Final CSR Impact Assessment Report

Infosys Limited

May 2026

Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP

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- Our work was limited to the specific samples/ procedures described in this report and were based only on the information and analysis of the data obtained through interviews of beneficiaries supported under the project, selected as sample respondents. Accordingly, changes in circumstances/ samples/ procedures or information available after the review could affect the findings outlined in this report. Further, the study did not include conducting any KYC checks/due diligence of the implementing partners, beneficiaries.

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List of Acronyms

Abbreviation	Full Form
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMC	Annual Maintenance Contracts
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Financial Proxy
GHGs	Greenhouse Gases
HH	Household
IDI	In-depth Interviews
ITI	Industrial Training Institute
KII	Key Informant Interviews
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MoE	Margin of Error
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCERT	National Council of Educational Research and Training
NET	National Eligibility Test
NPV	Net Present Value
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
OT	Operation Theatre
PHC	Primary Health Centre
PMUY	Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
PRV	Pressure Relief Valve
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGD	Small Group Discussion
SGBS	Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj
SROI	Social Return on Investment
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

Table of Contents

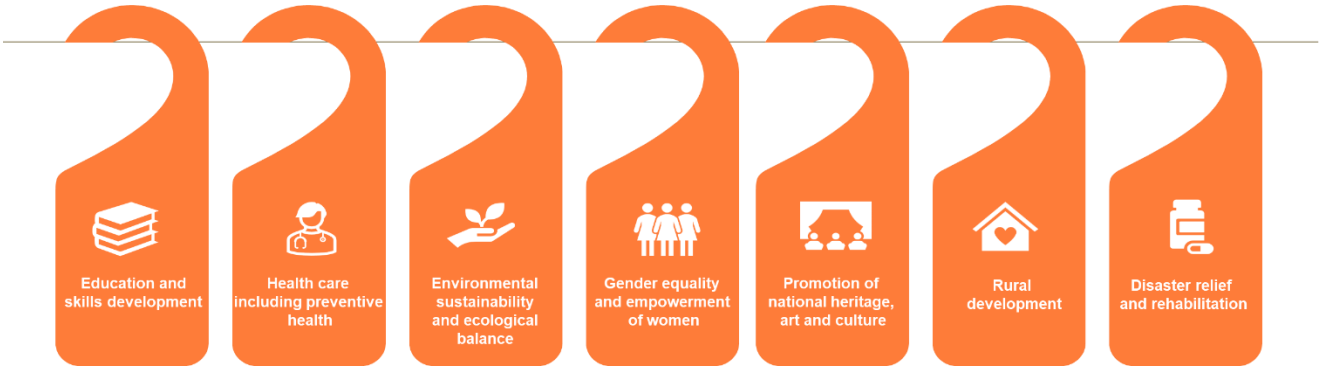
1. Introduction and Background

About Infosys Limited and its CSR

Infosys is a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting. It enables clients in ~60 countries to navigate their digital transformation. With over four decades of experience in managing the systems and workings of global enterprises, it expertly steers clients as they navigate their digital transformation powered by cloud and AI. It enables them with an AI-first core, empower the business with agile digital at scale and drive continuous improvement with always-on learning through the transfer of digital skills, expertise, and ideas from its innovation ecosystem[1].

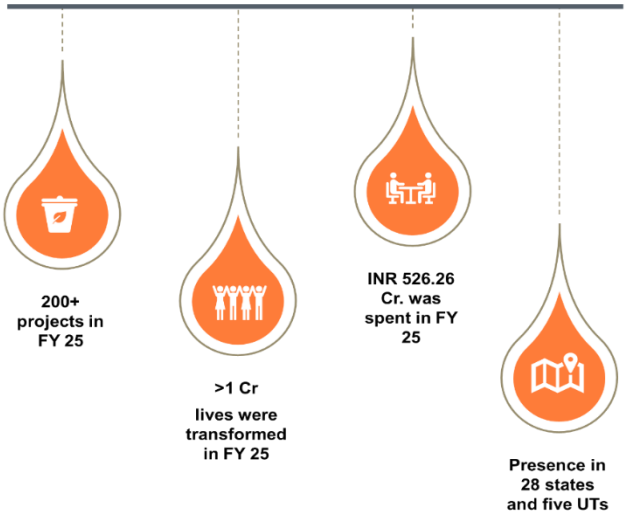
Infosys has been an early adopter of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), embedding social stewardship as a core part of its value system. Alongside sustained economic performance and robust eco-sustainability management, the company recognizes the importance of social stewardship. Infosys embraces its responsibility to create a **positive impact in the communities** where it operates and lives. Its key programs are driven by the cross-cutting focus areas developed over the years[2]:

Figure 1: Infosys's CSR Themes[3]



Infosys demonstrates a deep and sustained commitment to the communities in which it operates, integrating social responsibility into its core values and long-term engagement efforts. This led to the **creation of Infosys Foundation** to support the underprivileged sections of society. Established in 1996, it is a **not-for-profit organisation aimed at fulfilling the social responsibility of Infosys Limited** with a focus on creating opportunities and strives towards a more equitable society.

Figure 2: CSR at Infosys



Infosys Foundation **advances inclusive, community-centric development** through programs spanning education and skilling to enable employement, healthcare, environmental sustainability, women's empowerment, arts and culture, and disaster response. Working closely with nonprofit partners and local institutions, it strengthens public systems and community infrastructure, enhances teaching and learning environments, improves skills for employment, expands access to medical services, promotes sustainable practices, nurtures arts & cultural heritage, and mobilizes timely relief and rehabilitation when crises strike, an approach that blends grassroots engagement with long-term capacity building.[4]

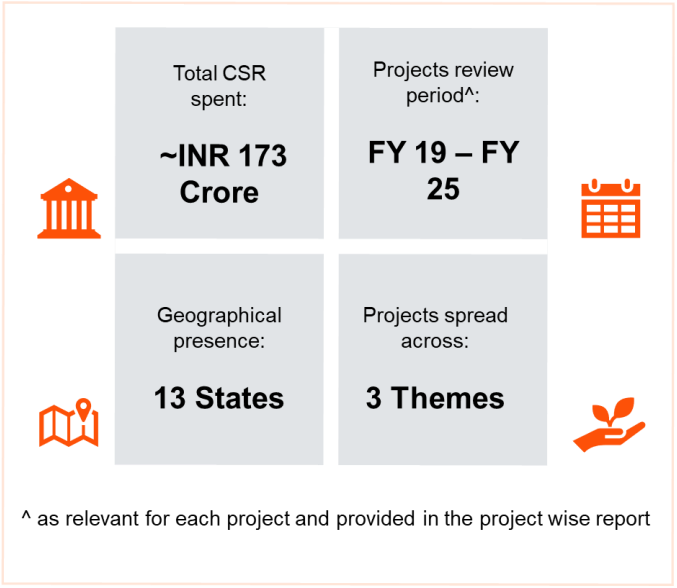
[1] Source: https://www.infosys.com/about.html
[2] Source: https://www.infosys.org/
[3] Source: https://www.infosys.com/investors/corporate-governance/documents/corporate-social-responsibility-policy.pdf
[4] Source: https://www.infosys.org/infosys-foundation/about/reports/documents/infosys-foundation-report-2024-25.pdf

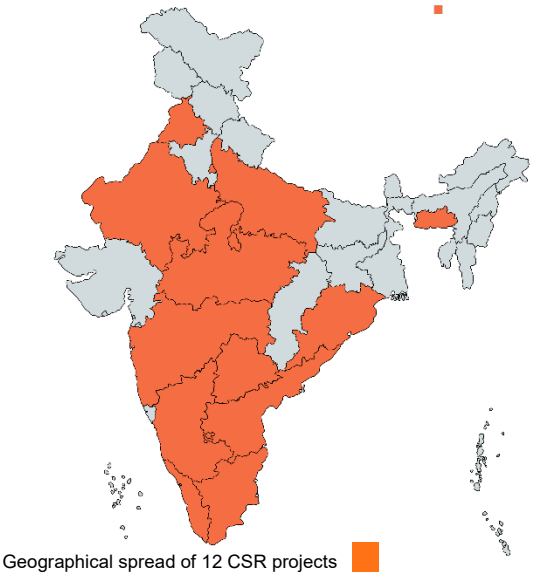
2. Executive Summary

About the Study:

Infosys Limited continues to support a range of CSR initiatives that strengthen communities, nurture local community development, and contribute to social well-being. In line with the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Amendment Rules, 2021, **Infosys engaged Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP) to conduct an independent impact assessment of 12 CSR projects** identified by Management[5]. A bird's eye-view of 12 CSR projects is provided below:

Figure 3: Overview of 12 CSR projects under evaluation





Geographical spread of 12 CSR projects

The assessment adopted a **context-specific, mixed-methods design**. Primary data was gathered through quantitative and qualitative tools, including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and virtual or on-site interactions with beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This **evaluation was anchored in the IRECS framework** (Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence, and Sustainability) to examine who was reached, how well projects addressed priority needs, what results were achieved and attributable, how partnerships enhanced outcomes, and whether benefits are likely to endure. In addition, for select CSR projects, with clearly attributable and measurable impact, the team applied the **Social Return on Investment (SROI) method** to quantify social value created per rupee invested.

Together, the **IRECS assessment and SROI analyses** provide Management with actionable, forward-looking insights to strengthen project design, partnerships, and measurement. **Findings were triangulated and synthesized into a consolidated report** to deliver clear, evidence-based insights for reporting.

Summary of Key Findings

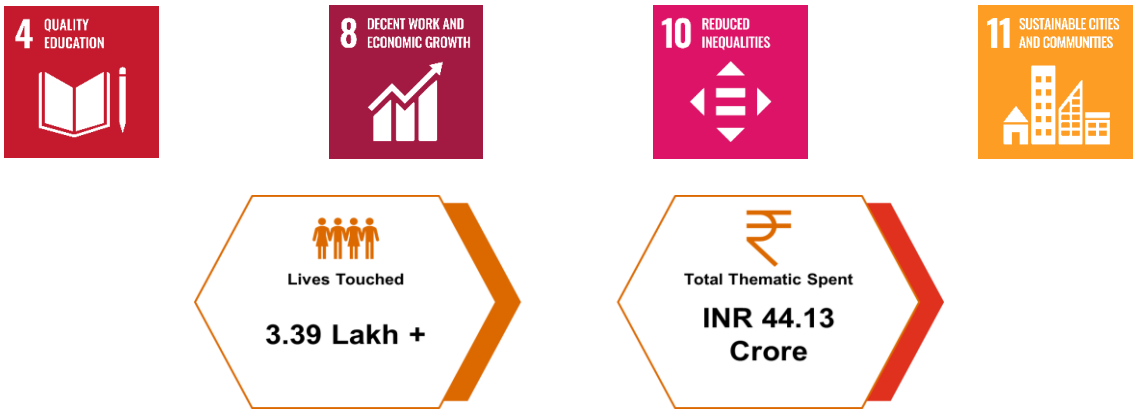
Theme 1: Education and skill development

Education, Skilling and livelihood CSR projects at Infosys collectively drive transformative, overarching impact by empowering individuals and communities through enhanced education, skills development, and cultural preservation. Spanning rural school-going children, government college youth from BPL and semi-urban backgrounds, women learners, and scholars engaged in cultural preservation, these projects respond to

[5] For the purpose of this report, 'Management' refers to Infosys Limited's management responsible for CSR oversight, including interactions with the Board and CSR Committee, as applicable'

context-specific needs across regions and populations. Together, they strengthen foundational learning and STEM access in rural schools, enhance employability and aspiration among marginalized youth, and safeguard India's intellectual and cultural heritage. By combining digital education, life-skills and employability training, and advanced research support, the projects enable improved academic outcomes, workforce readiness, confidence, livelihoods, and knowledge preservation. This drives inclusive growth, resilience, and sustained social value across diverse geographies.

These projects under this theme collectively **cater to the following United Nations - Sustainable Development Goals** (UN-SDGs):



Below provides an overview of impact created by each of the CSR projects in "Education and skill development" theme:

1. **Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj (SGBS) Unnati Foundation - UNXT Youth Training**
   - The project reached **~1.33 lakh government college students across different states**, most from rural and BPL backgrounds, addressing deep employability gaps through skill development trainings.
   - Post-training, **over 80% of participants** rated their English communication and **interview confidence as "good"**. This reflects a clear gain in self-belief and preparedness for the workplace.
   - Employment levels rose from **3% pre-training to nearly one-third of beneficiaries currently employed**, with many securing jobs within six months of completion. Entry-level earnings improved significantly, with **trained youth frequently securing salaries 30-40% higher than comparable peers**. This gain supports upward economic mobility at the household level.
   - Beyond jobs, **nearly 90% of participants reported positive behavioural change** at home and in social settings, applying values such as integrity, discipline, and teamwork. The training also encouraged aspiration-building, with **one-third of youth pursuing higher education** and many gaining clarity on long-term career paths.
   - The project is estimated to have generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 9.27:1**, based on assumptions and methodology described in this report. This indicates that every unit of resources deployed created the social value over nine times its value in social benefits. These benefits include increased incomes, employer cost savings, and sustained employability outcomes, underscoring the project's efficiency and depth of impact.

2. **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) - Oriental Studies Research and Preservation**
   - The project created a stable and enabling research environment at BORI, allowing scholars, especially those earlier working without sustained institutional support, **to focus on rigorous academic work**. This led to improved research quality while strengthening long-term scholarly capacity within the institute.
   - With **42 books and 33 research articles** published, along with digital resources, the project contributed to widening the reach of Indian historical and cultural scholarship. Researchers reported greater

national and international visibility, fostering dialogue beyond academia and reconnecting living traditions with contemporary audiences.

- Fragmented collections of rare and historically significant manuscripts, central to India's intellectual and cultural heritage, were transformed into organised, searchable resources through detailed bibliographies and catalogues. Key outputs include over **2,500 Bhagavata Purana entries** and descriptive cataloguing of **1,400+ epic and Purana manuscripts**, easing access for scholars and readers worldwide.
- Prior to the project, **Kadamba inscriptions and Atharvaveda ritual traditions existed in fragmented**, inconsistent, or largely undocumented forms, making them vulnerable to inaccuracies, neglect, and permanent loss. Through **systematic documentation, expert editing, translation, and contextual interpretation** of **over 500 inscriptions** and fading ritual practices, the project converted fragile and scattered knowledge into reliable scholarly resources. This preserved historically significant traditions while enabling accurate research and wider academic use.

3. **eVidyaloka - Rural Digital and STEM Education Programme**
    - The project enabled structured digital learning for **~52,000 students across 375 government schools in 10 states**, addressing critical **teacher shortages** in Maths, Science, and English. **Live, volunteer-led classes** delivered in regional languages improved access to consistent, concept-driven instruction.
    - **96.8% of students reported improvement** in overall **academic performance**, with **97.5% feeling more confident** in their subjects. The digital classroom model strengthened understanding of difficult concepts and contributed to a **2.5% increase in average student attendance**.
    - Over **90% of students** found digital classrooms **more effective than regular teaching**, with **live classes (75.8%) and recorded lessons (53.0%)** cited as most useful. **Regional-language delivery** reduced learning barriers, increased participation, and sustained **long-term interest in education (98.6%)**.
    - The intervention fostered **better study habits**, with **90% of students studying more regularly**, alongside higher curiosity and engagement observed by parents and teachers. Importantly, **63.3% of students reported a decline in dropouts among peers**, indicating stronger retention and motivation to continue education.

Theme 2: Environment sustainability and ecological balance

Rural communities across India continue to face interconnected challenges arising from reliance on traditional biomass-based cooking and limited access to clean energy solutions. These practices contribute to indoor air pollution, health risks for women and children, significant time spent on fuel collection and cooking, and sustained pressure on local ecosystems. The projects under the Environment Sustainability and Ecological Balance theme respond to these structural gaps by enabling transitions to improved cookstoves, biogas, and decentralised clean energy systems across varied geographies. Collectively, they are designed to ease daily drudgery, improve household efficiency and well-being, reduce dependence on fuelwood, and encourage environmentally sustainable practices, while remaining sensitive to local contexts and usage patterns.

