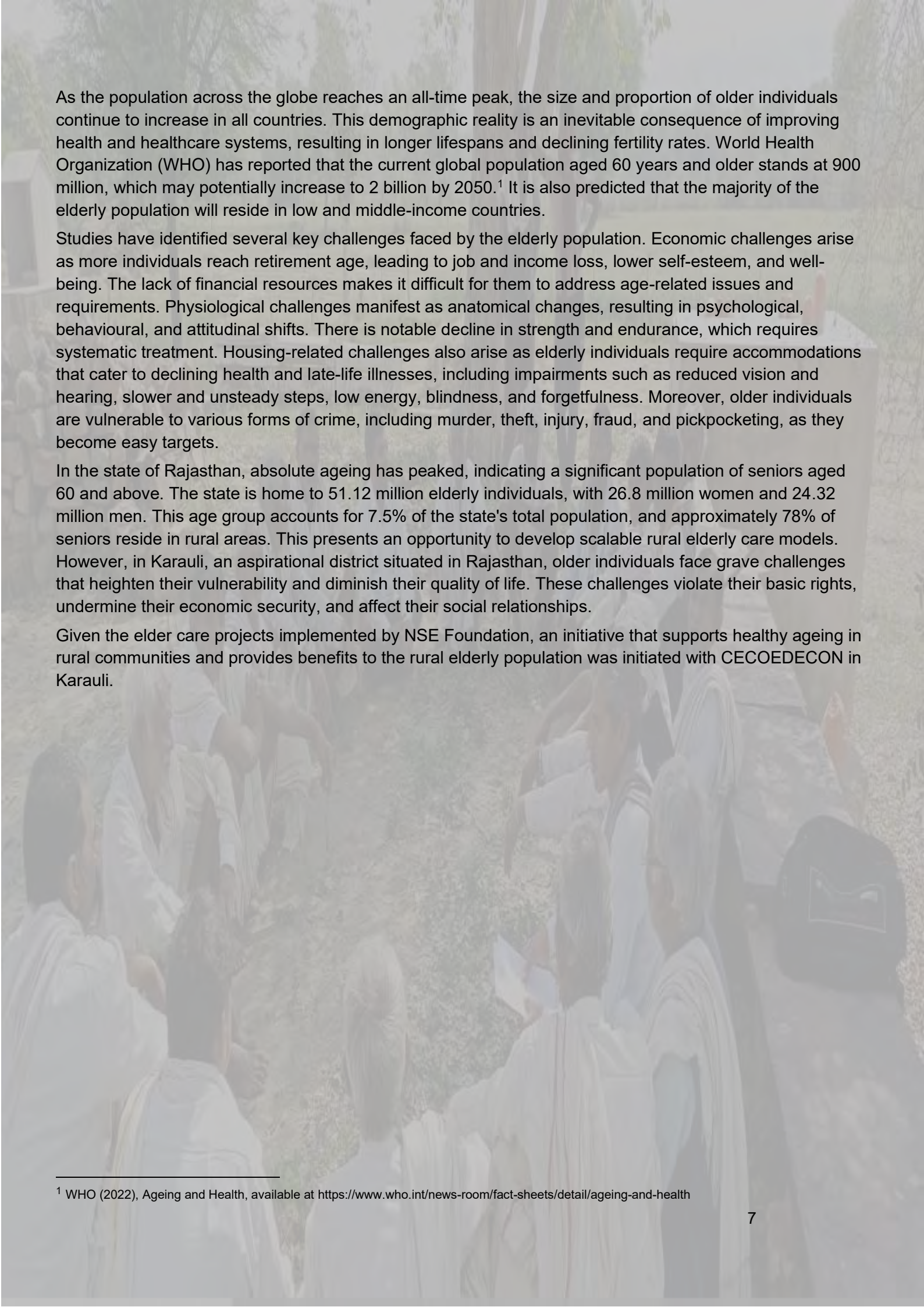
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An initiative to support Healthy Ageing in the Rural Communities of Karauli, Rajasthan

2023 Outcome Report





As the population across the globe reaches an all-time peak, the size and proportion of older individuals continue to increase in all countries. This demographic reality is an inevitable consequence of improving health and healthcare systems, resulting in longer lifespans and declining fertility rates. World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that the current global population aged 60 years and older stands at 900 million, which may potentially increase to 2 billion by 2050.¹ It is also predicted that the majority of the elderly population will reside in low and middle-income countries.

Studies have identified several key challenges faced by the elderly population. Economic challenges arise as more individuals reach retirement age, leading to job and income loss, lower self-esteem, and well-being. The lack of financial resources makes it difficult for them to address age-related issues and requirements. Physiological challenges manifest as anatomical changes, resulting in psychological, behavioural, and attitudinal shifts. There is notable decline in strength and endurance, which requires systematic treatment. Housing-related challenges also arise as elderly individuals require accommodations that cater to declining health and late-life illnesses, including impairments such as reduced vision and hearing, slower and unsteady steps, low energy, blindness, and forgetfulness. Moreover, older individuals are vulnerable to various forms of crime, including murder, theft, injury, fraud, and pickpocketing, as they become easy targets.

In the state of Rajasthan, absolute ageing has peaked, indicating a significant population of seniors aged 60 and above. The state is home to 51.12 million elderly individuals, with 26.8 million women and 24.32 million men. This age group accounts for 7.5% of the state's total population, and approximately 78% of seniors reside in rural areas. This presents an opportunity to develop scalable rural elderly care models. However, in Karauli, an aspirational district situated in Rajasthan, older individuals face grave challenges that heighten their vulnerability and diminish their quality of life. These challenges violate their basic rights, undermine their economic security, and affect their social relationships.

Given the elder care projects implemented by NSE Foundation, an initiative that supports healthy ageing in rural communities and provides benefits to the rural elderly population was initiated with CECOEDECON in Karauli.

¹ WHO (2022), Ageing and Health, available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health>

Key findings

- 2,433 meetings were conducted which served as a platform for collaboration, decision-making, and knowledge-sharing with a cumulative total of 31,277 participants.
- 212 youth groups were established with 1,070 members.
- 212 children's groups and 230 PRI members were mobilised under the project.
- 124 cataract surgeries were conducted, and essential medical services were offered to 730 individuals.
- 206 wood walking sticks, 200 musical instruments, and 200 *dari* distributed to elderly members to enhance their quality of life.
- Income generation opportunities offered to 200 individuals and 368 individuals linked with social security entitlements.

Key recommendations

- Conduct a needs assessment or recce before starting the project to ensure alignment with the needs of the intervention area and the community.
- Provide rigorous refresher trainings, follow-up with the community, and facilitate exposure visits to ensure the sustainability of project efforts.
- Establish convergence mechanisms with other organizations working in the same thematic area and ensure regular monitoring to leverage learnings.
- Implement an MIS to maintain data on savings and inter-loaning of ESHGs for regular monitoring and intervention.