The projects under this theme collectively **cater to the following UN-SDGs**:

^ Total no. of households benefitted (~1 Lakh) multiplied with the average family size (4 members)

Below provides an overview of impact created by each of the CSR projects in "Environment sustainability and ecological balance" theme:

1. **Improved Cookstoves in Udaipur - Helping Women and Environment**
   - The project reached nearly **19,000 households across 4 blocks in Udaipur district**, focusing on introducing clean cooking solutions to reduce indoor air pollution, save time and fuel, improve health and livelihoods, especially for women.
   - The project significantly reduces indoor smoke exposure. **97% of users reported lower smoke and gas emissions**, with **68% experiencing fewer respiratory issues** and **57% reporting reduced eye irritation**, leading to visibly healthier cooking environments for women and children.
   - Almost all beneficiaries reported reduced cooking time, with **over 70% saving around 30 minutes daily** and **19% saving up to 45 minutes**. This time was redirected towards **agriculture, household productivity, and children's education**, easing daily burdens, particularly for women.
   - All households reported lower fuelwood use, with **76% experiencing reductions of over 50%**. This translated into less physical strain from wood collection and improved household resilience, with families feeling more secure and better able to manage essential needs.
   - Cleaner combustion led to **less waste, soot, and ash** in homes, while **86% of households adopted more sustainable cooking practices**. Beneficiaries actively shared benefits within their communities, reinforcing awareness, uptake, and long-term behavioural change.
   - The project generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 4.59**, indicating that every unit of investment deployed created over four times its value in social benefits. It reinforces the intervention's efficiency and long-term relevance.

2. **Improved Cookstoves in Salumber - Helping Women and Environment**
   - The project reached **11,500 rural households across 2 blocks in Salumber district**[6], with women as primary users, leading to a **marked reduction in indoor smoke exposure**. It also focused on providing access to clean cooking solutions that improved health outcomes, reduced time and fuel burdens, and promoting environmental sustainability.
   - As a result, **62% reported fewer respiratory issues** and **56% experienced reduced eye irritation**, contributing to healthier and safer cooking environments.
   - All surveyed users reported faster cooking, with **77% saving about 30 minutes daily** and **18% saving up to 45 minutes**. This reclaimed time was meaningfully redirected towards farming, household responsibilities, and children's education, easing women's everyday workload.
   - Nearly all households **(99%)** reported reduced fuelwood use, with **86% cutting consumption by over half**, easing pressure on local forests. Cleaner combustion also meant less soot, easier kitchen maintenance, and wider adoption of environmentally sustainable practices across villages.
   - The project is estimated to have generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 2.11:1**, based on assumptions and methodology described in this report. This indicates that every unit of resources deployed created the social value over two times its value in social benefits. It underscores the project's efficiency in converting clean cooking access into measurable social outcomes.

3. **Sustainable Impact through Improved Cookstoves and Clean Energy Solutions**

[6] Salumber is newly formed district of Rajasthan in FY 24 which was formerly part of Udaipur District.

- The project distributed Jumbo Cookstoves to **10,000 households** and provided **solar electrification to 464 households in 4 districts of Meghalaya**. It also supported four primary health centres (PHCs) with solar power and medical equipment.
- The **improved cookstoves** led to near-universal adoption, with **99% of households surveyed actively using them**. Reduced smoke exposure translated into tangible health gains, **45% reported fewer respiratory illnesses, 65% less eye irritation**, and women saved **~30 minutes per cooking session**, easing daily physical strain and improving well-being.
- With **93% of households reporting lower fuel expenses** and **96% (n=284) noting reduced fuelwood use**, families redirected savings toward essentials such as healthcare, education, and savings. Time saved from cooking and fuel collection enabled women to engage more in productive and household priorities, strengthening overall financial stability.
- Further, solar electrification of **4 PHCs** ensured uninterrupted power for critical equipment, supporting **~400 patients per month** and significantly reducing the need for costly travel to distant facilities. In parallel, **464 households** gained access to decentralised solar electricity, extending productive hours, improving children's study conditions, and increasing daily incomes through evening livelihood activities.
- The project is estimated to have generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 5.89:1**, based on assumptions and methodology described in this report. This indicates that every unit of resources deployed created the social value of almost six times the value in social benefits. This impact is driven by improved health outcomes, time savings, reduced household costs, and strengthened service access. This underscores the project's efficiency in converting interventions into sustained social impact.

4. **Improved Cookstoves in Maharashtra - Helping Women and Environment**
   - The project focused on adoption of improved cookstoves by **37,200 households in** 5 districts across Maharashtra which led to **delivering clean cooking solutions** that improved health and safety, reduced time and fuel burdens, protected local environments.
   - This has led to a **significant reduction in indoor air pollution**, with **99% of users reporting improved indoor air quality** and **72% experiencing fewer respiratory illnesses**. Women and children, who spend the most time near cooking areas, reported fewer headaches, eye irritation, and burn incidents, contributing to safer and healthier homes.
   - Nearly **90% of beneficiaries reported reduced cooking time**, with most saving **30-45 minutes per day**, alongside a sharp decline in time spent collecting fuelwood. This time was redirected towards childcare, education, household work, and income-generating activities, with **81% reporting improved productivity in daily chores** and **75% gaining more time for rest and leisure**.
   - The project contributed to **substantial reduction in fuelwood use**, with **99% of households reporting lower consumption** and **44% observing reductions greater than 50%**. Fewer trips to forests, reduced ash and waste generation, and lower smoke emissions contributed to **reduced pressure of deforestation** and improved local environmental conditions, as consistently reported by community members.
   - The project is estimated to have generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 15.86:1**, based on assumptions and methodology described in this report. This indicates that every unit of resources deployed created the social value of almost sixteen its value in social benefits. This impact is driven primarily by reduced healthcare expenses and the economic value of time saved from cooking and fuelwood collection. This highlights the project's efficiency in translating a simple technological intervention into sustained social and well-being outcomes.

5. **Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Karnataka**
   - The project enabled **11,644 rural households** across five districts of Karnataka to transition from traditional biomass cookstoves to biogas, with **99% using biogas as their primary cooking fuel**. This shift led to substantial health gains, with **79% reporting reduced eye irritation**, **73% fewer respiratory issues**, and **99% perceiving improved household safety** due to smoke-free kitchens.

- Adoption of biogas reduced daily household drudgery, especially for women, with time spent on fuelwood collection declining from **103 to 42 minutes per day** and food preparation from **156 to 75 minutes**. The time saved was reallocated to household care, farming, learning, and leisure, contributing to greater autonomy and participation in community life.
- Nearly **99% of households used biogas slurry** for farming or kitchen gardening, resulting in **improved soil fertility (96%)**, better water retention, and higher crop yields, such as **paddy yields increasing from 12.5 to 15.3 quintals per acre**. Reduced dependence on chemical fertilisers and improved produce quality enabled households to strengthen farm incomes and adopt more resilient, organic practices.
- The project is estimated to have generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 5.22:1**, based on assumptions and methodology described in this report. This indicates that every unit of resources deployed created the social value over five times its value in social benefits. This impact is driven through improved health outcomes, reduced household expenditure, enhanced agricultural productivity, and environmental benefits. This reflects the project's ability to deliver sustained, multi-dimensional value at scale.

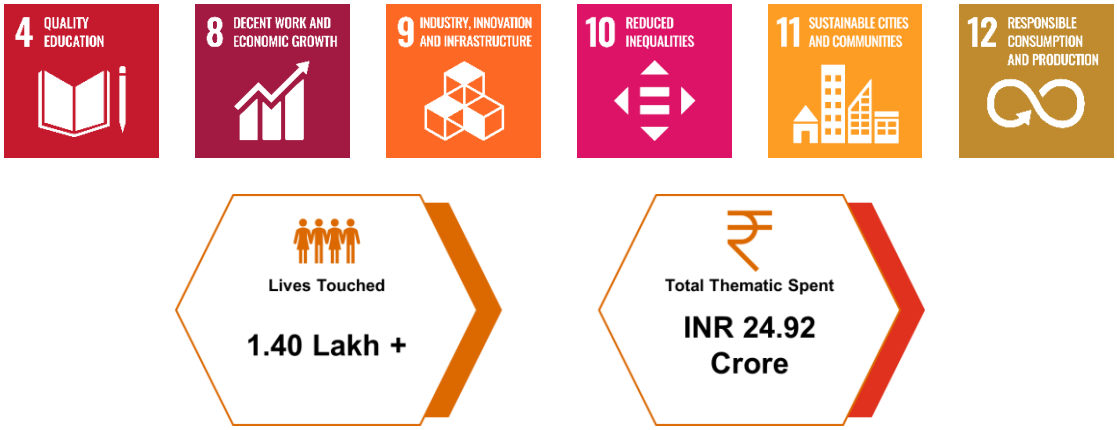
6. Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Maharashtra

- The project reached **10,289 households across 2 districts in Maharashtra**, with **99% adopting biogas as their primary cooking fuel**, significantly reducing dependence on fuelwood and smoky chulhas. Women reported a substantial reduction in daily drudgery, with time spent on fuelwood collection and cooking falling by more than half, allowing greater focus on household, farming, and personal activities.
- Access to biogas led to **77% of beneficiaries reporting improved health**, particularly fewer respiratory issues, eye irritation, and headaches caused by indoor air pollution. Cleaner kitchens and reduced smoke exposure were repeatedly highlighted by women as a meaningful improvement in everyday well-being.
- Reduced cooking and fuel collection time translated into more productive use of the day, **45% used saved time for household work, 38% for farming, and some for income-generating activities**. A small but notable share of households expanded livelihoods such as dairy and livestock management, reflecting early pathways to economic resilience.
- Near-universal use of biogas significantly cut fuelwood extraction, easing pressure on forests and reducing human-animal conflict. The use of biogas slurry strengthened sustainable farming practices, with **100% of respondents reporting improved crop yield and produce quality**, alongside reduced reliance on chemical fertilisers.
- The project is estimated to have generated a **Social Return on Investment (SROI) of 10.54:1**, based on assumptions and methodology described in this report. This indicates that every unit of resources deployed created the social value over ten times its value in social benefits. It reflects the project's strong ability to convert clean energy access into sustained, multi-dimensional benefits for rural households and communities.

Theme 3: Promotion of national heritage, art and culture

Cultural institutions and artists across regions face persistent gaps in professional infrastructure, inclusive platforms, and systems for long-term preservation and access. The projects under this theme collectively addressed these gaps by strengthening the physical, digital, and institutional environments that enable art and heritage to thrive. Renovated and purpose-built performance spaces restored scale, dignity, and accessibility for artists and audiences, while outreach programmes expanded visibility, fair support, and participation for under-represented practitioners. These initiatives together reinforce the ecosystems required for preserving, practising, and transmitting India's cultural heritage over the long term.

These projects under this theme collectively **cater to the following UN-SDGs**:



Below provides an overview of impact created by each of the CSR projects in "Promotion of national heritage, art and culture" theme:

1. **Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan – Khincha Auditorium Renovation**
   - The renovation of the Khincha Auditorium has transformed a 59-year-old facility (where no adequate modern or inclusive cultural space previously existed) into a modern and inclusive cultural space, catering **around 60,000 beneficiaries (artists and audience members) annually**. The upgraded auditorium has renewed Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's role as a trusted hub for Indian art, culture, and community engagement.
   - Expansion of the stage has increased on-stage capacity from **10-12 performers to up to 30**, allowing large-scale dance, music, theatre, and workshop formats that were earlier not feasible. Improved acoustics, lighting, and technical systems have enhanced performance quality while reducing logistical effort and dependence on external equipment.
   - Audience ratings across key features improved significantly, **rising from an average of 2.7 before renovation to an average of 4.3 post renovation** (on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest, n=15), reflecting better visibility, comfort, and overall experience. Raked seating, improved ambience, and ramp access have ensured a more inclusive and welcoming space for diverse audiences, including persons with disabilities.
   - The upgraded infrastructure has contributed to a **32% increase in the number of programmes conducted monthly**, enabling greater diversity and frequency of cultural events. With **99% of events now live-streamed**, the auditorium's reach has expanded beyond physical boundaries, reinforcing its relevance, credibility, and long-term sustainability in the field of promotion of art and culture.

2. **Yakshagana Kalaranga - Construction of Infosys Foundation Yakshagana Development, Training and Research Centre (IYCTRC)**
   - With support from Infosys CSR, this project has created **Udupi's first purpose-built Yakshagana performance space**, establishing an **indoor auditorium with a seating capacity of 388**. Previously, programmes were held in temple premises and college halls with poor acoustics and frequent disturbances which compromised both performance quality and audience experience. This new dedicated, permanent infrastructure fills a crucial void by **supporting the preservation and practice of this culturally rich and rare art form**.
   - In its first year, the Centre hosted **102 programmes and drew 300-500 audiences per performance**, providing artists with a dignified, professional platform designed to safeguard the authenticity and continuity of Yakshagana.
   - With a **zero-ticket policy**, barrier-free design, and ground-floor auditorium, the project has enabled participation by rural artists, elderly visitors, and persons with disabilities along with promotion of access and inclusion for art and culture initiatives. **Over 90% of visitors reported high satisfaction**, while **100% said they would revisit and recommend the Centre**, reflecting strong community ownership.

- Consolidation of artist welfare initiatives and access to a professional performance environment enhanced artists' visibility and confidence, with many performing on a formal stage for the first time. The Centre has become a trusted platform for both emerging and established performers across communities.
- Training camps and workshops on local art and culture conducted at the Centre supported students, largely from rural and Kannada-medium backgrounds, in building **confidence, communication skills, and career clarity**. Stakeholders highlighted the Centre's integrated model of culture and learning as fostering both personal growth and cultural pride.

3. **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan - Indian Arts Cultural Outreach Programme**
   - The programme directly engaged **over 4,600 individuals**, including **3,150 performing artists and 1,500 support staff**, many from economically vulnerable and underrepresented backgrounds. Artists consistently reported enhanced confidence, credibility, and visibility after performing on a professionally managed, nationally reputed platform, alongside fair remuneration and end-to-end logistical support.
   - Through curated, **theme-based festivals across multiple cities** such as Delhi, Bengaluru, Mysuru, Thiruvananthapuram, Indore, Navi Mumbai, Chandigarh/ Mohali, and Hyderabad, the initiative enabled the revival and reinterpretation of diverse classical, folk, tribal, and contemporary art forms. Artists and support staff expressed **high agreement (average rating of 2.9 out of 3)** that the programme strengthened visibility, recognition, and preservation of heritage art forms that are otherwise at risk of decline.
   - A free-entry model combined with large venues, live streaming, and digital archiving significantly widened access to the arts, reaching **around 20,000 online viewers** beyond physical audiences. The creation of a permanent digital repository and coffee table documentation ensured sustained visibility and learning well beyond the festival period.
   - Centralised planning and consistent execution across multiple cities resulted in **high satisfaction scores (average rating of 2.95 out of 3)** for logistics, coordination, and audience reach. Stakeholders highlighted the programme as a replicable model that strengthens India's cultural ecosystem by combining artistic excellence, inclusivity, and long-term institutional credibility.

For the detailed findings, please refer from Section 4 (Project-wise Findings) onwards.