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Impact Assessment Report



Samrakshana

Garnering Resilience through
Elders for Elders Network

Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

2023

NSE Foundation, a Section-8 Company, is the implementing arm of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives for the NSE Group. Through social interventions, it endeavours to include the most marginalised communities in the country's development story. In doing so, it plants the seeds of transformation and empowerment.

The Foundation partners with the government, non-governmental organisations, multilateral bodies, academic institutions to inspire, nurture, empower and sustain the aspirations of the communities it serves.

NSE Foundation collaborated with Karuna Trust (on-ground partner) to implement a programme called "Samrakshana: Garnering

Resilience through Elders for Elders Network (GREEN)" in Rameswaram island of Ramanathapuram district.

The programme aimed to address healthcare issues and strengthen financial security for the rural elderly population. It had three main objectives: social, health, and financial inclusion of elderly.

To achieve these objectives, Elder Self-Help Groups (ESHGs) were formed, digital and financial literacy training were undertaken, and healthcare services were made more accessible by creating a network of Mobile Medical Unit (MMU), clinics and traditional healers.

The project led to the formation of



161 ESHGs,



which directly benefited **9,192** individuals.



Additionally, over **11,000** beneficiaries received MMU services,



465 elders received OPD services, and



6,994 individuals benefited from yoga centres.

An impact assessment study was conducted to evaluate the programme's impact on the quality of life of older people. The objective of the study was to understand the impact of ESHGs on the economic and social aspects of the elders' lives and to assess the effectiveness of MMUs in improving their healthcare.



The assessment involved survey of 400 elderly, 24 community volunteers, 20 village/panchayat leaders, five trainers, three doctors. A mixed-methods research design was implemented for the study to gather quantitative and qualitative data from key stakeholders. The key findings of the impact assessment are given below:



94% of members of Elder Self-Help Groups (ESHGs) shared that they had received the seed capital and utilised it to start small business activities to cover their living expenses.



According to the baseline survey undertaken by on-ground partner, 19% of the elderly reported that they were financial independent. However, following the formation of ESHGs and the utilisation of seed capital, 55% of the elderly reported to have attained economic self-reliance.



81% of elders reported gaining respect in the family as they started their own businesses and earned income.



95% of the elderly surveyed have availed loans as part of the ESHG initiative. 84% of them reported that the loans supported their livelihood.



90% of the respondents indicated they had availed free medical services, including medical check-ups, vision screening, spectacles, and corrective surgeries.



60% of the elderly expressed that the Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) was available whenever needed. Additionally, 87% of the respondents shared that the MMU offered a time-saving advantage compared to other healthcare facilities.



59% of the elderly reported that their health problems had been partially cured after receiving treatment through the MMU.



71% of ESHG members reported accessing health insurance schemes post-facilitation by on-ground partner.



94% of the community/panchayat leaders conveyed their satisfaction with the MMU services and desired its continuation.

These findings highlight an improvement in income security of the elderly, their increased self-reliance and improved access to medical services. The programme positively impacted the physical, emotional, and financial well-being of the elderly, which contributed towards a better quality of life. The programme facilitated access to various government schemes for elderly. Moreover, the programme was aligned with government initiatives such as the National Health Mission and DAY-NRLM.

At the time of field survey, all the 20 sampled ESHGs were operational, and qualified individuals were entrusted with the permanent management of yoga centres and clinics, ensuring that the key components of the programme are sustainable. Overall, the initiative proved relevant in improving the lives of the elderly population.





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PROJECT OUTCOME REPORT

National Initiative for Skill Training on Dementia and Mental Health for Caregivers of Older Persons (NIST- DeMCOPE)



It is estimated that India will be home to 319 million people above the age of 60 by 2050. Nearly 70% of the existing population of this population segment reside in rural areas. Most of the states in the southern region also reported a higher share of the elderly population than the national average in 2021, a gap that is expected to widen by 2036. Old age is often associated with physical comorbidities, sensory impairment and frailty. In addition, mental health issues and cognitive impairment add to morbidity in older adults. These factors hamper independent living, decrease quality of life and foster dependency. The responsibility of caregiving in India is mostly dependent on family caregivers.


Managing older adults with dementia is a significant challenge for the primary caregiver. Behavioural problems such as depressive symptoms, agitation, aggression, depression and apathy are some of the symptoms caregivers often have to manage and address. Whereas the Indian healthcare and social care system is still in its developing stages, family systems are also undergoing rapid changes. Consequently, there is an increasing need and demand for formal caregivers in India to support in the care and management of older adults in the household. However, while there are agencies that provide healthcare services for the elderly, there is very limited availability of formal training programmes that account for quality caregiving among formal caregivers. Agencies that place caregivers in homes do not provide or provide very little training to caregivers before placing them.

The formal caregiver, therefore, faces significant challenges particularly in handling mental health challenges and complications among older adults. Feelings of being overwhelmed and/or stressed add to challenges, and lead to higher burnout rates, poor job satisfaction and perception of poor quality of healthcare being provided, among older adults and their families.

The project “National Initiative for Skill Training on Dementia and Mental Health for Caregivers of Older Persons” was conceptualised to provide specialised training to formal caregivers, against the backdrop of increasing mental health challenges among older adults in India and the lack of trained and quality formal healthcare providers.



Fig. 1: Outreach to geriatric caregiving service providers



The project focused on improving the skills and competency of formal caregivers in managing behavioural and mental health challenges faced by geriatric patients, including depressive symptoms, agitation, aggression, wandering, and sleep disturbances. The training was provided by NIMHANS' experts and covered both behavioural and soft skills, enhancing the caregivers' ability to provide quality care.

The project offered two types of training; Level 1 training targeted to individuals with a minimum qualification of 10th Standard, providing integrated training in mental health, dementia, and geriatric care; and Level 2 training focused on upskilling trained geriatric care assistants who had already completed a 6-month certificate course in caregiving. Both levels offered training in multiple languages and utilised a combination of in-person and online sessions.

The COVID-19 pandemic had impacts on the project implementation, including delays and the need for a shift to online model of training. Online training could only be facilitated with participants selected for Level[2 training. Participants were mobilised and integrated into the programme from old age homes and caregiving agencies, with the support of government departments.

Organisations reached out to for enrolling their candidates in the course

Cleta's House
Bengaluru

KITES-Senior care home
Bengaluru

Life Circle Health
Services in Hyderabad

Help Age India
Ramanathapuram

Nightingales Medical
Trust
Bengaluru

India Healthcare Home
Mumbai


Sneha Education Society
Raichur

Health Heal-Kannada and
Health Heal-Hindi

Sumandeep Nursing
College
Vadodara

Overall, 425 caregivers were trained out of the planned 500, and certification was achieved by 241 as some candidates did not attempt the evaluation. The programme also raised awareness among families with other agencies and government departments contributing to the overall outreach.

The development of a Learning Management Portal and the establishment of two sound-proof labs were successfully completed. The portal allowed participants to access course materials, attend sessions, and submit assessments. The labs were used to facilitate online training sessions and the recording of audio-visual content, as well as demonstration of nursing skills.