3. Approach and Methodology

3.1 Objective and Scope of Work

Infosys Limited **engaged Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP)** to conduct an impact assessment of following **12 CSR projects with a purpose to evaluate the impact created** through the activities undertaken during the implementation period:

Table 1: Overview of the Projects

Sr. No.	CSR theme	Name of the CSR project	Project Location	Research Method	Type of Assessment
1.	Education and skill development	Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj (SGBS) Unnati Foundation - UNXT Youth Training	Karnataka	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
2.	Education and skill development	Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute (BORI) - Oriental Studies Research and Preservation	Maharashtra	Qualitative	IRECS
3.	Education and skill development	eVidyaloka trust - Rural Digital and STEM Education Programme	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh	Mixed	IRECS
4.	Environment sustainability and ecological balance	Improved Cookstoves in Udaipur - Helping Women and Environment	Rajasthan	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
5.	Environment sustainability and ecological balance	Improved Cookstoves in Salumber - Helping Women and Environment	Rajasthan	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
6.	Environment sustainability and ecological balance	Sustainable Impact through Improved Cookstoves and Clean Energy Solutions	Meghalaya	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
7.	Environment sustainability and ecological balance	Improved Cookstoves in Maharashtra - Helping Women and Environment	Maharashtra	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
8.	Environment sustainability and ecological balance	Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Karnataka	Karnataka	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
9.	Environment sustainability and ecological balance	Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Maharashtra	Maharashtra	Mixed	IRECS + SROI
10.	Promotion of national heritage, art and culture	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan - Khincha Auditorium Renovation	Karnataka	Qualitative	IRECS
11.	Promotion of national heritage, art and culture	Yakshagana Kalaranga - Construction of Infosys Foundation Yakshagana Development, Training and	Karnataka	Qualitative	IRECS

Sr. No.	CSR theme	Name of the CSR project	Project Location	Research Method	Type of Assessment
		Research Centre (IYCTRC)			
12.	Promotion of national heritage, art and culture	Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan - Indian Arts Cultural Outreach Programme	Delhi, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Telangana	Qualitative	IRECS

The scope of work included reviewing the Key performance indicators (KPIs) as defined under the framework for implementing the project for the outputs, outcomes and impact of the projects. **Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness, Convergence and Sustainability Framework (the 'IRECS') framework and Social Return on Investment (SROI)** method were used to provide recommendations on the project's impact for the further evaluation and consideration. The approach included the below activities:

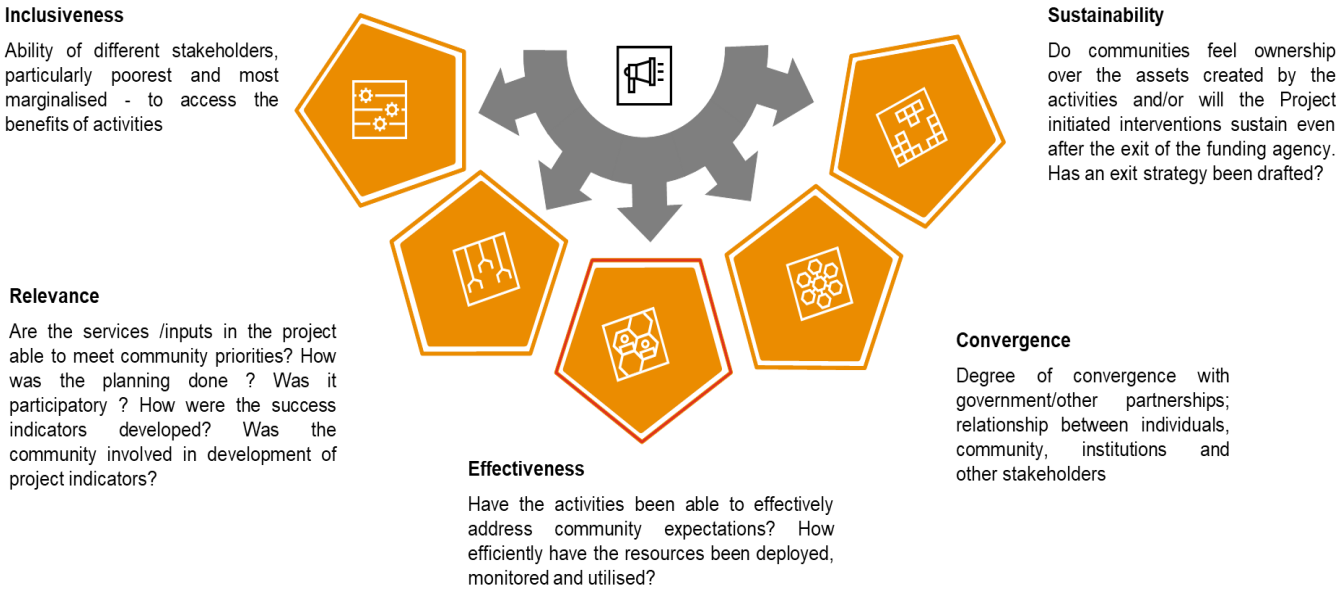
- Understood the scope and boundary of the projects and the assistance to be provided.
- Conducted desk review of the documentation provided by the Infosys and agreed with the management the parameters to be assessed for the SROI study for select CSR projects as per above table.
- Stakeholder mapping was carried out to identify key stakeholder groups to be interacted with during the assessment.
- Based on the above, developed the quantitative/ qualitative questionnaires (as relevant) to be used during the assessment for conducting in-depth interviews, interactions, meetings with the stakeholders and beneficiaries of the CSR Projects.
- For the impact assessment studies, wherever relevant based on the methodology of the study, an estimated quantitative sample was drawn for survey during the study.
- Data was collected through virtual/in-person interactions (as relevant) based on the questionnaires developed and consultations done.
- Based on the field visits and interactions and discussions, the information was analysed and assessment of outcome/impact was done. The list of technical and socio-economic benefit indicators was identified, and information collected from the beneficiaries/stakeholders was recorded.
- A customized excel-based SROI data sheet was developed for capturing the quantitative benefits of the Projects and analysis of the SROI was done based on assumptions, financial proxies and references.
- SROI ratio was calculated for select CSR projects with clearly attributable and measurable impact (Table 1) to understand the value of the impact/benefit generated from each rupee of investment and report was developed based on the overall findings including the recommendations for management's consideration.
- Report was developed based on the overall findings for Management's consideration.

3.2 Overall Methodology

Team has adopted a **coherent and integrated approach** to deliver the scope of work of the engagement. The following **4-stage approach** ensured that impact assessment study for each CSR project was carried out in systematic and consultative manner:

Work streams (WS)	WS 1: Client Kick-off and Desk review	WS 2: Research framework development	WS 3: Field Data Collection	WS 4: Data analysis and reporting
Activities	❑ We initiated a kick-off meeting with Infosys team to align on the scope and objectives, while also introducing the engagement team ❑ A review of project-wise documents (as received from the client) was conducted ❑ Stakeholders were mapped based on client interactions and document review	❑ Project - wise Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were determined based on the desk review of documents. ❑ We then developed a sampling framework and customised research tools for each stakeholder group (project-wise)	❑ The tools were refined, and field plan was finalised ❑ Tools were then translated in local language (as applicable) along with training of data collectors ❑ On-field data collection was undertaken.	❑ Data analysis included highlighting gaps and assessed the impact of the programme based on IRECS framework and SROI method ❑ Preparation of a consolidated report

Figure 4: IRECS Framework



3.3 Assumptions and Limitations

General:

- The information transmitted, including any attachments, are intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission,

dissemination, copying, paraphrasing, reproduction, or distribution in any manner or form, whether by photocopying, electronically, by internet, within another document or otherwise; or other use of or taking of any action in reliance upon this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient or for purposes other than as stated in the Agreement, is prohibited. Further, any quotation, citation, or attribution of this publication, or any extract from it to any third party unless expressly agreed in the Agreement is strictly prohibited. PWCALLP makes no representations or warranties regarding the information and expressly disclaims any contractual or other duty, responsibility or liability to any person or entity other than its client in accordance with the agreed terms of engagement.

- The nature of service provided under this engagement does not in any manner constitute provision of legal service or/ advice as the term is generally understood under various laws for the time being in force. The intent of PWCALLP was to provide assistance and support in accomplishing the stated objective of the assignment and as an adjunct activity may have included research of applicable laws, regulatory compliance requirements and an understanding of the process and procedure as per local statutory enactments without in any way rendering any specialist legal advice. Our report is not a substitute for legal advice, that may be provided by a duly qualified independent legal practitioner.

- Our scope of work, including any advice/ assistance, was limited to the scope of services specifically defined in the Letter. We were not responsible for the implementation of our recommendations.

- By giving our consent to the publication of our report and opinion on the Company's website ('your website') we do not accept any duty of care and deny any liability.

- You are responsible for the controls over and the security of your website and, where applicable, for establishing and controlling the process for electronically distributing Impact Assessment Report. We remind you that the examination of controls over the maintenance and integrity of your website is beyond the scope of our examination. Accordingly, we accept no responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of the Impact Assessment Report as they appear on your website.

Pertaining to this report:

- The report prepared by the PWCALLP is based upon the (a) information/ documents provided by Infosys and its implementing and/or technical partner and (b) data collected during the field visit to the project location by the PWCALLP team. PWCALLP performed and prepared the Information at the client's direction and exclusively for the client's sole benefit and use pursuant to its client agreement. Our report is based on the completeness and accuracy of the above-stated facts and assumptions, which if not entirely complete or accurate, should be communicated to us immediately, as the inaccuracy or incompleteness could have a material impact on our conclusions.

- PWCALLP's work was limited to the samples/ specific procedures described in this report and were based only on the information and analysis of the data obtained through interviews of beneficiaries supported under the project, selected as respondents. Accordingly, changes in circumstances/samples/ procedures or information available could affect the findings outlined in this report.

- The projects assessed as part of this report were identified and selected for impact assessment by Infosys management. PWCALLP has relied on the information and representations provided by Infosys in this regard and has not independently verified the applicability or eligibility of the selected projects under the provisions of the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Rules, 2014, or any subsequent amendments thereto.

- For SROI based study of select CSR projects:

    - The method has high data dependency, and the results may impact if the correct data is not available/ provided.

- For a strong SROI study, the use of factual, documented & time bound data is essential. For the same, robust data processes and M&E framework (or result based framework) is required.
- Specific areas such as deadweight, attribution and drop off has considerable subjectivity.
- Since outputs and outcomes are valued at each level of stakeholder engagement, it is difficult to capture all aspects and arrive at holistic results.
- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by Infosys as part of its monitoring reports. The exact number of community members or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.
- The proxy values for the calculations have been referred to from quantitative results of the study and information shared by key stakeholders during the interactions. PWCALLP does not claim the responsibility for the correctness of data shared by the stakeholders.
- The data on project investment is shared by the Infosys team. PWCALLP has not verified the investment figures independently.

4. Project 1: Sree Guruvayurappan Bhajan Samaj (SGBS) Unnati Foundation - UNXT Youth Training

4.1 About the Project

In India, government colleges and institutes continue to face challenges in preparing graduates for employment. Despite possessing strong technical and academic qualifications, students from rural and semi-urban government institutions often struggle with critical employability gaps including poor communication skills, lack of confidence, limited exposure to workplace culture, and inadequate soft skills.

To address these barriers, **Infosys Limited and EdgeVerve Systems Limited** (through its CSR arm – Infosys Foundation), under their commitment to promote education and skills development to enable sustained livelihoods, partnered with **SGBS Unnati Foundation** to implement the **UNXT - Youth Training and Employment Program** with **Infosys Foundation** overseeing the implementation of the project. This project aims to enhance employability outcomes for government college graduates through a structured training intervention focused on soft skills, values, life skills, and employment readiness. The project supported **~1.33 lakh youth beneficiaries** across 10 states in India. The project aimed to train the youth through the instructor-led and self-learning model including[7]:

- **Teaching market-oriented skills** consisting of comprehensive training in English communication, workplace readiness, professional etiquette, resume writing, and interview preparation aligned with industry requirements
- **Placement support for trainees** by systematic job matching through dedicated placement portal and employer partnerships to facilitate transition from training to employment
- Conducting **workplace readiness, leadership and life skills** workshops to improve employability
- **Mandatory changemakers training of 25-days** who in turn are responsible for delivering the 90 hours classroom training to UNXT students
- **Unnati Learning App (ULEAPP)**, a digital Learning Platform with e-learning content accessible via mobile app, including video courses, reading materials, and self-assessment tests
- **UDHYOGAM (Job Portal) platform** for profile creation, video resume upload, and job matching with recruiters
- **Swayam personality assessment** which helps participants gain deeper self-awareness by identifying their personality traits, strengths, areas for improvement, and potential career opportunities

Figure 5: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

4.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The PWCALLP team initiated the study through a kick-off meeting with the Infosys Foundation team and SGBS Unnati Foundation team to define clear evaluation criteria. This preliminary discussion focused on **defining the scope of work, aligning stakeholder expectations, and developing a comprehensive understanding of the project's design and implementation strategy**. Following this, the team obtained the subsequent project documentation from the Infosys Foundation team and the implementing partner:

[7] Source: Project documents/ information received from Infosys Foundation and implementing partner

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed with SGBS Unnati Foundation which outlines the project's key activities and other operational modalities
- **Database** of project beneficiaries

The team conducted a **comprehensive desk review** of the provided documents to deepen their **understanding of the project, develop a robust assessment framework, and identify key stakeholders for interactions**, in line with the preliminary interactions with the Infosys Foundation and SGBS Unnati Foundation teams.

The study was **guided by the IRECS framework and SROI (Social Return on Investment) method** wherein the team adopted a structured approach to evaluate the project's impact. IRECS framework focused on gauging the impact of this project on parameters such as Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness (and efficiency), Convergence, and Sustainability, providing an overall assessment in terms of producing the intended project outcomes. It also helps in gaining a qualitative understanding of the impact created, stakeholder perception, and the extent of collaboration with other partners. Additionally, the SROI method design helps to measure and account for value created quantifying the social, environmental, and economic value generated by the project and helps in assessing the costs and benefits.

In consultation with Infosys Foundation, a **mixed-method approach** combining quantitative and qualitative research methodology was deployed to conduct the impact assessment study. The quantitative component focused on generating measurable insights and evidence regarding both current and projected impacts of the intervention. **Qualitative data** collection was utilised to capture stakeholder perspectives, and lived experiences, translating them into deeper understanding of the project's actual impact on beneficiaries. The research design incorporated multiple data collection techniques: quantitative methods such as **structured surveys** complemented by qualitative approaches including **Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs), In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with key stakeholders:

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 6: Research design for the study

- **Quantitative surveys** with a sample of **283** Students*
- **Two Focused Group Discussion (FGD) each** with Students
- **A total of Four In-depth Interviews (IDIs) - Two In-depth Interviews (IDIs) each** with Academic Institution Representatives, Changemakers/ Trainers and Employers
- **One Key Informant Interview (KII)** with SGBS Unnati Foundation representative
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Foundation team

*Based on the data shared by Implementing Partner, it was noted that ~1.33 lakh beneficiary students have been covered under the project. Hence, a sample size of 272 was estimated at 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, we have covered more sample size (283) to ensure the appropriate representation of the findings from the 5 states with highest footfall in our sample. The sample was further distributed proportionately to the selected states basis the footfall. The quantitative sampling distribution was as below:

Table 2: Distribution of quantitative sample across schools

State	Sample
Andhra Pradesh	75
Tamil Nadu	61
Karnataka	60
Uttar Pradesh	50
Madhya Pradesh	37
Total	**283**

4.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings that emerged from the discussions with key stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

The team noted the following challenges that emerged prior to project intervention (UNXT training):

- **Limited employability despite technical qualifications**: Government college graduates possessed strong academic credentials and technical knowledge but lacked the soft skills, communication abilities, and professional grooming required by employers. As mentioned by Academic Institution Representative of one of the institutes, students come from very humble economic and social backgrounds and while the institute provides good technical education, they lacked infrastructure for personality development programs.

- **Communication and English language barriers**: Students from rural backgrounds and regional medium schools struggled with English communication, creating a major obstacle in job interviews and workplace environments. One changemaker at one of the institutes mentioned that students initially could not speak effectively prior to the project intervention.

- **Lack of confidence**: Many students exhibited stage fear, hesitation in public speaking, and inability to present themselves professionally. According to some students at surveyed institutes, before UNXT training, they had no confidence that they could do private job in life.

- **Poor interview and job search skills**: Students lacked knowledge of resume writing, interview techniques, workplace etiquette, and how to navigate the job market.

- **Limited exposure to professional values and workplace culture:** Students had minimal understanding of workplace expectations, professional ethics, time management, teamwork, and corporate culture requirements, particularly for positions in corporate hospitals and private sector companies.

- **Absence of career guidance and self-awareness:** Many students lacked clarity about their strengths, suitable career paths, and long-term goals. The Swayam psychometric assessment[8] was not available before the project, leaving students without structured tools for the same.

- **Disconnect between academic education and employment readiness:** As mentioned by SGBS Unnati Foundation representative, educational institutions focused primarily on syllabus completion and examination preparation, with little emphasis on holistic personality development, making graduates academically qualified but not job ready.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

This section summarizes the findings from the impact assessment study:

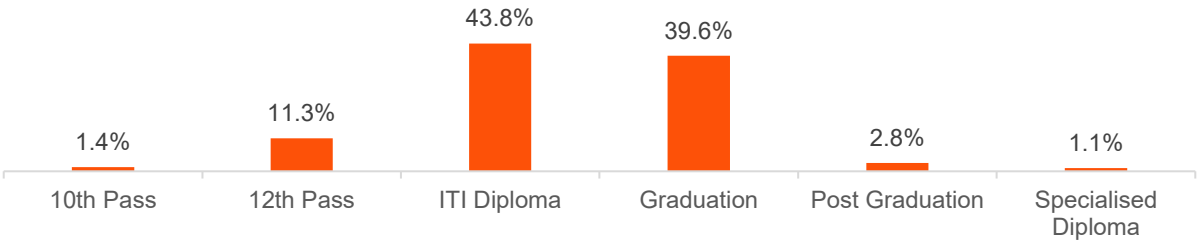
[8] Swayam psychometric assessment is psychometric personality assessment of the UNXT training students.

1. Profile of the respondents

The analysis presents the profile of respondents based on various demographic indicators including age, gender, educational background, and socio-economic profile:

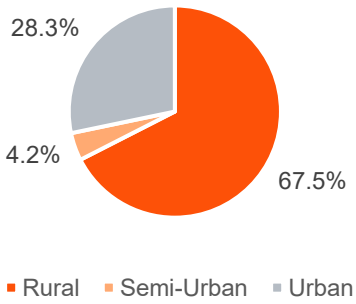
- 40.3% of the respondents were female with the rest being male.
- **Almost all the beneficiaries** (99.3%, n=283) ranged from 17 to 30 years.
- At the time of UNXT training, **43.8% (n=283) were ITI Diploma holders**, 39.6% were graduates, 11.3% had completed 12th standard, 2.8% were postgraduates, with remaining having completed 10th standard or specialized diplomas such as Mechanical Engineer diploma and Computer Science diploma.

Figure 7: Educational Qualification (n=283)



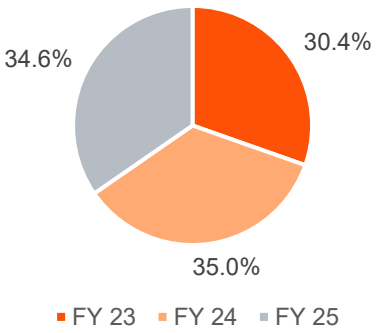
- **58.7% (n=283) of beneficiaries were from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families**, highlighting the project's focus on economically disadvantaged youth who face the greatest barriers to employment.
- **67.5% (n=283) came from rural areas**, 28.3% from urban areas, and 4.2% from semi-urban locations, demonstrating the project's rural outreach.

Figure 8: Residential Area (n=283)



- Beneficiaries were distributed across FY 23 (30.4%, n=283), FY 24 (35.0%), and FY 25 (34.6%), providing longitudinal perspective on project outcomes.

Figure 9: UNXT Training Year (n=283)



2. Enhanced Employability Through Comprehensive Skill Development

The team noted that the project enhanced employability through its multi-dimensional approach:

- **Before UNXT training, 66.1% (n=283) of respondents rated their English communication skills as "Average"** and 19.8% as "Poor." **After training, this transformed with 80.9% rating their skills as "Good,"** 18.7% as "Average," and only 0.4% as "Poor." During the FGDs, students shared that before the training, they had no confidence but after the training, they were able to realise their potential. One **Changemaker informed that students who couldn't speak in class actively participated in debates and discussions during the training demonstrating improved confidence.**

Table 3: English Communication Rating (n=283)

Rating	Before UNXT training	After UNXT training
Good	14.1%	80.9%
Average	66.1%	18.7%
Poor	19.8%	0.4%

- **Before UNXT training, only 19.8% (n=283) felt "Good" about facing job interviews**, while 59.0% were "Average" and 21.2% "Poor." **Post-training, 81.9% reported "Good" confidence levels**, 15.5% "Average", and only 2.5% "Poor." **One employer observed that the interview skills of the UNXT students are good, and they can present themselves well** whereas other candidates sometimes are under-confident and unable to present their skills.

Table 4: Confidence in facing job interviews (n=283)

Rating	Before UNXT training	After UNXT training
Good	19.8%	82.0%
Average	59.0%	15.5%
Poor	21.2%	2.5%

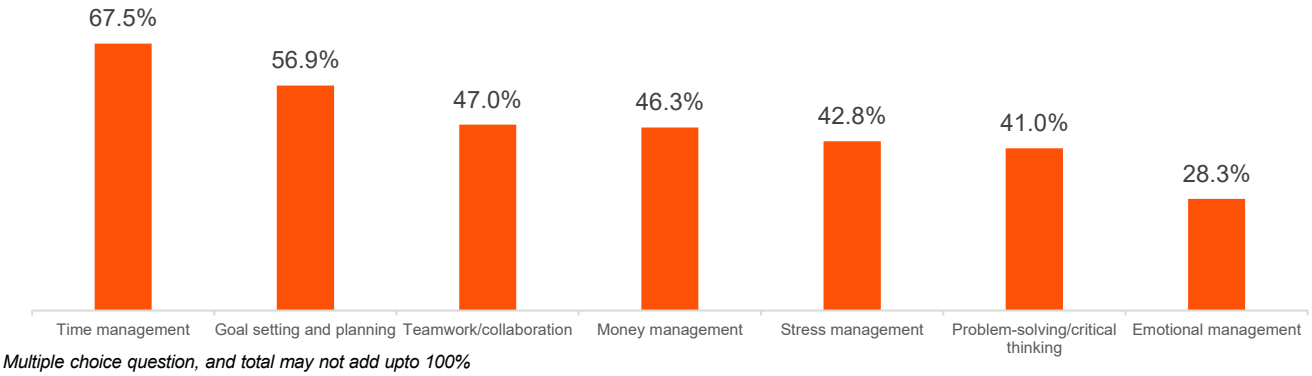
- **Future career confidence showed similar improvement - from 30.4% (n=283) "Good",** 54.1% "Average", and 15.5% "Poor" **before training to 85.5% "Good**", 13.8% "Average", and 0.7% "Poor" **after training**. This represented a **transformation in students' self-belief and career aspirations**.

Table 5: Confidence about future career (n=283)

Rating	Before UNXT training	After UNXT training
Good	30.4%	85.5%
Average	54.1%	13.8%
Poor	15.5%	0.7%

- During the interactions, the **students emphasized that the training teaches many skills that they can utilise in their personal and professional life. Respondents reported applying multiple life skills in daily life including time management (67.5%, n=283), goal setting and planning (56.9%),** teamwork/collaboration (47.0%), money management (46.3%), stress management (42.8%), and problem-solving/critical thinking (41.0%).

Figure 10: Life Skills applied in daily life (n=283)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

3. Improved Employment Outcomes and Economic Mobility

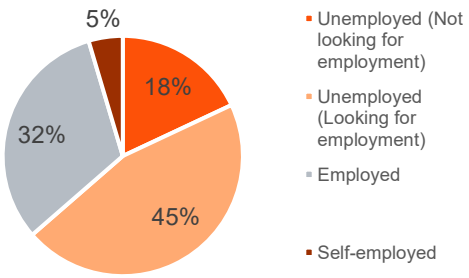
- Before UNXT training, 53.7% (n=283) were unemployed and not looking for employment, **40.6% were unemployed but looking for employment, 3.2% were employed**, and 2.5% were self-employed. **After training**, this shifted positively with 25.4% unemployed not looking, **43.5% unemployed but looking, 27.9% employed,** and 3.2% self-employed, **demonstrating increased employment and active job-seeking behaviour.**

Table 6: Employment Status (n=283)

Employment Status	Before UNXT training	After UNXT training
Unemployed (Not looking for employment)	53.7%	25.4%
Unemployed (Looking for employment)	40.6%	43.5%
Employed	3.2%	27.9%
Self-employed	2.5%	3.2%

- Post the UNXT training, **the placement percent was 39.10% with 79 students placed after the training with 81% retention rate.**
- **At the time of study, 31.8% (n=283) were employed, 45.6% were unemployed but actively looking (increased motivation),** 18.0% were not looking for employment, and 4.6% were self-employed. **This indicates that approximately one-third achieved employment, while nearly half remained actively engaged in job search - a significant improvement from pre-training scenario.**

Figure 11: Employment Status - Current (n=283)



- **Average monthly income showed improvement across the beneficiary sample pool. Before training, 91.9% (n=283) earned less than ₹10,000. After training, this reduced to 68.9%**, with 23.7% earning ₹10,000-20,000, 6.4% earning ₹20,000-30,000, and small percentages in higher brackets. **Current income**

distribution shows 63.9% below ₹10,000, 26.9% in ₹10,000-20,000 range, and 8.5% earning ₹20,000-30,000, indicating progressive income growth trajectory.

Table 7: Average Monthly Income (n=283)

Average monthly income	Before UNXT training	After UNXT training	Current
Less than ₹10,000	91.9%	68.9%	64.0%
₹10,00 - ₹20,000	7.1%	23.7%	26.9%
₹20,000 - ₹30,000	1.1%	6.4%	8.5%
₹30,000 - ₹40,000	-	0.7%	0.7%
Above ₹50,000	-	0.4%	-

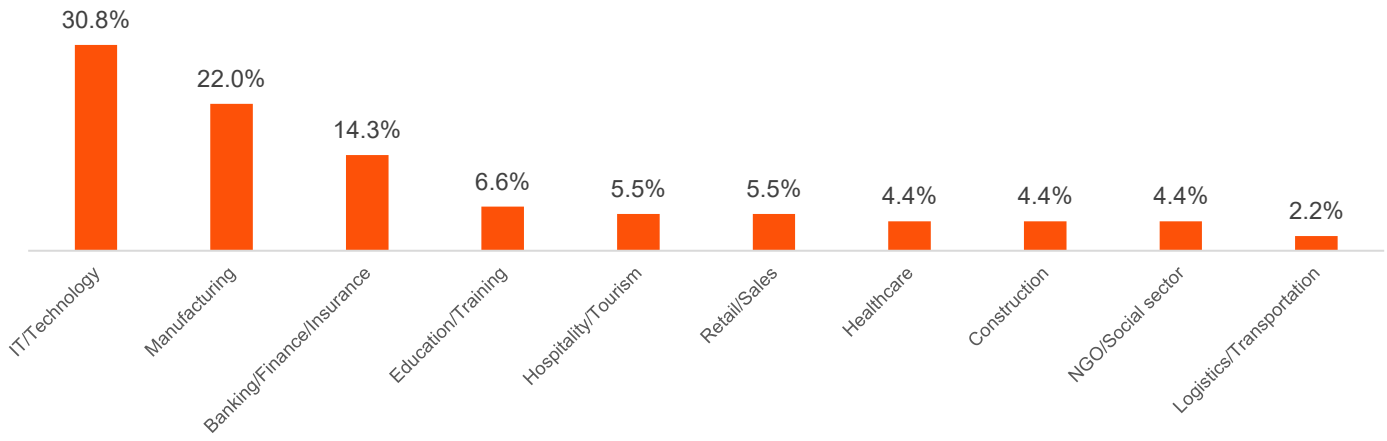
- 69.6% of the students employed after the training fell in the income range of ₹10,00 - ₹20,000 while for self-employed. It was 33.3% for the ranges of Less than ₹10,000, ₹10,00 - ₹20,000 and ₹20,000 - ₹30,000.

Table 8: Income range for employed and self-employed

Income Range	Employed	Self-employed
Less than ₹10,000	8.9%	33.3%
₹10,00 - ₹20,000	69.6%	33.3%
₹20,000 - ₹30,000	17.7%	33.3%
₹30,000 - ₹40,000	2.5%	-
Above ₹50,000	1.3%	-

- During the interactions with the students, it was noted that the entry-level positions ranged from ₹10,000-25,000 monthly, with potential to reach ₹24,000-25,000 after one year of experience in sectors like nursing/paramedical. **One employer informed offering UNXT students ₹24,000-25,000 per month compared to ₹17,000-18,000 for typical entry-level hires, representing a 30-40% salary premium.**
- Among those who secured jobs post-training (n=79), 73.4% secured employment within 6 months of training completion.
- **Among the students who secured employment after the training (n=79), 81.0% were continuing in the same job, demonstrating good retention and stable employment patterns.**
- The current employment sectors of the UNXT students are IT/Technology, Banking/Finance/Insurance, Manufacturing, Education/Training, Healthcare, Construction, Hospitality, Retail, Logistics, and NGO sectors, **displaying project's cross-sectoral relevance.** It was also reported by the SGBS Unnati Foundation representative that the self-employed youth usually get involved in family business and agricultural sector.

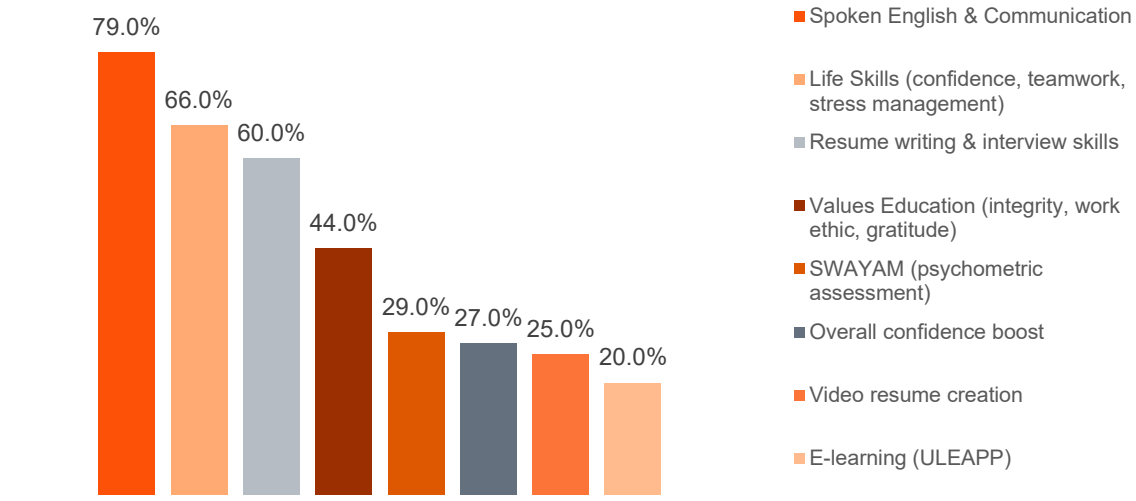
Figure 12: Current Employment Sector (n=91)



4. Enhanced Project Delivery and Student Engagement

- 87.3% (n=283) of respondents received their UNXT digital certificate with certificates being delivered within 10-15 days of course completion. SGBS Unnati Foundation representative informed that the reason for some students not receiving certificate could be due to them providing incorrect email address.
- **The most helpful components for job performance were Spoken English & Communication (79%, n=100),** Life Skills (66%), Resume writing & interview skills (60%), Values Education (44%), followed by Swayam psychometric assessment (29%), Video resume creation (25%), and E-learning/ULEAPP (20%).

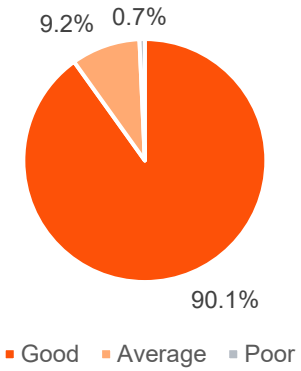
Figure 13: Most helpful UNXT training components in getting/performing job (n=100)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

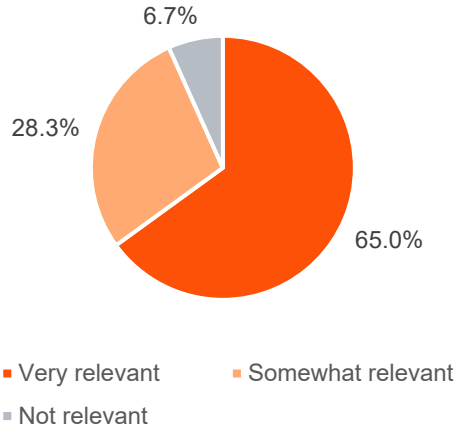
- The **project maintained strict 90%** (some institutions requiring 100%) **attendance** requirements to ensure meaningful engagement for the 90 hours classroom training. During the interactions, students confirmed that all students ensure that they follow the attendance requirements and **certificates are only given to the students who complete the required criteria of attendance and completion of the e-learning content on ULEAPP.**
- **90.1% (n=283) of respondents rated Changemaker teaching quality as "Good"**. One Changemaker shared that they have been with SGBS Unnati Foundation for 10 years now and the **main aspect of the project is the relationship they build with the students**, creating a bond between the students and the trainers. Students also noted during the discussion that **trainers always appeared prepared for sessions with clear daily plans.**

Figure 14: Changemaker Teaching Quality (n=283)



- **65.0% (n=283) rated UNXT curriculum as "Very relevant" to real job market needs**, 28.3% as "Somewhat relevant," and only 6.7% as "Not relevant," displaying alignment with employment requirements.

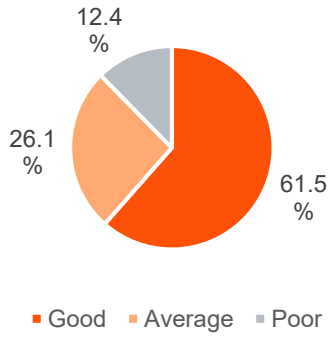
Figure 15: Relevance of UNXT curriculum (n=283)



5. **Technology Platform Adoption and Digital Learning**

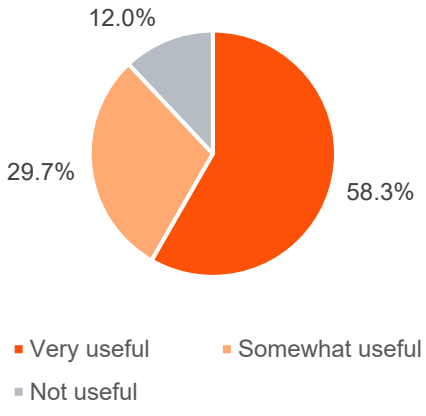
- **During the interactions, students mentioned that the ULEAPP[9] is primarily made for blended learning and ensures that there is a self-learning component** and the platform helps them get in-depth information on topics with more examples and activities to complement classroom learning. **61.5% (n=283) rated ULEAPP content quality as "Good,"** 26.1% as "Average," and 12.4% as "Poor."