The programme recognised the importance of early intervention and provided training for participants who were in the initial induction phase and early stages of their careers. By equipping formal caregivers with the necessary knowledge and skills, the programme strived to improve the care provided to older adults with mental health issues. Additionally, the programme aimed to strengthen relationships between caregivers and families by addressing the inadequacies in handling behavioural problems.

Learnings

Programmatic

- Many caregivers operate informally, making it difficult to access and explore training opportunities.
- Caregivers experience significant stress due to the nature of their work and require interventions and support systems.
- Due to their work timings, candidates prefer a hybrid or online training model
- Creating awareness about the importance of training in geriatric mental health and dementia care is crucial in rural areas

Technical and Sectoral

- There is a gap in demand and supply of caregivers. Moreover, professional caregivers with understanding of local languages are even fewer.
- ANM, GNM and B.Sc. nursing institutions can also include modules on professional caregiving.

Institutional and Policy

- The training programme can be specialised and tailored further for different age-groups and locations, considering the specific needs and challenges faced by the elderly.

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Project Outcome Report for

KARUNA TRUST

Mobile Medical Unit



The aspirational district of Kiphire in Nagaland falls behind the rest of the country in multiple socio-economic and health parameters. The remote district, more than 200 km from the State capital Kohima, has just four health blocks and 31 health units. Private healthcare providers are conspicuous by their absence, and primary health centres in the district are inaccessible, mainly on account of the rough, mountainous terrain, as well as the poorly equipped centres.

NSE Foundation initiated the project, 'Strengthening of primary health care services in the aspirational district by managing Mobile Medical Units (MMUs) and Government Public Health Centers (PHCs)' in Kiphire with Karuna Trust as the on-ground partner. The project aimed at improving the delivery of healthcare services through a not-for-profit, public-private partnership model that aimed to supplement the Government's health programmes.

This was envisaged in two ways: (1) deploy and manage Mobile Medical Units (MMUs), to address communicable and non-communicable diseases, and provide referral services to a population of 37,000 in the district; and (2) create model PHCs through the PPP route, to provide quality healthcare services to 70,000 people. The project also planned to provide technology-based healthcare solutions to patients.

The programme team facilitated the accessibility of healthcare services in the remotest of places that were not covered by the PHCs. In the first year of the project, the team exceeded the target on vehicle deployment, as well as services like outpatient facilities. Through health camps, patient transfers, and frequent village visits, the team developed close relationships with PHC staff as well as villagers. The team encouraged rural communities to take part in blood group tests and assisted PHC staff in conducting laboratory tests. Lactating mothers reported improved prenatal, natal, and postnatal care from PHCs with assistance from the MMU team.

There was increased coverage due to the visits conducted on weekends, and villagers benefitted from free check-ups and medicines. The programme awareness sessions managed to increase the antenatal care registrations way above the targets, at 366% in the first year, and 320% in the second year.

The project team made significant inroads into the community, addressed their healthcare requirements, and planted the seeds of awareness. The programme managed to achieve 50% of the target set out initially.

This was despite the challenging inaccessible terrain and rough weather conditions. The target beneficiaries who were mostly daily wage earners and farm labourers were not reachable on weekdays. In addition, there were challenges such as a high rate of attrition of the project staff and a lack of appropriate medical equipment infrastructure within the health centres on which the programme depended.



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Rice Fortification for Better Nutrition Outcomes (2021-2022)



More than a third of the world's malnourished children live in India. The lack of vitamin A, iron, iodine, zinc and folic acid – which constitute micronutrients – claim the lives of 3,000 children below the age of five years each day.

The northeastern region of India remains isolated from the rest of the country due to its mountainous terrain and poor infrastructure. The ethnic population in these states primarily reside in traditional structures without basic amenities and healthcare, which results in significant numbers of malnourished children and child morbidities. According to the National Family Health Survey 5 (2019-20) Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura reported an increase in the prevalence of stunting among children.

In Nagaland, the percentage of stunted children (too short for their age) was reported to have grown from 29% (NFHS 4 - 2015-16) to 33% (NFHS 5 - 2019-21) approximately. As per the North-Eastern Region Districts Sustainable Development Goal Index baseline report (2021-22) released by the NITI Aayog, there was a requirement to specifically meet the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3 (aiming at good health and well-being) and Goal 2 (on zero hunger) in 6 out of the 16 districts in the state. These 6 districts were Longleng, Phek, Kiphire, Peren, Dimapur, and Mokokchung.

Rice fortification

Many of these deficiencies can be prevented through consumption of a healthy diet, as well as through food fortification and supplementation. Food fortification is seen as a cost-effective, long-term strategy for prevention of nutrient deficiencies, and has been identified as an integral part of India's healthcare policies and flagship programmes. The 'Rice Fortification for Better Nutrition Outcomes' is one such project that aimed to address anaemia in the northeast, with a focus on Nagaland.

From August 1, 2021 to December 30, 2022, fortified rice was introduced to people covered under the Government's Public Distribution System (PDS), Mission Poshan and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS). Fortified rice was provided through the ICDS/Mid-Day Meal Scheme/Public Distribution Scheme (PDS), and was implemented by NSE Foundation with on-ground support from Centre for Health Research and Innovation (CHRI), a Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) affiliate and a not-for-profit organisation. In Nagaland, CHRI-PATH implemented the project as a technical partner to the Government, and all the six districts were chosen to pilot the programme.

Rice was fortified by the addition of micro-nutrients. Awareness campaigns were conducted to encourage adoption of fortified rice, particularly among primary/upper primary school students, pregnant and lactating women, and those covered under the PDS. The project reached the vulnerable population through Anganwadis, midday meals, as well as the PDS.

The project ensured that fortified rice is available in the open market, that its distribution is aligned with Government schemes, and that the community benefits from nutrition education and awareness.



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Project Outcome Report for **SUSWASTHYA**



The Suswasthya program aimed to improve maternal & child health and reduce malnourishment in pregnant women, lactating women, infants, children, and adolescents. The program was first implemented in the demonstrative block Khoyrasol of the Birbhum district in West Bengal. The program was scaled up to train the field personnel and supervisory staff in the other 18 blocks of the district on the learnings and successful strategies from Khoyrasol implementation. Capacity building and advocacy across all levels of the health administration in the government were conducted so that the program could be replicated and upscaled to other blocks, and districts of the state. The program operated from January 2021 to March 2023.

The eastern Indian state of West Bengal reported a vicious cycle of poverty and inadequacies in food, lack of education and awareness, early marriages, early-age pregnancy, poor ante-natal care, undernourished children, and poor community health, especially in the rural hinterland. A significant percentage of children were malnourished given the large numbers who were either underweight, stunted, or severely wasted.

According to the NFHS 2019-20, an alarming 74.4% of women (aged 15 to 49 years) in rural West Bengal were anaemic. In Birbhum, a whopping 77% of children under the age of 5 years and 78% of the women of reproductive age were reported to be anaemic. NSE Foundation intervened in the region through a local partner (*Child in Need Institute -CINI*) for the Suswasthya program.

After a baseline study in the Khoyrasol block, a basic assessment of BMI & micronutrient deficiency (haemoglobin/ iron levels) was done to identify those who were medically at a high risk among the pregnant women, lactating mothers, newborns, children, and adolescents. Apart from home visits by the Field Level Workers (FLWs) and the village facilitators, the women, children, and adolescents in the block were reached out through over 200 camps for malnutrition screening (assessment of BMI & anaemia levels) and awareness camps. Women were made aware of the basics of nutrition, healthy cooking, exclusive breastfeeding & supplemental feeding guidelines for children through the 400-plus nutrition demonstration camps.



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Empower Women and Girls - for improving Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition

Outcome Report

2023



Undernutrition is a significant issue affecting women and children in India, with approximately 25% of women of reproductive age suffering from this issue. This has severe consequences as undernourished mothers tend to give birth to undernourished babies, perpetuating a cycle of undernutrition across generations. Adolescence is a nutritionally vulnerable period due to rapid physical growth, and a significant proportion of girls and boys in India suffer from anaemia, which adversely affects their overall health, cognitive development, and productivity.¹

The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) provides comprehensive data on population, health, and nutrition in India. An analysis of the NFHS-4 data for Karauli, Rajasthan reveals alarming statistics related to child and maternal health and nutrition. The high prevalence of child stunting, wasting, and underweight children, coupled with low rates of exclusive breastfeeding and inadequate dietary practises, highlight the urgent need for a number of interventions to help improve nutrition and overall well-being.² It has become important to work on the issue of undernutrition and promote the health and well-being of women and children.

The project “Empower Women and Girls - for improving Maternal, Child and Adolescent Health and Nutrition- ‘Sambal’ ” was planned to be implemented by NSE Foundation and Centre for Health, Education, Training and Nutrition Awareness (CHETNA) in 151 villages of Todabhim block in Karauli district, Rajasthan from 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2023. However, the project was operational for 18 months (April 2021- October 2022) and covered 95 villages before its foreclosure. The broad objective of the project was to improve maternal and child health and nutrition(MCHN) by building capacities, empowering women’s groups and adolescent girls(AGs), and enhancing access to health and nutrition entitlements through engagement with village organizations(VOs), federations, VHSNCs and Gram Panchayats.

Key findings

- A total 95 villages were reached out to over a period of 18 months.
- A field team of 17 members including local field trainers were recruited and mentored to implement field level activities.
- A cascading module was adopted to provide trainings. The coordinators were trained as master trainers and a training of trainers (ToTt) was organized by CHETNA. They organised training of CHETNA field trainers. A trainers team was formed for imparting trainings to SHGs,VOs,CLFs, VHSNCs and Gram Panchayat members.
- Training was provided to 93 against the initial target of 151 VO, 293 out of 400 SHG members, 31 out of 42 Gram Panchayat and 5105 out of 8000 targeted Adolescent Girls (AGs).
- 99% of the participant attendees were reported to have achieved A and B grades, in the post training.
- The ICDS frontline workers were supported to organize Godbharai ceremonies and 54 pregnant women.
- Efforts were made to reach out to pregnant women, inform them about MCHN and their entitlements. The project was successful in reaching out to 160 pregnant women in year 1 and 1497 women in the year 2. *Godhbarai* ceremonies were also organized for 54 pregnant women.
- A cadre of 406 Swasthya Sakhis was identified and 180 Swasthya Sakhis were provided with training support.

Key recommendations

- Continue efforts to bring together the community, elected representatives, and service providers to address the demands of women and girls and take appropriate actions.
- Focus on empowering institutions (SHGs, VO, and VHSNCs) to influence women to adopt the recommended practises, rather than directly engaging with individuals.

¹ UNICEF India, Women’s Nutrition, available at - <https://www.unicef.org/india/what-we-do/womens-nutrition>

² NFHS India, available at - http://rchiips.org/nfhs/factsheet_NFHS-5.shtml



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Evaluation and Assessment Report of NSE Foundation-CSR Intervention

Project on

LIFE LINE EXPRESS PROGRAMME AT BIRBHUM



NSE Foundation partnered with the on-ground partner in 2020-21, to implement a project on Life Line Express for extending preventable health benefits to the rural masses in the Birbhum district of West Bengal during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Geographical coverage of the project centered at Chinpai Railway station of the district and rural people throughout the district benefited from this project. The Life Line Express train was stationed in the Chinpai station of Birbhum district for around 20 days. The project period was December 2020 to June 2021. The project operated during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many grassroots-level organizations, viz., Tomorrow's Foundation, Water for People India Trust, Local Gram Panchayats, and others were engaged in carrying out outreach programmes as well as screening of patients and further referrals to the LLE-OPD. The outreach works were carried out by home visits, campaigning, miking, posters/leaflets distribution, etc. The programme aimed at addressing preventable diseases among rural poor people. This project also helped in educating people at large about health education as well as helping the capacity-building process of the district health officials. The project was carried out in close collaboration with the district administration including health officials of the district. The programme not only addressed the health issues of the patients but also made them aware of the health consequences if not timely checked.

The present assessment study was executed to evaluate the outcomes and impact of the programme on direct and indirect beneficiaries, and other stakeholders like community members at large. The objectives of this assessment exercise were to gauge the effectiveness of the programme, the role and engagement of the indirect beneficiaries and local community members and health professionals of the project, and document

The project operated during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many grassroots-level organizations, viz., Tomorrow's Foundation, Water for People India Trust, Local Gram Panchayats, and others were engaged in carrying out outreach programmes as well as screening of patients and further referrals to the LLE-OPD.

their perceptions and feedback. The approach adopted for the evaluation study includes five key principles, viz., relevance including cohesiveness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Further, a mixed method research design was adopted for the data collection and included both quantitative survey and qualitative interviews and FGDs with key stakeholders.



Project Impact

Significance

65%



of patients received in-house initial medical tests.

35.6%



of beneficiaries were not covered under any health schemes.

98.7%



of beneficiaries received free of cost health treatment.

47.6%



of patients identified diseases for the first time.



Improved knowledge of preventable disease.

Consistency

- ⦿ The programme directly aligns with SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being and indirectly with many numbers of SDGs.
- ⦿ It also aligns with the National Health Policy.
- ⦿ It is in alignment with the NSE Foundation's CSR initiatives.

Effectiveness

35



outreach workers (health professionals, NGO representatives working in the health sector, and other volunteers) in awareness generation and preliminary health tests.

7,774



patients got treatment against the set target of 6,200 (direct beneficiaries)

58.8%

of male and 41.1% of female patients benefited under this project.

Around

12%



of patients above the age group of 60 years benefited from the programme.