Figure 16: ULEAPP Content Quality (n=283)



- **58.3% (n=283) found Swayam assessment "Very useful" in understanding career strengths**, 29.7% "Somewhat useful," and 12.0% "Not useful." **Students shared that they analysed their personality through the report generated from the assessment which suggested their alignment with different career options.**

Figure 17: Usefulness of Swayam Assessment (n=283)



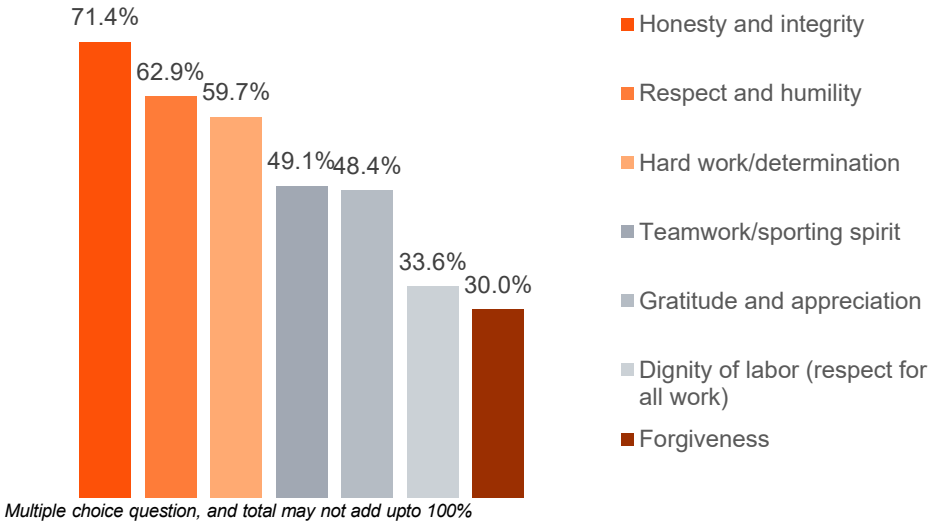
[9] ULEAPP: Unnati Learning App

- However, only 22.2% (n=283) of the respondents reported using the Udhyogam portal. Among those who used Udhyogam portal 45.3% (n=243) found it "Very useful," 32.1% "Somewhat useful," and 22.6% "Not useful" in job search suggesting underutilization of the portal.
- Though the students confirmed that ULEAPP (e-learning app) access continues after training completion. However, actual usage declined post-completion as students became busy with employment, higher studies, or exam preparation with the survey results noting that only 16.3% respondents continued using ULEAPP after training completion.

6. Values Integration and Behavioural Transformation

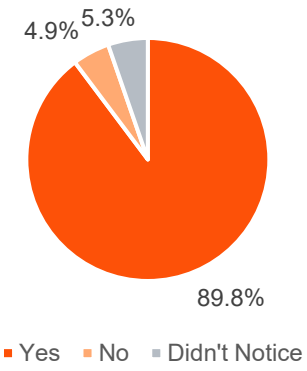
- **During the survey, the respondents reported applying multiple values learned in the training** with Honesty and integrity (71.4%, n=283), Respect and humility (62.9%), Hard work/determination (59.7%), Gratitude and appreciation (48.4%), Teamwork/sporting spirit (49.1%), Dignity of labour (33.6%), and Forgiveness (30.0%) reported to be applied in their daily life.

Figure 18: Values in daily life (n=283)



- **89.8% (n=283) reported their behaviour/ conduct improved at home or social settings after the training**, while 5.0% reported no change and 5.3% didn't notice any change. During the interactions, **one Changemaker revealed that many students themselves came up and acknowledged that the training helped them in their personal lives with positive changes in their behaviour at home**. Additionally, **one Employer stated observing that the UNXT students maintain professional personality and ethics without reminders. They set positive examples for peers enhancing workplace professionalism**.

Figure 19: Improvement in behaviour/conduct (n=283)



7. Family Economic Impact and Social Mobility

- **56.9% (n=283) of respondents reported that their family's financial situation improved since completing UNXT training**, while 43.1% reported no improvement. This was also corroborated during the interactions with the students, where they informed that with their employment, they could **directly contribute** to the range of **₹10,000-25,000 monthly** towards their household income.

- **84.8% reported their living condition improved since completing UNXT training**, with only 15.2% reporting no improvement. During the discussions, **female students placed particular emphasis on gaining empowerment through employment, with one student who was employed sharing that now she was able to support household expenses and had gained more autonomy in family decisions**.

- For students from BPL families (58.7%, n=283), even modest employment represented significant family upliftment. The project has created pathways for first-generation learners to break intergenerational poverty cycles by enhancing their employability.

8. Higher Education Pursuit and Career Clarity

- **33.6% (n=283) of respondents were currently pursuing additional courses/degrees, demonstrating that the training created appetite for continuous learning** rather than viewing training as terminal education.
- **Among those pursuing further studies (n=95), 76.8% reported that the training influenced their decision to pursue higher education** indicating the project's role in shaping educational aspirations.
- When probed further, these **students revealed that the training helped them in their higher studies decisions through instilling confidence in pursuing higher education (90.4%, n=73)**, providing career clarity from Swayam assessment (69.9%), providing information about courses/colleges (54.8%), instilling financial confidence (42.5%) and peer influence (31.5%), demonstrating multi-dimensional impact of the project.

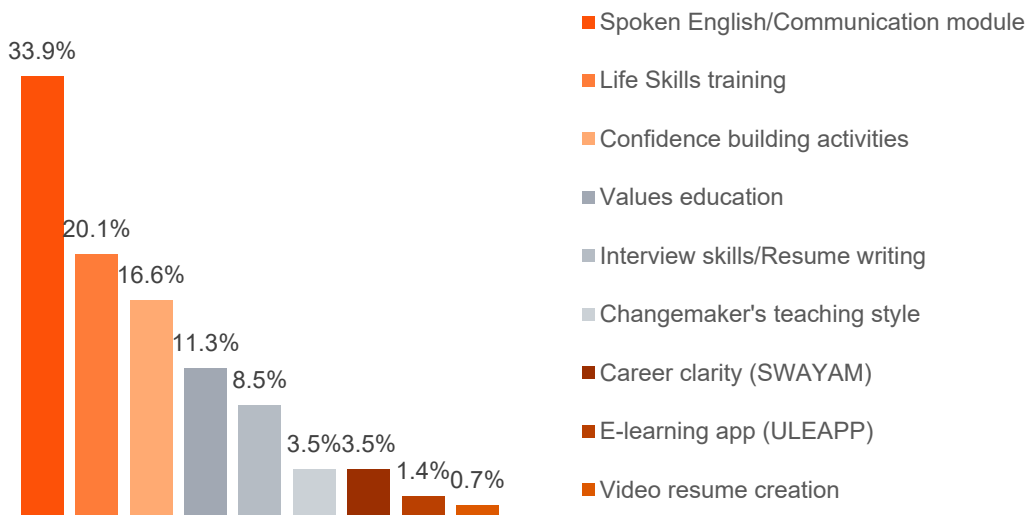
9. Employer Value Proposition and Recruitment Efficiency

- One employer reported **negligible recruitment cost for UNXT students compared to an average of ₹10,000 per conventional hire representing direct cost savings.** They also shared that **UNXT students required 0-3 days induction compared to 6-7 days minimum for regular entry-level hires,** representing reduction in onboarding time and associated supervision costs.
- Further, **one employer rated UNXT students as superior in communication skills and workplace attitude and values.** Also, beyond cost savings, employers stated that they **valued communication skills, attitude towards learning, and commitment to assignments of the UNXT students**.

10. Training Satisfaction and Advocacy

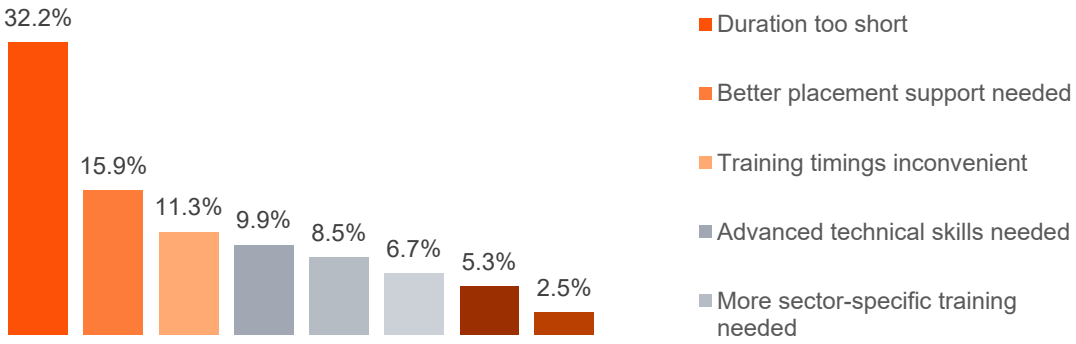
- **84.1% (n=283) of respondents were "Satisfied" with UNXT training**, 13.1% were "Neutral," and only 2.8% were "Dissatisfied," **demonstrating high beneficiary satisfaction**.
- During the survey, it was revealed that **93.3% (n=283) would recommend UNXT training to others** (friends, siblings, juniors) demonstrating strong beneficiary endorsement.
- Additionally, 80.9% reporting to have already recommended UNXT training to others (batchmates, siblings, friends, neighbours) displaying project satisfaction.
- During the survey, it was revealed that **students appreciated Spoken English/ Communication module (33.9%), Life Skills training (20.1%), etc**.

Figure 20: Most liked components of UNXT training (n=283)



- On being probed further during the survey, **students identified shorter training duration (32.2%), better placement support (15.9%), addressing inconvenient training timings (11.3%)** as the major potential improvement areas. During the qualitative interaction with students, they described that the **training duration of 3 hours each for 30 days and the training timings become hectic sometimes as it is parallel to their formal academic studies.** They also described that though there is Udhyogam portal but the options for **placements are sometimes for far off places when they would like them to be local**, which was also corroborated by the SGBS Unnati Foundation representative who informed that **they are now trying to align the placements for the students in their local geography.**

Figure 21: Suggested areas of improvement for UNXT training (n=283)



4.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project from FY 23 (i.e. January, 2023) – FY 26. The overall impact is

calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight refers to the portion of benefits that would have occurred even without the project. For the purpose of this analysis, deadweight has been conservatively assumed at 20-25% to account for the possibility that a portion of the observed outcomes may have occurred in the absence of the intervention due to broader economic conditions, individual motivation, or parallel initiatives. Therefore, while the project contributes significantly to value creation, a portion of the impact is attributed to these external factors.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is taken to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution (by others) estimates the proportion of the impact that can be credited to the efforts of other stakeholders involved. For the current calculations, Attribution by others has been assumed at a higher level of 50–75% to reflect the influence of beneficiaries' prior education, personal effort, and employer-side factors, ensuring that the estimated social value remains conservative and does not overstate project contribution.

Drop-off

Drop-off is incorporated to account for the diminishing benefits over subsequent years, as the impact of the training itself decreases and a larger portion of the returns is attributed to the trainees' own skills and external factors. Accordingly, a drop-off rate of 75% has been applied, reflecting the significant reduction in the direct impact of the training over time and the growing influence of the trainees' individual capabilities in sustaining outcomes such as income gain from employment, income from self-employment, and cost savings per hire.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been arrived at based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)
Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 1,88,54,24,272 across a period from FY 23 to FY 26.

Table 9: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Trained Youth	• Employability training (classroom + e-learning). • Free psychometric assessment (Swayam) for career clarity.	• 1,32,862 youth trained • 1,32,862 gain enhanced communication, confidence, and life skills.	• Youth employed in formal sector. • Youth enrolled in higher education • Youth started businesses/self-employment.	• Employed youth earning income achieving financial stability. • Self-employed youth generating income.

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
	• Placement support through Udhyogam portal. • Lifetime access to ULEAPP e-learning platform.		• Youth are actively job-seeking with enhanced employability. • Increased communication skills, confidence, and work-readiness among all trainees.	• Improved self-esteem, reduced anxiety about future, and a sense of purpose.
Employers	• Engagement through Udhyogam placement portal. • Access to pre-screened, trained candidates. • UNXT certification as quality signal.	• Trained youth hired by employers. • Companies hire from Udhyogam placement portal. • Reduced recruitment time and costs due to pre-screened candidates.	• Lower recruitment and onboarding costs (reduced advertising, screening, training). • Higher quality hires with strong soft skills (communication, teamwork, work ethic).	• Savings per hire on recruitment and onboarding costs.

Note: The data points (pertaining to reach of the project) used in this impact map have been provided by the implementing partner. As this report has been prepared to assess the social impact and calculate the social return on investment of the project only, verification or validation of these data points has not been conducted as part of the study.

Table 10: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution (by others)	Drop-off	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY24	Total value created in FY 25	Total value created in FY 26	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Trained Youth	Income gained from employment	20%	0%	50%	75%	₹ 7,27,79,628	₹ 48,53,71,141	₹ 64,69,96,114	₹ 26,51,01,028	**₹ 1,47,02,47,911**
	Income from self-employment	20%	0%	75%	75%	₹ 21,92,402	₹ 1,46,21,240	₹ 1,94,90,004	₹ 79,85,860	**₹ 4,42,89,506**
Employers	Cost savings per hire	25%	0%	50%	75%	₹ 2,88,64,311	₹ 17,80,65,442	₹ 16,39,57,102	₹ 0	**₹ 37,08,86,855**
Total Impact Created						**₹ 10,38,36,341**	**₹ 67,80,57,823**	**₹ 83,04,43,220**	**₹ 27,30,86,887**	**₹ 1,88,54,24,272**

Table 11: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Financial Proxy Explanation	Source(s)
Trained Youth	Income gain from employment	Financial proxy has been calculated by taking the difference between the pre- and post-UNXT training earnings for employed individuals' basis the survey.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Income from self-employment	Financial proxy has been calculated by taking the difference between the pre- and post-UNXT training earnings for self-employed individuals' basis the survey.	Beneficiary survey findings
For Employers	Cost savings per hire	Based on the qualitative discussion with the employer, the cost savings per hire is ₹ 10,000.	Qualitative interactions

b. SROI Calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.

Total Impact Value = ₹ 1,88,54,24,272

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 20,00,00,000[10]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is considered while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India since FY 23 is considered[11].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact	NPV of Utilisation
₹ 1,62,46,86,475	₹ 17,53,04,578

	SROI Ratio
Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project comes out to be 9.27:1.	**9.27:1**

The SROI value is 9.27. This means that for every ₹ 1 being invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 9.27 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.

- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.

- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.

- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

[10] As per the MoU
[11] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette

4.5 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 12: IRECS Analysis

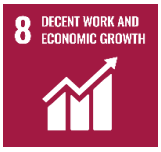
Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project displayed strong inclusiveness as it **targeted government colleges and ITIs serving disadvantaged youth**. • 40.3% of the respondents were female with the rest being male, **58.7% beneficiaries were from BPL families and** 67.5% of the beneficiaries came from rural areas indicating the inclusive nature of the project. • The **project was made accessible without any fees, ensuring no financial barriers. Project actively served first-generation learners from humble socio-economic backgrounds** who lacked exposure to professional development opportunities.
Relevance	• **The project addressed critical employability gaps faced by government college graduates including communication skills** (66.1% had average/poor English before training), interview confidence (80.2% had average/poor confidence), career clarity (69.6% had average/poor future confidence), professional values, and workplace readiness. • **Curriculum components including Spoken English** (rated most helpful by 79%), Life Skills (66%), Values Education (44%), and Resume/Interview Skills (60%) were **highly relevant to beneficiaries' employment needs**. 65.0% rated curriculum as "Very relevant" to job market needs, with 28.3% finding it "Somewhat relevant." • The **project's focus on personality development, professional grooming, and soft skills filled critical gaps** that academic institutions could not address.
Effectiveness	• **Employment increased** from 3.2% before training to 27.9% immediately after and 31.8% at current assessment. Among employed, time to first job averaged 0-6 months for 73.4% of students. • **Income distribution shifted positively** with 23.7% earning ₹10,000-20,000 after training (vs. 7.1% before) and 6.4% earning ₹20,000-30,000. UNXT students commanded 30-40% increased salary of (₹24,000-25,000 vs. ₹17,000-18,000 for regular entry-level). • **English communication skills improved** with 80.9% rating themselves "Good" after training vs. 14.1% before. Interview confidence improved to 81.9% "Good" vs. 19.8% before. Career confidence reached 85.5% "Good" vs. 30.4% before. • 89.8% of beneficiaries reported **behavioural improvements**. 71.4% applied honesty/integrity, 67.5% practiced time management, 62.9% demonstrated respect/humility daily. • 56.9% reported **improved family financial situation**, 84.8% reported improved living conditions. • 33.6% pursued further studies, with 76.8% confirming UNXT training influenced this decision, demonstrating **project's role in educational aspiration building**. • Employers observed **negligible recruitment cost vs. ₹10,000** per conventional hire. **50-100% reduction in onboarding time** (0-3 days vs. 6-7 days) demonstrating superior performance ratings across communication, workplace attitude, and teaching effectiveness. • **84.1% of beneficiaries reported to be satisfied with project,** 93.3% willing to recommend, 80.9% already recommended to others displaying the effectiveness of the project. • **90.1% of beneficiaries rated trainer quality as "Good"** displaying the effectiveness of trainers.