4,236



patients availed diabetics and BP services

65.5%



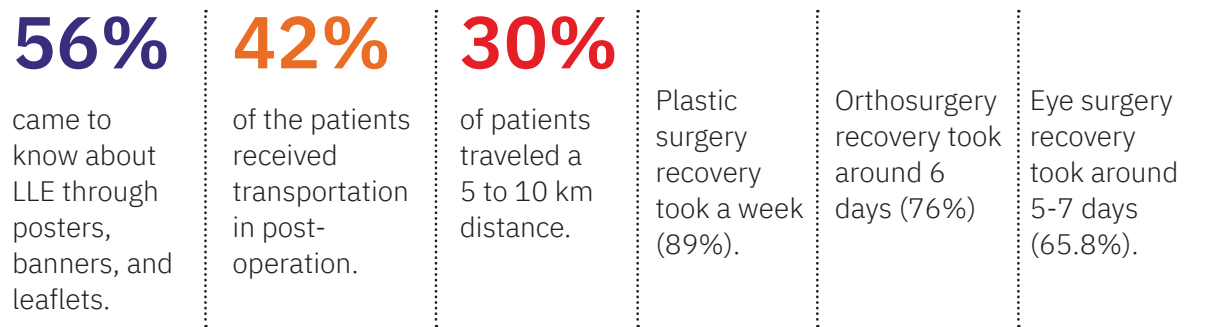
of patients received surgeries.

42%



of patients got post-operative aids/appliances.

Efficiency

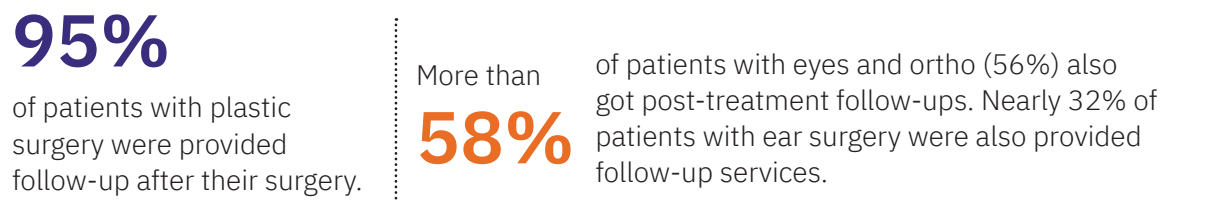


Result



It helped in the reduction of disability in the district.

Sustainability



The programme has a significant and positive impact on the lives of patients. They understood the value of non-communicable disease and its prevention.

On an overall basis, the evaluation study of the impact of the NSEF's CSR programme on Life Line Express reveals that there has been a significant positive impact on the health status of the patients and the larger community in general.

The programme was relevant for its intended beneficiaries as it has been successful in addressing the health issues of the patients. The programme has been effective in increasing health awareness including preventive health issues among the community members.

The robust convergence of the stakeholders in the programme has enabled the attainment of programme objectives. This convergence has been the key to sustaining the ethos of the programme that undertakes



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Sustainable Water Institutions for Tangible Growth (SWIFT)

Outcome Report 2023



Water scarcity and its efficient management in agriculture are critical issues in today's world, given the growing global population and the increasing demand for food. While the daily drinking water requirement for an individual is typically around 2 litres, a staggering 3,000 litres of water is necessary to produce the food needed per person each day.¹ This highlights the urgent need to optimize water usage in agriculture.

Groundwater accounts for a significant portion of both drinking water (50%) and agricultural irrigation (43%). However, as the world's population is projected to reach 9 billion by 2050, agriculture will face complex challenges in order to meet the rising demand for food. Approximately 60% more water will be needed to produce the additional food required, necessitating improved water management practices.² To address water-related challenges, it is essential to focus on enhancing food production while minimizing water usage, strengthening the resilience of farming communities to withstand floods and droughts, and implementing clean water technologies that protect the environment. These areas require attention to ensure sustainable and efficient water practices in agriculture.

Climate change further exacerbates water-related issues, with rising temperatures causing dry regions to become drier and wet regions to become wetter. Higher temperatures in arid areas accelerate water evaporation, leading to increased drought risk and duration. Climate change has also contributed to a rise in natural disasters, such as floods, droughts, tropical cyclones, heatwaves, and severe storms, accounting for a significant portion of documented occurrences.³

In India, groundwater irrigation is crucial, particularly in Tamil Nadu, where the southern region heavily relies on groundwater for agriculture. However, the surge in groundwater demand over the past decade has resulted in pollution due to natural causes, waste disposal activities, spills, leaks, and improper agricultural practices.

Ramanathapuram district, an aspirational district in Tamil Nadu, faces significant groundwater challenges. The coastal part of the district experiences brackish to saline water formation, while saline aquifers at various depths contribute to water scarcity. The poor quality of water hampers aquifer recharge efforts, making traditional water tanks known as Ooranis the most suitable structures to enhance water availability in the region.⁴

NSE Foundation and Dhan Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation (DVTF) undertook an initiative “SWIFT (Sustainable Water Institutions for Tangible Growth)” in the Ramanathapuram district of Tamil Nadu to promote community-led natural resource management, renovate water bodies for rainwater harvesting, improve farm productivity and income for poor farmers, and facilitate knowledge sharing among farming institutions.

Key findings

- 42 Vayalagams (village-level institutions) were promoted, with a total of 3,472 command area farmers reaching out to 42 villages.

¹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Water, *available at* - <https://www.fao.org/water/en/>

² Ibid.

³ World Health Organization, Drought, *available at* - [Drought, WHO](#)

⁴ Central Ground Water Board, District Groundwater Brochure – Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu, April 2009

- 36 capacity-building events organized outreaching 926 participants.
- 13 irrigation tanks and 9 Ooranis were renovated, benefiting 12 villages and 710 households. Renovation activities included tank deepening, bund strengthening, sluice reconstruction, and feeder channel clearance.
- 19 farm ponds were constructed, benefiting 19 farmers from 9 villages.
- 75 farmers were supported in removing Prosopis on 75 acres of land, contributing to improved soil fertility and increased cultivation.
- 116 farmers were supported in the planting of 3,130 saplings, promoting the Green India Mission and providing additional income opportunities.
- 50 acres of farmland have been levelled and bundled, benefiting 53 farmers.
- 56 farmers were benefited from sheep penning activities, treating 52.2 acres of barren or fallow land.
- 25 acres of tank silt was applied, benefiting 25 farmers and improving both water storage and soil fertility.
- 84 AFGs had received loans totalling INR 24.5 crores from Canara Bank, benefiting 1,142 families.
- 27 insurance literacy programs were organized, providing knowledge about various insurance programs to 1,077 participants.
- 3 health camps were organized to raise awareness about animal-rearing practices.
- 11 agriculture trainings were conducted, with 313 participants learning about various agricultural practices.
- One mutual call centre was established, providing information on government entitlements and agricultural knowledge to 1,795 members.
- Tank deepening has also created additional water storage, increasing irrigation capacity or frequency.
- Improved access to drinking water for 918 households has been achieved.
- 1,077 members were oriented on life, health, livestock, and crop insurance facilities.