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Convergence	• The **project collaborated with state education departments** of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Kerala, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, and college administrations to implement training in government institutions, though formal MOUs varied by state. • College placement cells benefited from **better-prepared students, leading to improved institutional placement rates.** However, formal linkages with state skill missions (NSDC, Skill India Mission, state-level employment schemes) were limited. • **Private sector convergence through employer partnerships** was emerging but not systematically structured as one of the employers informed that the candidates they hired applied independently rather than being selected from Udhyogam portal. • The project operated **relatively independently with strong institutional support** but lacked deep integration with government skill ecosystems as the project does not directly integrate with the government skill programs. • **Industry partnerships** beyond SGBS Unnati Foundation's direct network require strengthening for assured placement outcomes as all the students trained and willing to be employed do not necessarily get placements.
Sustainability	• The UNXT training **increased employability** and the students started earning through jobs and self-employment contributing towards the project's sustainability. • Government colleges making the training mandatory and providing infrastructure ensures sustained implementation. • Skills learned (communication, values, life skills) have **lifelong utility beyond immediate employment.**

4.6 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project is well aligned with the CSR priorities of Infosys Limited and EdgeVerve Systems Limited, which emphasise support for initiatives that promote education and skill development. The project contributes to Infosys Limited's thematic focus on education and skilling by addressing critical employability barriers faced by disadvantaged youth from government institutions. The project is also aligned with the following **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[12].**

SDG 4 – Quality Education: The project directly contributes to this goal by enhancing educational outcomes through comprehensive soft skills, life skills, and values education. By delivering personality development, communication training, and career guidance across disadvantaged youth in government institutions, the project promotes equitable access to quality skill development that complements academic education.



SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth: The project significantly advances this goal by improving employment outcomes and income levels for marginalized youth. By equipping youth with employability skills, professional values, and job search capabilities, the project facilitates their transition into decent work and contributes to inclusive economic growth.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: The project actively addresses inequality by targeting government institution students from disadvantaged backgrounds and from rural areas. By providing free training and levelling the employability playing field between government and private college graduates, the project reduces disparities in economic opportunities.

4.7 Study Limitation

- **Limited availability of employers for the interactions:** Team faced challenges in interactions with the employers as the implementing partner reported encountering difficulties in mobilising the employers. In addition, the quality and depth of interactions with those employers who did participate were lower than anticipated. As a result, the employer perspectives captured in this assessment may not fully reflect the broader range of employer

[12] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

experiences, and findings related to employer engagement (including in the SROI calculations) may be viewed as indicative rather than comprehensive.

4.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: From Stage Fear to Civil Services Aspiration

Jagriti (name changed), a 22-year-old ITI graduate from rural Uttar Pradesh, came from a daily-wage farming family. Extremely shy with poor English skills, she avoided public speaking entirely and believed professional employment was only for privileged students. Her expected future was local informal work or early marriage.

Initially reluctant, UNXT training transformed her perspective. The Changemaker created a judgment-free environment with daily practice sessions. The Swayam psychometric assessment identified her analytical strengths. When she shared, "Money matters, but I want to do something people remember me for," he suggested civil services—a dream she'd never imagined possible.

Over 30 days, structured English lessons, values education, and life skills training built her confidence and practical abilities. Consistent encouragement developed genuine self-belief. By training's end, Jagriti volunteered for public speaking and prepared a confident video resume. She boldly enrolled in competitive exam coaching, applying her new study skills.

"Before UNXT, I had no confidence. After the training and personality testing, I discovered my potential. Now I believe I can achieve anything. My goal is becoming an IAS officer to serve my community." Her transformation shows how UNXT fundamentally reshapes aspirations and life trajectories beyond immediate employment.

Case Story 2: Breaking Barriers - From Hesitant Student to Confident Professional

Vivek (name changed), a 23-year-old paramedical student from Meerut, came from a financially struggling middle-class family with an unemployed father. Despite completing his Diploma in OT Technology with strong technical knowledge and good scores, he lacked soft skills, professional grooming, and English communication abilities. He was terrified of interviews, couldn't write proper resumes, and showed poor body language. Most critically, he didn't believe in himself. Hence, Vivek couldn't clear initial screenings. He was considering settling for ₹10,000-12,000 at a small nursing home, far below his qualification level.

Initially sceptical about the mandatory UNXT training, Vivek was too shy to participate early on. However, the Changemaker's patient approach through daily spoken English practice, role plays, and debates created a safe learning space. Values education on punctuality, integrity, and dignity of labor helped him realize his financial background didn't define his worth, character and willingness to learn mattered more.

By training's end, Vivek participated actively, maintained eye contact, spoke significantly better English, and believed in himself. Within two months of applying post training, he interviewed at a multi-specialty hospital. He introduced himself confidently, answered technical questions clearly, and impressed the panel with professional demeanour. He secured an OT Technician position at ₹24,000 monthly.

"Before UNXT, I thought good English and confidence were for rich students only. UNXT taught me communication is about speaking properly, maintaining confidence, and presenting yourself well. That mindset shift changed everything." His journey shows how UNXT addresses not just skill gaps but deeper psychological barriers of self-doubt that trap talented disadvantaged youth in underemployment.

5. Project 2: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute - Oriental Studies Research and Preservation

5.1 About the Project

India is globally recognized for its vibrant cultural and traditional heritage, deeply intertwined with its illustrious history, including epic narratives like the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and the legacies of numerous ancient kingdoms. However, the rapid pace of modernization has led to a gradual erosion of this rich cultural tapestry. One contributing factor is the limited availability of published records that document these traditions. While many valuable manuscripts are housed in libraries and archives, they remain largely inaccessible to the general public. Additionally, inscriptions scattered across various regions of the country are often overlooked, resulting in their deterioration over time. Consequently, there is a growing disconnect between contemporary society and India's historical traditions and cultural legacy.

The **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute**, Pune, was established on July 6, 1917, in honor of Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, a pioneering figure in scientific Orientology in India. The institute is dedicated to research in the field of Orientology, aiming to illuminate the world about the extensive knowledge produced in the East, particularly in India. It houses one of the largest collections of rare books and manuscripts, with over 125,000 books and 28,000 manuscripts accumulated over 90 years, covering virtually every aspect of Orientology.[13]

As part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, **Infosys Limited and EdgeVerve Systems Limited** (through its CSR arm – Infosys Foundation) **have come together to support the 'Academic Development Programme'** at the **Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute.** Implemented by the Infosys Foundation, this collaborative project aims to strengthen academic research and cultural preservation through a series of targeted activities, including the following[14]:

1. **Research and Training in Oriental Studies:** Establishment of chairs for eminent scholars and short-term visiting scholars/fellows in various areas of Oriental studies to promote advanced research and knowledge sharing.
2. **Bibliography and Cataloguing of Ancient Texts:** Compilation of bibliographies and preparation of descriptive catalogues of manuscripts to make resources accessible to scholars globally.
3. **Work on Inscriptions:** Collection, verification, and preparation of inscriptions, including translation, summaries, and procurement of images for scholarly use.
4. **Publication and Knowledge Dissemination:** Development of new formats, historical outlines, and support for publication to preserve and share cultural and historical insights.

Figure 22: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

With the support of Infosys Foundation under the Academic Development Programme (ADP), Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute has been undertaking several initiatives. Details of the various initiatives supported as part of this are outlined below:[15]

[13] Source: https://bori.ac.in/
[14] Source: MoU signed between Infosys and Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute and project documents shared by Infosys and Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
[15] Source: Project Progress Report shared by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute

1. Bibliography of Bhagvata Purana:

This initiative focused on compiling a bibliography of the Bhagavata Purana, drawing from various sources such as online databases and libraries in three languages: Marathi, Hindi, and English. It also covered materials related to the Bhagavata Purana tradition in Maharashtra. The first volume of the bibliography has been published. A notable aspect of this bibliography is that, in addition to scholarly works, it includes books and articles intended for passionate readers and followers of the Bhagavata Purana tradition which is the **only Purana that continues to have a living tradition across multiple regions of India**. The **bibliography features a total of 2,573 entries**, encompassing both books and articles.

2. History of Ritualistic Tradition of Atharvaveda:

This initiative aimed to **reconstruct the history of the ritualistic tradition of the Atharvaveda** through the study of both published and unpublished documents, complemented by field visits and interviews with traditional Atharvaveda reciters. The final work is titled “Ritualistic Tradition of Atharvaveda”.

3. Collection of Kadamba Inscriptions:

The initiative aimed to collect published inscriptions and obtain printable images of those unpublished. It involved preparing texts of published inscriptions as translations, summaries, or images, translating inscriptions with new formats, and summarizing the rest. Additionally, images of unpublished inscriptions were procured and processed similarly. Finally, the initiative sought to outline the history of the Kadambas and their contemporary culture based on inscriptions and other sources. As of FY 25, a total of **507 inscriptions has been edited**, 603 books, journals, and theses have been read or referenced, and a **comprehensive descriptive chart of 570 Kadamba inscriptions** has been prepared.

4. Descriptive Catalogue of Epics and Purana-s Manuscripts:

The initiative aimed to compile a descriptive catalogue of **1,803 Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Purana manuscripts from the Bhandarkar Institute’s Government Manuscripts Collection**. A computerized subject-wise list was created, and descriptions and data entry for **1,466 manuscripts** have been completed. Critical editions were regularly consulted, and two research papers were presented based on the work.

5. Nyaya and Mimamsa:

The initiative aimed to compile a descriptive catalogue of **Nyaya and Mimamsa manuscripts** from the Government Manuscripts Collection at the Bhandarkar Institute. As of FY 25, a total of **640 manuscripts** has been described.

The project has engaged visiting Scholars and Fellows to conduct independent research in the field of Orientology. Visiting Fellows, who are post-doctoral or Ph.D. students specializing in any area of Orientology, are appointed for terms ranging from one week to one month. They are formally recognized as "Infosys Fellows." Visiting Scholars are established experts (either currently employed or retired) appointed for terms of two to six months. These experts are formally designated as "Infosys Scholars."

In addition to these major initiatives, Infosys Scholars and Fellows have conducted independent initiatives, publishing their findings in the form of books and articles. Notable works include studies on *Shivrajabhishekprayog, the Palaeolithic Cultures of Maharashtra, Rasopanisad, Kshatrapati Sambhaji Maharajanchi Rajniti, and Reinventing Ellora.*

5.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment study employed an integrated and cohesive approach to evaluate the project’s social impact. Study began with a kick-off meeting with the Infosys Foundation team, followed by a briefing call with the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute team. These interactions provided the research team with valuable insights into the specific support elements of the project.

Following these meetings, the Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP) team received the following project documents for desk review:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed with Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute detailing the project specifics and modalities
- **Project Progress Reports** detailing the activities carried out progressively

Accordingly, the PWCALLP team conducted a desk review of the aforementioned documents, leveraging insights gained from the kick-off meeting. This process aided in designing the assessment framework and finalizing the key stakeholders for engagement.

Given the nature of the project, a **qualitative research design** was strategically employed to facilitate a comprehensive evaluation of its impact. This methodological approach prioritized the collection of rich, descriptive data through direct engagement with key stakeholders via **semi-structured in-depth interviews with various stakeholders.** By emphasizing subjective narratives and lived experiences, the study enabled a deeper interpretive analysis of stakeholder perceptions, contextual nuances, and emergent themes, thereby offering a multidimensional understanding of the project's outcomes and implications. Specifically, the qualitative methods employed included:

Figure 23: Research design for the study

- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Director of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute
- **Two In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Chair of Orientology
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Professor
- **Three In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Infosys Scholar
- **Three In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Infosys Fellow
- **Three In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Chief Investigator
- **Three In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Research Assistants (5 IDIs)
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Foundation

5.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

The team identified the following challenges that surfaced prior to the implementation of project interventions:

- **Persistent Financial Constraints**: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute is an old, prestigious institute that solely depended on donations and goodwill funding from various donors. This limited and unstable funding made it difficult for the institute to run its daily operations smoothly and, crucially, to adequately compensate scholars and researchers. This financial constraint hindered the institute from scaling up research activities and expanding its academic output.

- **Inability to Properly Support Scholars**: Due to limited funds, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute could not afford to provide appropriate honoraria or fellowships to scholars and researchers, who are essential to maintaining and enhancing research quality. Many talented researchers had to rely on their own projects with minimal institutional support, which impacted on the timely completion and quality of scholarly work.

- **Fragmented and Incomplete Manuscript Documentation:** While Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute housed a rich collection of manuscripts, many were unpublished, poorly or not catalogued, or existed only in varied formats and languages. This made it difficult for scholars to access, study, or disseminate this knowledge. The lack of systematic cataloguing hindered the wider academic community from benefiting from these resources.

- **Need for Academic and Capacity Building Support**: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute sought to revitalize Oriental studies and related fields but lacked systematic support to mentor young scholars and build a robust academic community. Without dedicated chairs, fellowships, or structured programmes, the institute faced challenges attracting and retaining young talent and facilitating knowledge exchange.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

1. **Strengthened Academic Excellence and Capacity Building**

- The establishment of the **'Infosys Foundation Chair of Orientology'** and the **'Karnataka Chair of Orientology,'** along with the support provided to visiting scholars, fellows, principal investigators, and research assistants, has fostered a vibrant and dynamic academic ecosystem at Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. As highlighted by the Director of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, these positions have attracted **eminent scholars from across the globe**, fostering sustained engagement with young researchers. This mentorship and collaboration have **elevated scholarly rigor, encouraged interdisciplinary knowledge exchange**, and significantly strengthened research capacity, ensuring the continued growth and vitality of Oriental studies.

Figure 24: Plaque depicting Infosys' support for the programme

- Previously, while reputable scholars were drawn to the institute due to its goodwill, this project enabled Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute **to address the financial resources constraints to adequately compensate** them or ensure the quality and timely completion of research. Scholars often brought their own projects, with the institute providing limited support. Since the launch of this project, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute has been able to **remunerate scholars and fellows appropriately, resulting in higher-quality research outputs[16].**

- The Director further explained that the **selection of scholars and fellows follows a pre-defined**, rigorous process. Applicants submit detailed proposals which are then evaluated by senior evaluators who are experienced researchers in the field, followed by written tests and personal interviews, **ensuring that only high-quality researchers are appointed**.

- According to one of the Chairs, these scholars regularly interact with junior researchers and conduct numerous workshops[17], **enriching academic collaboration**. Junior researchers receive comprehensive training on research methodologies, including effective literature search techniques, manuscript reading skills, and critical components to include in their research projects, thereby **enhancing their academic competence**.

[16] During our interactions, we probed the institute representative to understand the remuneration of scholars and fellows but the request was declined owing to confidentiality.
[17] The institute was unable to share the quantitative output (such as number of workshops and participants) during our interactions as they don't maintain documentation.

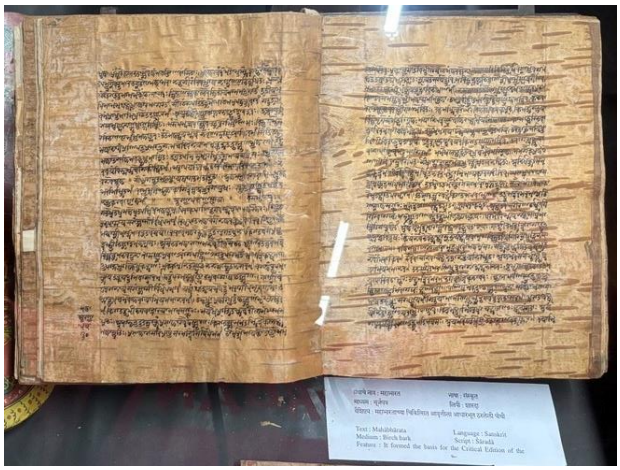
- Infosys Scholars themselves expressed appreciation for the **supportive academic environment** and **mentorship** at Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. They highlighted that this has helped them **develop confidence and the necessary skills** to independently conduct research projects.

> “Following the support from Infosys Foundation, we have been fortunate to receive assistance from several other CSR organizations that have contributed to various aspects of the institute, such as library infrastructure development, digital learning programs, and the digitization of books and manuscripts. This wider support has come about largely because of the trust and confidence these organizations have in the Infosys Foundation.”
>
> **Narrated by Principal Investigator during our interactions**

2. Comprehensive Bibliographic and Cataloguing Efforts Improved Resource Accessibility and Organization

- Projects such as the **comprehensive bibliography of the Bhagavata Purana and the descriptive catalogues of manuscripts** related to epics (Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas) and philosophical texts (Nyaya and Mimamsa) **transformed fragmented and scattered sources** into **well-organized, searchable, and accessible resources.**

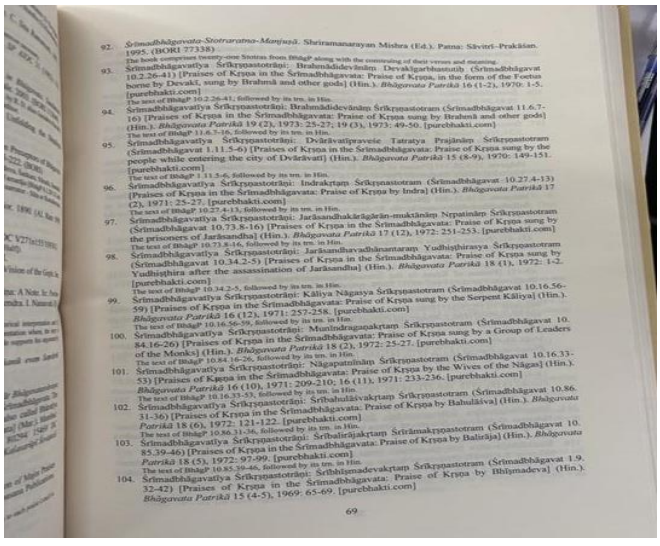
Figure 25: Mahabharata Manuscripts



- Under the Bibliography of Bhagavata Purana, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute has **collected research articles published by scholars on various sections of the Bhagavata Purana**. Based on these articles, they have developed a comprehensive bibliography that includes detailed summaries, publication years, author names, and links to available digital sources.

- During the compilation of the Bhagavata Purana bibliography, research assistants classified the content into **thematic categories such as Raslila and picturisation of Krishna, systematically creating detailed entries** (or ‘gists’) for each item along with references including **publication year, author names, and digital sources, enhancing the precision and usability of the resource.**

Figure 26: Bibliography of Bhagavata Purana



- The creation of computerized, subject-wise catalogues and thorough bibliographic entries has democratized **access to these rare and ancient texts, allowing scholars worldwide, alongside the general public, to efficiently locate, cross-reference, and analyze these invaluable collections**, thereby significantly advancing research and preservation efforts.

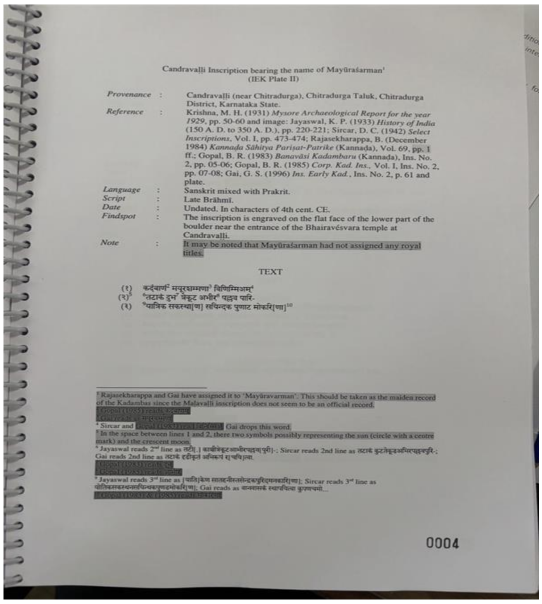
- Principal investigators highlighted that such detailed **bibliographies and catalogues serve as indispensable tools for new students and researchers**, enabling them to engage with primary sources without having to consult original manuscripts directly, thus **streamlining the research process and saving substantial time and effort.**

- Beyond serving as ready reference tools, the work on the ***Bhagavata Purana*** **bibliography and manuscript cataloguing has deeply enriched the knowledge and expertise of principal investigators and research assistants themselves**. Their direct engagement with diverse manuscripts improved their understanding, and they acquired proficiency in various scripts essential for manuscript study, thereby strengthening the overall research capacity within the institute.

> “Bibliography of the Bhagavata Purana was useful not just for researchers but also for regular readers and religious followers. By making such easy to access materials, the project connected deep academic knowledge with the way these traditions were practiced. This helped keep the culture alive and meaningful for more people.”
>
> **Narrated by Director of BORI during our interactions**

3. **Preservation and Documentation of Manuscripts and Inscriptions Preserved Intangible Heritage**

Figure 27: Descriptive Catalogue of Kadamba Inscriptions



- The project carefully collected, edited, translated, and published over **500 inscriptions from the ancient Kadamba kingdom**[18]. These old and fragile inscriptions talk about the **politics, society, and culture of that time**. By putting this information into easy-to-understand formats with translations and summaries, the project not only **protects these valuable historical records but also makes them available to scholars** all over the world. This will be helpful to improve knowledge of India’s local history.

- Almost all the stakeholders echoed that previously **published Kadamba inscriptions contained inaccuracies**, which were rectified through expert consultation and careful editing, resulting in more accurate and reliable resources for researchers.

- As reported by principal investigator, the project has worked towards saving important traditions that were passed down by word of mouth, especially the **ritual practices of the Atharvaveda**. Researchers studied both **published and unpublished documents** and visited communities to talk with traditional Atharvaveda practitioners. This helped in preserving unique knowledge and rituals that might have been lost because of modern changes.

- The principal investigator stated that they **not only studied texts but also gathered stories and information from living Atharvaveda communities**. Since many of these traditions were fading, documenting them **helped preserve this valuable heritage**. This approach revitalized interest among both scholars and local communities, effectively connecting academic research with living cultural practices.

4. **Publication of Books, Research Papers, and Digital Resources Amplified Knowledge Dissemination**

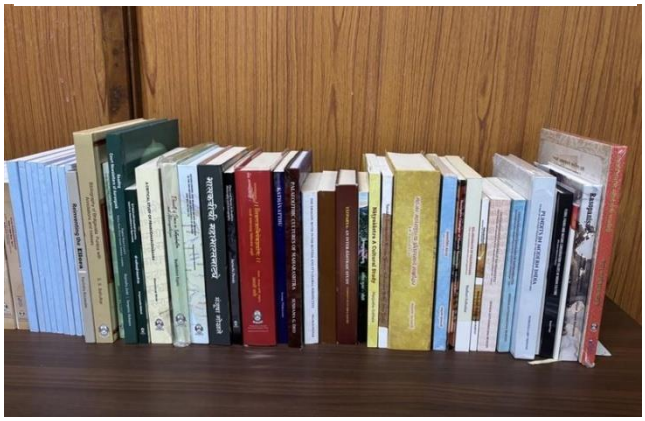
- As reported by a professor of Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, the project has produced **42 published books and 33 research articles**, alongside digital publications, lectures, and presentations. This extensive output has **greatly expanded the reach of Indian cultural, historical, and religious knowledge, making it more accessible to diverse audiences**.

- By disseminating research through Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute’s website, the project has **enriched academic discourse while reaching a broader audience**, including students, researchers, and the general public. This has significantly enhanced awareness and appreciation of India’s Oriental heritage at both national and international levels.

[18] Source: Progress Report shared by Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute

- The availability of digital publications has **significantly improved global access to project's research outputs**. This has facilitated **increased scholarly interaction across continents**, including Europe and the USA, enabling greater collaboration and exchange of ideas. A chief investigator highlighted that the project has **elevated** Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute**'s profile through international academic recognition**, enabling participation in global conferences and fostering fruitful academic exchanges with institutions worldwide.

Figure 28: Books Published under the Project

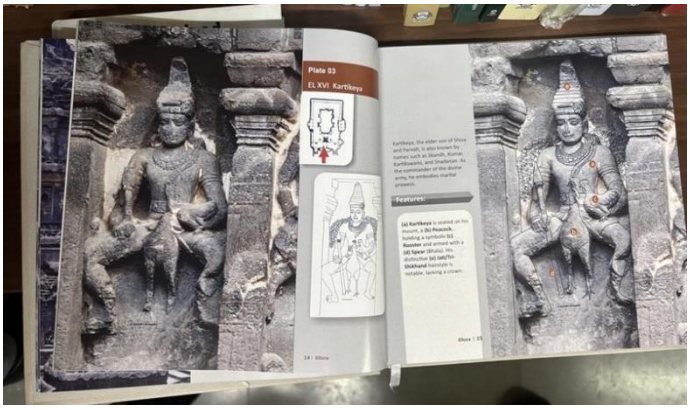


- The wide-ranging dissemination of diverse research topics has not only bolstered Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute's standing as a premier Oriental studies institution but also raised global awareness and understanding of India's rich cultural and historical heritage. However, it was also noted that the **books developed under the project are currently published only on** Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute**'s website**, limiting access primarily to those already familiar with the institute or interested in Oriental studies.

5. Independent Research by Infosys Scholars and Fellows Fostered Diversity and Innovation

- Beyond the core projects, **independent research conducted by Infosys Scholars and Fellows broadened the scope of inquiry into diverse topics** such as Shivrajabhishekprayog, Palaeolithic cultures of Maharashtra, Rasopanisad translations, political histories, and art history of Ellora.

Figure 29: Independent research book titled Reinventing the Ellora published



- This diversity of **research topics encouraged innovative approaches to Oriental studies**, **enriched the academic profile of** Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute**,** and attracted new scholars and audiences, expanding the institute's intellectual impact across varied disciplines.

- Scholars appreciated the **financial and infrastructural support provided under this project, which allowed them to focus fully on their research without funding worries**. The supportive academic environment, including access to libraries, administrative support, and mentorship, was highly valued and considered crucial to their productive research experience.

- Several scholars shared that the project **enabled them to complete important research work and publications, which enhanced their academic reputation and career prospects**. Some secured academic positions and awards based on their contributions. The project also opened pathways to international collaboration and scholarly exchanges.

> "I am extremely grateful for the support provided by the Infosys Foundation. It is solely because of this support that I have been able to pursue my dream of reinventing the art and sculpture of the Ellora Caves."
>
> **Narrated by Infosys Fellow during our interactions**

5.4 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 13: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project demonstrates strong **inclusiveness** by supporting **a diverse spectrum of scholars, ranging from eminent chairs and visiting fellows to junior research assistants**, thereby providing opportunities for both experienced academics and emerging talents. • Nearly **49% of the Infosys scholars and fellows are female**, reflecting a commitment to gender balance and equal representation. • Additionally, the project's efforts to **digitize and publish resources have expanded accessibility beyond the academic community** to include the general public, non-specialists, and cultural enthusiasts, significantly broadening participation and engagement with India's rich heritage.
Relevance	• The project is relevant as it **addresses the need to preserve and document India's rich and rare Oriental heritage**, encompassing ancient manuscripts, inscriptions, and oral traditions. • The project addresses the **challenge of preserving Indian stories and cultures** that, unlike many Western traditions, have been largely transmitted orally or through limited texts, much of which has been lost or destroyed. While the full long-term impact of these efforts may be difficult to quantify, their significance is profound, **playing a vital role in safeguarding our rich cultural heritage for future generations.** • Various initiatives under this project such as the bibliography of the **Bhagavata Purana**, the study of **Atharvaveda ritualistic traditions**, and the documentation of **Kadamba inscriptions** specifically target critical gaps in existing knowledge and resources. • The project **aligns closely with efforts to safeguard cultural heritage in the face of modernization and the gradual loss of traditional practices**. Moreover, its research outputs serve multiple purposes, benefiting academic scholarship, cultural education, and religious communities, thereby ensuring comprehensive and lasting relevance.
Effectiveness	• The project has demonstrated strong **effectiveness** through the successful **completion and publication of 42 books, 33 research articles**, and numerous digital resources, significantly enhancing both research quality and visibility. • Comprehensive **cataloguing and bibliographic** efforts have further **improved the accessibility and usability of valuable research resources**. • Mentorship and training programmes have **effectively developed research capacity among young scholars**, while rigorous selection and ongoing monitoring have **ensured high-quality** and meaningful academic contributions. • Despite **challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic**, the project showed flexibility and resilience, delivering outcomes with minimal delays. • Additionally, **digital publishing and participation in international conferences have expanded** the project's global reach and facilitated scholarly exchange.
Convergence	• The project facilitated convergence by involving **visiting research scholars and fellows from various educational institutions**, fostering a collaborative academic environment. • Following the support from Infosys, **several other CSR organizations also stepped forward to contribute** to different aspects of the institute, including **library infrastructure** development, **digital learning** programmes, and the **digitization of books and manuscripts**. This expanding network of partnerships demonstrates strong collaboration across stakeholders. • Additionally, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute established partnerships with external entities such as **libraries and research institutes**, enhancing data collection efforts and enabling effective pooling of resources to support the project's objectives.

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Sustainability	• The project promotes sustainability by **creating digital archives and publications** that ensure long-term accessibility of research outputs. Additionally, the scholars, fellows and research assistants trained through the project **contribute to building a self-sustaining research ecosystem capable of ongoing scholarly work.** • Team noted that the Chairs established under the project cannot be sustained after the closure of this project by Infosys. However, the Infosys's involvement has encouraged several other CSR agencies to come forward and support various aspects of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute institution.

5.5 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project is aligned with the respective CSR Policy of **EdgeVerve Systems Limited** and **Infosys Limited**[19], which identifies (a) **education** and (b) **promotion of national heritage, art, and culture**, as key thematic areas. The project is also aligned with the following **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)**[20]**.**

SDG 4: Quality Education: The project enhances **quality education by building research capacity through fellowships, mentorship, and training programmes**, while improving access to ancient manuscripts and scholarly resources via comprehensive cataloguing, bibliographies, and digital publications, thus supporting inclusive and lifelong learning in Oriental studies.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities: By preserving **tangible and intangible cultural heritage including manuscripts, inscriptions, and living ritual traditions**, the project safeguards community identity and heritage against the effects of modernisation, contributing to the cultural sustainability and resilience of communities for future generations.

5.6 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

5.7 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Reviving the Atharvaveda Ritualistic Tradition

The traditional ritual practices of the Atharvaveda, one of the ancient Vedas of India, were gradually fading due to modernization, cultural changes, and a significant lack of systematic documentation. As older generations passed on and modern lifestyles took precedence, many unique rituals and oral traditions were at risk of being lost forever, threatening an important part of India's spiritual and cultural heritage.

Recognizing the urgency to preserve this intangible heritage, researchers undertook a multi-faceted approach under the Infosys Foundation-supported project, which involved extensive field visits to remote communities still practicing these rituals. Alongside oral histories and community interviews, they rigorously studied both published and unpublished manuscripts related to Atharvaveda traditions. Through careful reconstruction and documentation, the team pieced together a more complete picture of the ritualistic practices, ensuring they were recorded accurately and comprehensively.

The project culminated in the publication of scholarly works and the creation of digital resources that now serve as permanent records of the Atharvaveda's ritualistic traditions. These resources provide accessible materials for scholars, practitioners, and cultural enthusiasts alike, breathing new life into the study and practice of these ancient

[19] Source: https://www.infosys.com/investors/corporate-governance/documents/corporate-social-responsibility-policy.pdf
[20] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

rituals. By preserving and revitalizing these endangered traditions, the project has enriched the field of Vedic studies and strengthened cultural identity for future generations. It has fostered renewed academic interest and community awareness, creating a vital bridge between the past's oral traditions and contemporary cultural expression.

"This project not only saved knowledge from disappearing but connected academic study with living tradition"- Principal Investigator

Case Story 2: Sangita Devi- Growing as a Scholar through the Atharvaveda Research Project at Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute

Sangita Devi (Name Changed) completed her master's degree in Sanskrit in FY 22 and joined the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute as a Research Assistant in FY 22. Motivated by a strong interest in India's ancient knowledge systems, she became involved in the Atharvaveda project, a research initiative aimed at preserving and studying one of the important Vedas and its ritualistic traditions.

Upon joining the project, Sangita received comprehensive training and mentorship from senior scholars and research staff at Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute. She was guided on how to conduct academic research, read and interpret ancient manuscripts, and prepare detailed bibliographies. The supportive environment allowed her to freely discuss challenges and questions, facilitating rapid learning. The project also provided access to multiple libraries and research resources, enabling her to crosscheck and validate references thoroughly. The structured mentorship helped build her confidence in research methodologies and academic writing.

Through her work on the Atharvaveda project, Sangita contributed significantly by typesetting materials, preparing consolidated bibliographies of articles and books, and visiting various libraries for cross-referencing. Her enhanced research capabilities allowed her to author several research papers and gain a deeper understanding of ritualistic studies related to the Atharvaveda. Importantly, her participation in the project helped her qualify for critical academic certifications such as the State Eligibility Test (SET) and the National Eligibility Test (NET), which are prerequisites for assistant professorship and doctoral studies in India. Sangita also noted that the project created more opportunities at Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute for emerging scholars like herself, expanding the academic community and enriching the institute's research environment.