Key Recommendations

- Investment in field-level orientation and training to ensure Vayalagam members understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Exploring opportunities to align project interventions with existing government schemes to leverage resources and expand the coverage of activities.
- Coordinating with relevant government departments to share project plans, progress, and completed works, as well as gather valuable data on irrigation tanks and other water-related infrastructure.
- Utilising available secondary data from government departments to provide information about technical planning, especially for interventions such as irrigation tanks, Oorani, and farm ponds.
- Ensuring that unit costs are based on the specific needs of the area and the consideration of the match between demand and supply to maximize the benefits of project works.
- Developing and maintaining a comprehensive MIS to gather data during planning and post-construction phases, to enable better tracking and documentation of project impacts.
- Considering the usage of GIS technology, including aerial imagery captured by drones, to monitor and showcase the project's impact more effectively.



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Water Agriculture and Food Security (WAFS) Project Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu Project Outcome Report



In the agrarian landscape of Tamil Nadu, particularly in the blocks of Bogalur and Mudukulathur in Ramanathapuram district, challenges such as water scarcity, Prosopis weed invasion, and a changing climate are pertinent. The deteriorating state of water storage structures have compounded the issues further, leading to declining productivity and livelihood shifts. The WAFS (Water, Agriculture, and Food Security) project was conceived as a response to these challenges, aiming to ensure water and food security through strategic interventions. The project focused on 51 villages in the blocks of Bogalur and Mudukulathur, identified based on needs and feasibility for interventions.

The project aimed to enhance water resources, introduce climatic-resilient agricultural practices, and engage communities in sustainable resource management initiatives. The WAFS project adopted a comprehensive approach, integrating community engagement, infrastructure development, and sustainable agricultural practices. The project methodology encompassed site-specific interventions guided by community preferences and needs. The project entails water conservation activities, including renovating Ooranis, restoring minor irrigation tanks, and creating farm ponds. Agriculture and green cover activities involved removing Prosopis jungle, promoting orchards, implementing alternative cropping, and avenue plantation.

The project interventions impacted 9,555 families residing in the Bogalur and Mudukulathur blocks. Over 200 farmers, empowered through the Farmers Producer Organisation (FPO) embraced sustainable practices and gained vital skills for improving productivity. Strategic interventions, including the removal of Prosopis juliflora and tank revival, enhanced the agricultural intensity and productivity. The project constructed about 100 farm ponds and mitigated crop losses through sustainable water management practices. Successful avenue plantation and orchard promotion increased green cover, aligning with environmental sustainability goals.

Challenges such as COVID-19 disruptions, staff recruitment constraints, and unpredictable rainfall were navigated with resilience, showcasing the project's adaptability. The importance of community-driven sustainability, strategic pre-consultation meetings, and mobilisation of community contributions emerged as critical project learnings. The establishment/strengthening of Village Water Management Committees (VWMCs) and the FPO will play pivotal roles in ensuring the sustainability of project interventions.

Key Findings

- **Renovation of Ooranis:** 15 Ooranis were renovated, addressing water scarcity through desilting, bund strengthening, and filtration unit construction.
- **Restoring Minor Irrigation Tanks:** 18 tanks were rehabilitated, enhancing the efficiency of the irrigation system for agricultural sustainability.
- **Creating Farm Ponds:** 100 farm ponds were constructed, serving as vital resources for life-saving irrigation and pisciculture.
- **Removal of Prosopis Jungle:** 353 acres of Prosopis-infested land were reclaimed, fostering agricultural intensity and livelihood renewal.

- **Conversion of Barren Land to Orchard:** 277 acres transformed into orchards, promoting green cover, and ensuring sustainable income sources.
- **Promotion of Farmer Producer Organisation:** Established "Ramnad Kayal Organic Farmer Producer Company Limited" with 276 registered members.

Key recommendations

- Initiate comprehensive capacity-building programs for community organisations, focusing on water structure maintenance, equitable resource sharing, and sustainable agricultural practices.
- Provide support and training for the Board of Directors and shareholders of the FPO to enhance their understanding of efficient operational practices.
- Promote and facilitate the active participation of women in decision-making processes related to water resources and project interventions.
- Explore the integration of advanced technologies such as drones and GIS for monitoring, capturing progress, and assessing the impact of interventions.
- Develop and maintain a robust MIS to gather data systematically during both the planning and post-construction phases.



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Sustainable spring-shed and agriculture development in Kiphire district in Nagaland

Outcome Report

2023



In order to achieve global development goals- building nourishing, environmentally friendly and equitable food systems is crucial. In India, groundwater resources are crucial, as it has the largest consumer base worldwide, but unsustainable exploitation has led to a critical state of many aquifers. If not addressed, this could jeopardize over a quarter of the nation's harvest and impact long-term food security and economic growth. Effective water resource management is paramount, especially in agriculture, which accounts for approximately 80% of total water withdrawals.¹ To make agriculture economically and biologically sustainable, focusing on land use patterns, production systems and infrastructure development is important.

The agriculture sector plays a vital role in ending extreme poverty, promoting shared prosperity, and feeding the projected 9.7 billion population by 2050.² Compared to other sectors, agricultural growth is highly effective in elevating incomes, contributing significantly to the global GDP. However, water scarcity poses challenges to agriculture, especially with the growing population, urbanization, and climate change, as water is an essential component for agriculture, with irrigation contributing to 40% of the global food supply.³ Irrigated farming is more productive than rain-fed agriculture, enabling increased crop production and diversification. However, competition for water resources is expected to escalate, necessitating reallocation from less productive sectors, particularly in water-stressed regions. Agriculture, currently accounting for 70% of global freshwater withdrawals, may face reallocation due to its substantial water usage.⁴

The Naga Society heavily relies on agriculture, particularly in the Kiphire district, where over 90% of the population is involved in farming. The predominant land use pattern in Nagaland is shifting cultivation, known as *jhum*, covering 73% of the arable area. Challenges in Nagaland include small and scattered landholdings, low cropping intensity, heavy rainfall leading to runoff and soil erosion, inadequate infrastructure and services, and limited adoption of technologies. By implementing effective measures, such as promoting efficient water management, providing support for technology adoption, improving market access, and strengthening agricultural extension services, Nagaland can enhance its agricultural productivity and contribute to the overall development of the state and the well-being of its population.

The project "Sustainable Spring-shed and Agriculture Development in Kiphire District in Nagaland" was implemented by NSE Foundation and North East Initiative Development Agency (NEIDA) between 1st October 2021 to 31st January 2023. The broad objectives of the project were to restore ecological balance, enhance agricultural production, improve water resources and irrigation facilities, and support Community-Based Organizations in the Kiphire district.

Key findings

- A total of 11 springs were rejuvenated by the end of the project.
- 74 farmers were supported as an Agriculture Producer Group.
- 733 farmers were reached out to through cultivation practices.

¹ 'Irrigation in India: Status, Challenges and Options', Available at – [Krishi.icar.gov.in](https://www.krishi.icar.gov.in)

² The World Bank, 'Agriculture and Food'

³ The World Bank, 'Water for Agriculture'

⁴ Ibid.

- The project provided training and seeds to a limited number of farmers, with 260 farmers receiving seeds in the Kharif season and 497 farmers in the Rabi season.
- The project formed/re-designed and strengthened 14 WUGs and 9 spring-shed committees, and 74 farmer-producer groups.
- 10 units of Jalkund were constructed in 10 villages, bringing 5 ha of land under irrigation.

Key recommendations

- Generate a PRA report by improving data collection and analysis to contribute better to the planning phase.
- Adjust project activities based on learnings from previous seasons to ensure timely input support to farmers, such as providing saplings instead of seeds to prevent wastage and improve plant survival rates.
- Implement the detailed monitoring mechanism and tools as planned to effectively monitor project progress.
- Conduct regular meetings with the implementing team to address challenges and issues faced during project implementation.

Latitude: 25.839106

Longitude: 94.971613

Elevation: 2177.63±14 m

Accuracy: 10.1 m

Time: 04-02-2023 11:34

Note: NSEF-Garden Petals



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Impact Assessment Report

Rebuilding 10 schools affected by Nisarga Cyclone

Guhagar Block of Ratnagiri District, Maharashtra



2023 - 2024



Students seated in a classroom in Zilla Parishad School Palpene 2

In June 2020, Cyclone Nisarga struck Maharashtra's coast and severely affected the Guhagar Block in Ratnagiri. Many families lost their livelihoods and primary schools in the district were seriously damaged. The cyclone also disrupted the primary education of the children in the community. For these children, going to school meant not only learning but also getting a mid-day meal, which was crucial for their nutrition and attendance. The Right to Education (RTE) Act also stressed the need for quality WaSH facilities in schools, such as clean water and safe toilets. Without these facilities, children's health and well-being suffered, which negatively impacted their learning outcomes.

NSE Foundation and Vikas Sahayog Pratishthan (VSP) designed a Disaster Relief intervention for the Zilla Parishad (ZP) primary schools in Guhagar Block, Ratnagiri that were severely affected by the Cyclone. The intervention aimed to rebuild, renovate, and revitalise the schools by providing WaSH infrastructure, classroom facilities and community workshops. The intervention aimed to improve the attendance, retention of the students and improve the overall quality of education in these schools through efforts at disaster rehabilitation.

The intervention included building toilets, hand washing basins, drinking water facilities, and renovating classrooms with lights, benches, fans, and wall paintings. The intervention followed the Right to Education (RTE) framework to determine the additional needs and activities for the schools. The intervention also created a Child Parliament (Bal Panchayat) in each school to involve students in the school management and foster responsibility. To engage the community in primary education, VSP conducted orientations and meetings with the parents, teachers, and

students to inform them about the RTE and Child Parliament. To ensure sustainability and transference, the intervention trained and strengthened the School Management Committee (SMC) and formed a Steering committee with various stakeholders. This assessment aimed to measure the impact of the intervention on the stakeholders and the infrastructure quality through a structural assessment. The assessment interviewed a sample of students, teachers, parents, SMC members, Steering Committee members, principals and field team members. A separate structural assessment was also done to evaluate the quality and nature of the infrastructure interventions.

The teachers and parents unanimously agreed that the project has addressed the challenges caused by the Cyclone. The structural assessment confirmed that all of the planned infrastructure was completed in all of the selected schools. The students reported that 94.4% have access to clean drinking water and 97.6% use the toilets and washbasins in their schools. The teachers and parents also showed a significant improvement in their awareness levels on RTE. The principals stated that the sustainability of the program is ensured by training students on the careful usage and ownership of the facilities.

The repair and renovation of the school infrastructure have solved multiple challenges, such as rehabilitating the schools after the Cyclone by providing clean drinking water and classroom facilities like fans and lights. These renovations have made classrooms more suitable for learning throughout the year. The program has benefitted all the stakeholders by improving access and community involvement in primary education.



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Impact Assessment of Assam Flood Response

Restoration of WASH in Schools



2023

The project understudy is “Assam Flood Respond 2020- Restoration of WaSH in Schools.” It was initiated in 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Golaghat and Jorhat districts of Assam. The project was implemented by the National Stock Exchange Foundation (NSE Foundation) in collaboration with on-ground partner North-East Affected Area Development Society (NEADS)

A 3 (three) month impact study was executed by the evaluation partner, Datamation International in 2023. The impact evaluation study included desk review, field investigation, FGD, and IDI, for obtaining qualitative and quantitative data from various direct and indirect stakeholders. The study drew up learnings, findings a best practice, etc., and recommends future initiatives for the concerned localities as well as for future initiatives for the area and providing insight for future program effectiveness.

About the Project

NSE Foundation in collaboration with the District Administration and on-ground partner implemented the project- Restoration of WaSH in Schools to create child-friendly WASH facilities in 25 schools and communities in two districts-Golaghat and Jorhat District of Assam affected by the severe flood of 2020.

The project provided opportunities to share experiences promoting WaSH facilities and address the key challenges relating to the implementation of WaSH in schools of the project districts.

Severe floods from May to September 2020, almost six months afflicted over 50 lakh people in the state of Assam. The death toll was 80 people and the lives of the entire population were seriously disrupted with large-scale damage to public and private properties (Chaturvedi, 2020). Roads, bridges, culverts, embankments, and public utility buildings,

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including schools, were severely damaged. The state education department surveyed in the same year, 2020, and reported 667 primary schools and 34 high schools damaged by flood and erosion (Karmkar, 2020). The report further stated that more than 1000 schools were partially or completely damaged by floods and erosions almost every year.)NSE Foundation identified two severely flood-afflicted districts, Jorhat and Golaghat of Assam for the support and restoration work in the year 2021.

The project targeted the vulnerable local communities afflicted by the consequence of natural disasters, namely, flooding due to incessant heavy rain and overflowing of the Brahmaputra, inundating large areas of the state in the districts of Jorhat and Golaghat in Assam.

Summary of findings

This WASH project was undertaken in the Golaghat and Jorhat districts of Assam. The programme was implemented for a period of one year. Twenty-three (23) government schools were supported, out of which 10 were in Golaghat and 13 schools in Jorhat districts with 589 students enrolled in them. The purpose of the project was

to improve access of WASH facilities and add to quality of life through health improvement thereby creating a conducive hygiene learning environment for children. The key findings of the impact assessment are given below:

- ▶ The programme was effective in ensuring that the WASH structures in the schools were restored and refurbished. The implementing agency in collaboration with the on-ground partner repaired 100% of the damaged water and sanitation structures like Urinal/ toilet, hand and feet WaSH stations, and hand pumps for water supply, and other infrastructure as reported by the randomly selected 589 students and 52 teacher respondents from 23 Government schools included in the impact study. They also repaired and restored the classrooms and kitchen.
- ▶ 100% of the students and teachers respondents were aware and sensitive to properly maintain and sustain the upgraded school infrastructure provisioned to them. 75% of the student respondents reported they have been given adequate and timely training, not only on health and hygiene practices but also on proper usage of WASH facilities in schools.
- ▶ As reported by 100% of the respondents the repair and restoration of the WASH structures were completed within the stipulated project time.
- ▶ The WaSH initiative was able to achieve in bringing about institutional, attitudinal, and behavioral change. This was evident as 97.74 % of students in Golaghat and 98.15% of students in Jorhat reported that they liked coming to school. In 100% of the schools, the SMC members reported a visible increment in student attendance, health, and attention in class. 100% of the schools reported there was no littering by children in their schools.
- ▶ However, there was a mixed response regarding the positive shift in students' attendance and attention from teacher respondents. The same was the case with an increment in attendance and improvement in students' health and attention in class from SMC respondents. 33% of teachers in Golaghat mentioned that the positive impact was seen to some extent and 67% of the respondents mentioned that said there was no impact in the attendance. Similarly in Jorhat – 90% responded affirmatively and 10 % reported “to some extent), the reason for the same could be attributed to school closures following the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown across the country. This condition resulted in severe learning loss and affected school attendance overall among students. 95% of the teacher respondents also reported Positive changes in student health status (teachers)
- ▶ Another finding was that the intervention had contributed to the reduction in student dropout as reported by 58% of the SMC Respondents in Golaghat and 90% in Jorhat.
- ▶ 4% of teacher respondents reported that there was a reduction in student dropout and 35 % reported that to some extent it has contributed to the same.



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Project Outcome Report

Robotic Solutions For Cleaning Of Septic Tank



The septic tank is a hazardous environment filled with semi-solid and semi-fluid human faeces, which accounts for around two-thirds of the tank. The faecal sludge begins to harden into a clay-like substance and becomes extremely hard near the tank's bottom. This causes a steady build-up of unpumpable sludge at the pit's bottom. Vacuum pumps can remove semi-solid and liquid waste from sewer lines, but they are unable to dissolve hard sludge. This is when human scavengers come into play. Workers enter the tank to homogenise the sludge and clean the tank's bottom, a process known as 'manual scavenging.'

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, around 10.9 crore individual household latrines (IHLs) have been built in India¹. However, the demand for maintenance and thus the need for manual scavenging is also expected to go up with the construction of new toilets. As per 2011 Census of India, over 7,40,000 households continue to practise manual scavenging, while around 58,098 manual scavengers (Safai Karamcharis) work in dangerous conditions².

Safai Karamcharis engaged in manual scavenging are at risk of microbial infections that cause skin and breathing problems and even death. The main difficulties they face when cleaning septic tanks are the corrosive and harmful septic tank environment, the build-up of hard sludge at the bottom, and the presence of harmful gases. Data also shows that between 2017 and 2022, about 352 persons died in the process of cleaning sewers and septic tanks³.

For the benefit of manual scavengers, the Government (Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment) passed the "Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013". However, due to an acute lack of credible and affordable technologies, manual scavengers continue to exist in India, with more than 80% concentrated in four states (Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka). A technique that effectively breaks down and homogenises hard sludge in septic tanks without requiring human intervention is vital to eliminating manual scavenging.

In around 2016-17, members of the Safai Karamchari Andolan, a movement that aims to eradicate manual scavenging, approached IIT Madras (IIT-M) to discuss the possibility of a cost-effective and efficient solution for cleaning septic tank with minimal human intervention. Prof. Prabhu Rajagopal, Head - Submersible Robotics Group at IIT-M's Centre for Non-Destructive Evaluation (CNDE), along with his students started to work on finding a solution. A team was formed, the problem dimensions were quantified, and surveys as well as market research were carried out. After 3-5 years, Prof. Prabhu and his team developed a prototype robot (now called the 'HomoSEP') for homogenising hard sludge, pumping the slurry, storing it, and transporting it to a treatment facility without physical human intervention.

With an objective of conducting limited field trials of the prototype robot (HomoSEP) NSE Foundation and IIT-M joined hands together. The goal was to develop a workable and sustainable solution for the sanitation industry.

In addition to building HOMOSEP robots over the project cycle, IIT-M also organised regular demonstration events and solicited input from Safai Karamcharis. The Karamcharis highlighted that the HOMOSEP prototype is difficult to use on narrow streets as it blocks the way for other vehicles. To address this, IIT-M developed the *HOMOSEP-Compact*, a smaller version of HOMOSEP that can be coupled to a bigger storage truck / vehicle and towed around the city. The *HOMOSEP-Compact*

1 Ministry of Jal Shakti "Toilets built under Swachh Bharat Mission" (www.pib.gov.in), 10 Feb 2022 <[pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1797158](http://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1797158)>, accessed on Oct 9, 2023

2 Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment "Manual Scavenging" (www.pib.gov.in), 7 Dec 2021 <[pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1778858](http://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1778858)> accessed on Oct 9, 2023

3 Newsclick Report "352 Manual Scavenging Deaths in the Country Since 2017, UP Records Most Deaths at 57" (www.newsclick.in) 23 Dec 2022

however was unable to clean residential household sewage tanks due to its size and storage capacity. This led IIT-M to develop *HOMOSEP-Atom*, an even smaller device. All eight (08) HomoSEP robots, three in Chennai, two in Gujarat, two in Bihar, and one in Chhattisgarh, had been deployed by March 2023. About 400 Safai Karamcharis were trained across the locations.

The team's studies show that a septic tank can be successfully cleaned with the HomoSEP in as little as 2 hours. Previously no such technology was available to clear heavy sludge without manual intervention. One of the novel aspects of the project is the distribution strategies explored and adopted. For example, in Chennai, three (03) 'Safai Enterprises' were created by IIT-M, comprising of self-help groups and widows of those who lost their lives while manually cleaning septic tanks. HomoSEP robots were given to their enterprises. The Safai Enterprises are expected to eliminate the stigma associated with the profession through generation of revenues by operating these machines. This can positively impact the scavenging work; in the same way the cleaning companies professionalised garbage collection.

Though HomoSEP robots offer a more respectable future for manual scavengers, there are operational challenges that Safai Karamcharis must overcome. As members of communities trapped for generations in this work, newly formed Safai Karamchari cooperatives with the machines need more time and support before landing enough tank cleaning orders that they can execute and achieve sustainability. Besides, wider deployment would be necessary before impacting the community on a larger scale, which is the scope for further projects. The immediate follow-up projects being undertaken by Prof. Prabhu's team with Tamilnadu Adi Dravidar Housing Development Corporation (TAHDCO) and other Government agencies highlight the enormous potential of the work supported through NSE Foundation.



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