6. Project 3: eVidyaloka- Rural Digital and STEM Education Programme

6.1 About the Project

In rural India, government schools continue to face chronic challenges such as shortages of teachers, limited subject expertise, and inadequate exposure to digital and STEM[21]-based learning. These gaps have contributed to inconsistent teaching quality, weak foundational understanding, and widening learning disparities between rural and urban students. Children in Grades 5 to 10 are particularly impacted, as these years are critical for strengthening conceptual clarity and academic confidence.

To address these systemic barriers, **Infosys Limited and EdgeVerve Systems Limited** (through its CSR arm – Infosys Foundation), under their commitment to promote equitable and technology-enabled education, partnered with **eVidyaloka Trust** to implement the Rural Digital and STEM Education Programme. This project aims to enhance learning outcomes in government schools through a digital classroom model supported by trained volunteer teachers from across India and abroad.

The project supported **375 government schools**, benefiting students primarily from **Grades 5 to 10** across key subjects including **Mathematics, Science, and English**[22]. In addition to live classes, the programme integrated STEM-enrichment modules, digital learning content, Artificial intelligence (AI) structured assessments, and enrichment resources to ensure a holistic learning experience. The intervention included the following core components:

- **Digital Classroom Enablement** – equipping schools with internet connectivity, display screens, digital content access, and necessary technological infrastructure.
- **STEM and Foundational Learning Resources** – including curated videos, worksheets, experiments, and conceptual learning modules to strengthen comprehension and problem-solving skills.
- **On-ground Digital Centre Coordinators** – community-based facilitators responsible for managing attendance, classroom setup, and ensuring student engagement.

Figure 30: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

[21] Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
[22] Source: Project documents/ information received from eVidyaloka Trust

6.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The PWCALLP team initiated the engagement through a kick-off call with the Infosys team to define clear evaluation criteria. This preliminary discussion helped the team in (a) **defining the scope of work, (b) aligning stakeholder expectations, and (c) developing a comprehensive understanding of the project's design and implementation strategy**. Following this, the team obtained the subsequent project documentation from the Infosys team and implementing partner:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed with eVidyaloka Trust
- **List of school details supported** under this project (state-wise)

The team conducted a **comprehensive desk review** of the provided documents to deepen their **understanding of the project**, **develop a robust assessment framework, and identify key stakeholders for interactions,** in line with the preliminary interactions with project team.

Following the IRECS framework, the research employed a **structured approach to assess the project's impact.** IRECS focuses on gauging the impact of development programmes on various parameters such as Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness (and efficiency), Convergence, and Sustainability, giving an overall assessment of the project in terms of producing the intended project outcomes. It also helps in gaining a qualitative understanding of the impact created, stakeholder perception, and the extent of collaboration with other partners.

In consultation with Infosys, a **mixed-method approach** combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies was deployed to conduct the impact assessment study. The **quantitative component** focused on generating measurable insights and evidence regarding both current and projected impacts of the intervention. **Qualitative method** was utilised to capture stakeholder perspectives, and lived experiences, translating them into deeper understanding of the project's actual impact on beneficiaries. The research design incorporated multiple data collection techniques: quantitative methods such as **structured surveys** complemented by qualitative approaches including **Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs), Small Group Discussion (SDG)** and **In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with key stakeholders:

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 31: Research design for the study

- **Quantitative surveys** with a sample of **281 S**tudents*
- **One Focused Group Discussion (FGD)** with Students and Parents
- **One Small Group Discussion (SGD)** with eVidyaloka's content development team
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI) each** with Volunteer Teacher, Headmaster, Field Coordinator and Class Assistant
- **One Key Informant Interview (KII)** with eVidyaloka representative
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** (kick-off meeting) with Infosys Foundation team

*Based on the data shared by Implementing Partner, it was noted that **~52,000 beneficiary students** have been covered under the project. Hence, a sample size of **272** was estimated at 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, we have covered more sample size (**281**) to ensure the appropriate representation of the findings from all the 10 villages in our sample. The sample was distributed proportionately to the three selected states basis the footfall and further equally distributed among the selected schools for sampling. The quantitative sampling distribution was as below:

Table 14: Distribution of quantitative sample across schools

State	District	School Names	Sample Covered
Karnataka	Raichur	GHPS Marchatahal	26
		GHPS Dinni	26
		GHPS Aroli	26
		GHPS Turukondana	27
		GHPS Palakanamaradi	28
Rajasthan	Karauli	GSSS Atewa	42
		GSSS Sapotra	28
		GSSS Batda	23
Maharashtra	Ahmednagar	ZPPS Dahigaon	29
		ZPPS Ukkadgaon	26
Total			**281**

6.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with key stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

The team noted following challenges that emerged prior to project intervention:

- **Shortage of subject-specific teachers**: Many schools did not have dedicated teachers for Mathematics, Science, and English. Existing staff were often required to manage multiple grades and subjects simultaneously, which reduced instructional depth and consistency. As it was noted during the interaction with the Headmaster that they only had four teachers for seven grades and it was hard to complete the whole syllabus.

- **Limited exposure to STEM and activity-based learning**: Students had minimal access to experimental learning tools, digital content, or practical demonstrations, particularly in Science and Mathematics. Most learning remained textbook-driven, resulting in weak conceptual understanding. The Class Assistant mentioned that students had less exposure to technology and activity-based learning. Also, many students were weak in English and in understanding concepts in Mathematics and Science.

- **Insufficient digital infrastructure**: Several schools lacked basic technological resources such as internet connectivity, display screens, or digital teaching tools. This prevented the use of modern, interactive pedagogy and constrained opportunities for digital literacy. According to the eVidyaloka representative, challenges included no electricity, no internet, no proper roads to reach schools and remote geography. This prevented the use of modern, interactive pedagogy and constrained opportunities for digital literacy.

- **Minimal exposure to digital literacy and emerging technologies such as AI for teachers and students**: Before the project, students and teachers had little to no awareness of digital tools or AI (Artificial Intelligence) as confirmed by the class assistant. Schools did not have the capacity to introduce AI-driven personalised learning, analytics-based feedback, or digital self-learning platforms. As a result, rural learners were disconnected from emerging technology trends increasingly shaping the future of education.

- **Limited community awareness of digital education models**: Parents and community stakeholders had low awareness of technology-enabled education and volunteer-led digital instruction. As a result, home-level academic support remained limited, and initial adoption of digital learning required orientation and sensitization.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

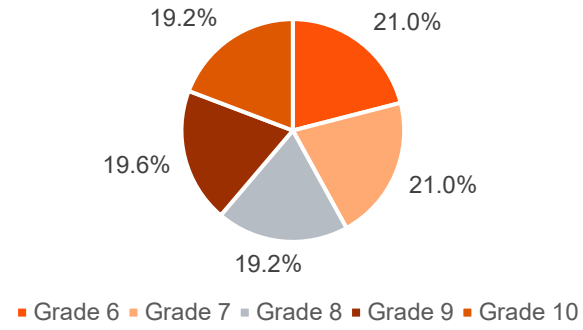
This section summarizes the findings from the impact assessment study, forming the evidence base for recommendations and future project enhancements.

1. Profile of the respondents

Below analysis presents the profile of the respondents based on various demographic indicators including age, gender and economic profile depicted in below representations:

- The largest proportion of respondents (**21.0%, n=281) were students from 6th and 7th grade**, while 19.6% of respondents were from 9th grade (Figure 32)**.**
- The respondent profile comprised **52.7% (n=281) males and 47.3% females**. The team maintained a **balanced gender distribution** to ensure that the survey findings adequately represent both male and female perspectives.

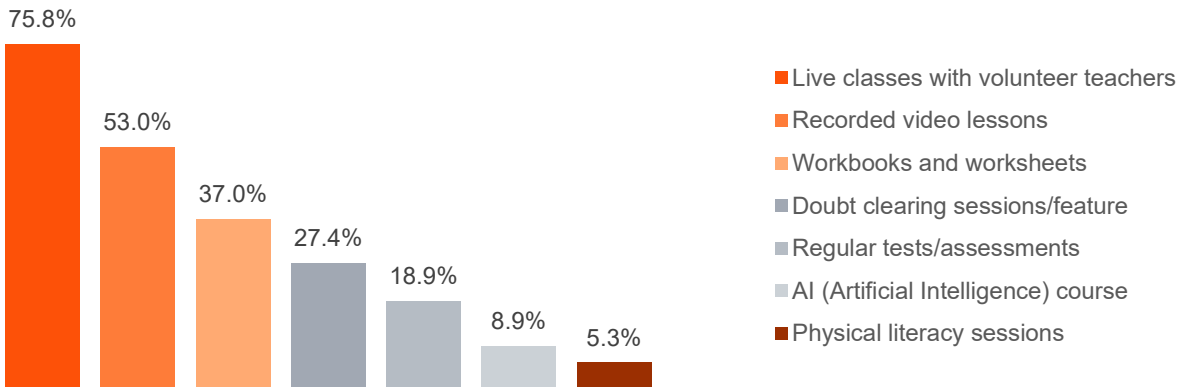
Figure 32: Grade-wise Distribution (n=281)



2. Increased Access to quality education through online medium

- Team noted that **physical infrastructure was established at the project schools** to facilitate service delivery, including **laptops, network routers, monitors, web cameras, and speakers installed in dedicated digital classrooms to provide respondents with access to quality online education**. Furthermore, **solar panels and inverters were installed** to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply at the schools.
- The **Digital Classroom setup enables volunteer teachers to connect with students for conducting live classes in rural government schools situated in remote areas.** These classes, covering Mathematics, Science, and English, are **delivered in the regional language to enhance students' comprehension** of the lessons. The classes are **conducted during regular school hours within the school premises**, where supplementary resources such as recorded videos, workbooks, and worksheets remain accessible to the students.
- Respondents further reported the **utilisation of live classes with volunteer teachers (75.8%)** as one of the major benefits followed by recorded video lessons (53.0%) (Figure 33).

Figure 33: Benefits utilised by the respondents (n=281)



**Multiple Coding Question, Responses may not add up to 100%.*

- It was noted that **each subject receives 45-minute live instructional sessions conducted twice weekly with 25-30 sessions per grade per subject annually** focusing on conceptual learning rather than completing textbooks during the live classes which strengthened the access to quality education. The project enhanced learning effectiveness through regional language delivery. Videos include both audio explanations and subtitles in regional languages, enabling students to comprehend concepts more easily. Volunteer teachers blend English instruction with local language explanations, with Class Assistants providing real-time translation support when needed.

- In instances where **students missed the class or volunteer teachers are unavailable, Class Assistants conduct worksheet activities and offline revision sessions utilising recorded sessions and workbooks, which remain accessible for students.**

Basis the responses received from respondents on different benefits availed under the project (Figure 33), the subsequent sub-sections depict the analysis of such benefits using corresponding sample size (n) as mentioned below:

- Live classes with volunteer teachers (n=213 i.e. 75.8% of 281)
- Recorded video lessons (n=149 i.e. 53.0% of 281)
- Workbooks and worksheets (n=104 i.e. of 37.0% of 281)
- Doubt clearing sessions/feature (n=77 i.e. of 27.4% of 281)
- Regular tests/assessments (n=53 i.e. of 18.9% of 281)
- AI (Artificial Intelligence) course (n=25 i.e. of 8.9% of 281)
- Physical literacy sessions (n=15 i.e. of 5.3% of 281)

3. Enhanced learning experience for the respondents

Relevance of the content

- Live classes, recorded videos, workbooks, worksheets, doubt-clearing sessions, and assessments were all **developed and delivered in the students' preferred/regional language**. This **approach has facilitated quality teaching and depth of learning, enabling students to grasp concepts more effectively** in their preferred/regional language. It should be noted that the language of communication for the AI course and physical literacy sessions was not assessed in this study, as these components were in their initial stages of implementation at the time of evaluation.

Table 15: Alignment with preferred/regional language

	Live classes (n=213)	Recorded video (n=149)	Workbooks and worksheets (n=104)	Doubt sessions (n=77)	Assessments (n=53)
Preferred/regional language	93.0%	92.6%	96.2%	87.0%	81.8%

Based on interactions with students, team noted that **students report improved comprehension of complex subjects when instruction is provided in a language they are fluent in.** Students shared that the volunteers use simple language and show pictures to help the students understand better and when the volunteer teacher sometimes speaks only English, the Class Assistant explains the lessons again after the class (if needed). This indicates that the project has been able to reduce cognitive load, allowing students to **focus on learning the subjects rather translating it**. Students also added that lessons delivered in their native language has **boosted their interest and motivation**. They **feel more included and participate actively** in class discussions and academic activities.

During the FGD, **parents highlighted improved retention of information and concepts over time among their children** as they observed that videos and pictures help children remember with small experiments and activities making learning fun. The Content Development Team confirmed that delivering content in regional languages has allowed volunteer teachers to incorporate contextual examples based on geography that make learning more relatable and meaningful **to enhance comprehension and long-term retention.**

- **Majority of the student respondents (97.9%, n=281)** reported that **topics covered in the digital classroom aligned with their regular school textbook curriculum** which enhanced teaching and learning effectiveness. This alignment deepened students' school learning by presenting curriculum-prescribed concepts through enhanced pedagogical methods including videos, demonstrations, contextual examples. Further, the **learning content was in alignment to the state boards and NCERT curriculum as the**

project focussed on augmenting the regular school studies of the respondents. This alignment was helpful for respondents to consume the content within the structure defined by their board of education and remain focussed.

- 92.0% (n=25) reported developing good understanding of AI concepts after taking the AI course with all the respondents (n=25) reported that the AI course was easy to understand and increased their interest in technology and innovation.

Streamlined process of learning

- 93.9% (n=213) student respondents reported that live classes accommodated their regular school schedule without conflicts.
- Team noted that the **respondents were provided with lesson plan** in alignment with the respondents' learning objectives. The lesson plan was followed by the teachers and adhered by the respondents so that regular timetable is followed for respondents to be aware of the topics and plan their studies accordingly.
- In this regard, **majority (90.0%) of the respondents (n=281)** reported that a detailed lesson plan was provided to them. 91.5% of these respondents (n=272) further responded that the **lesson plan was always followed by the teachers/class assistants and adhered by them**.
- As per the interaction with respondents, **the workbooks and worksheets provided under the project have been helpful for practicing their learnings**. The same insight was obtained during the survey, as **majority (97.1%) of the respondents (n=104) reported that the workbooks and worksheets complement the live classes and video lessons**.

Resolution of challenges at ground level

- Some schools experienced **challenges with regular electricity supply due to their location in remote rural areas of the aspirational districts**. To address this, **solar panels and inverters were installed to ensure continuous power supply for uninterrupted operation of digital classrooms.**
- Interactions with students and class assistant revealed **intermittent network connectivity issues that disrupted live classes. To mitigate** this, class assistants **switched to alternative service providers for improved network connectivity.** T**ime lost due to connectivity issues is compensated through offline revision using recorded videos and workbooks, alongside rescheduling of the live sessions.**
- Interactions with Class Assistant and Field Coordinator revealed **occasional technical issues with classroom equipment** such as malfunctioning laptops, webcams, and speakers that disrupted live sessions. To address this, **eVidyaloka provided replacement devices and technical support, while Class Assistants were trained in basic troubleshooting** to resolve minor technical problems independently, ensuring minimal disruption to the learning process.

4. Improvement in learning level among respondents

Facilitating the improvement in learning through lesson plan, doubt sessions and regular assessments

- **98.9% (n=266)** found the **lesson plan** helpful in **keeping their study schedule on track**.
- **96.1% (n=77)** student respondents reported that the **doubt clarification sessions were effective** and helpful in enhancing their understanding.
- Majority **(98.1%) of the respondents (n=53)** mentioned that **assessments were regularly carried out to monitor their progress.**
- As per the interaction with volunteer teacher, Class Assistant and School Headmaster, **live classes combined with worksheets enhanced learning outcomes and positively impacted student learning**. Volunteer teacher reported that live interactive classes drove student engagement, while recorded videos enabled repeatable revision at students' own pace.
- 64% (n=25) respondents reported improvement in their understanding of AI with 92% (n=25) respondents reporting good understanding of AI concepts after taking the AI course.

- **The project contributed to building student confidence through live classes and interactive sessions.** Almost all the **respondents (97.5%, n=281) reported feeling more confident** in the subjects for which they utilised the project service(s).

Bringing positive changes among respondents

- **Basis the survey responses (n=281), it was analysed that respondents' attendance increased by 2.5%** on average during the academic year when the project was implemented as compared to the previous year.
- As per the interactions with volunteer teacher, the project is **bringing positive change in the lives of the children** by connecting them with these digital learning platforms. **These respondents enjoy learning online through the live classes delivered by the volunteer teachers**. On probing further, following changes were observed by Class Assistant, School Headmaster and parents among the students:

  Academic Improvements:

  - Improved reading abilities and better reading and comprehension in English
  - Enhanced performance in Mathematics, with students attempting to solve math questions at home and improved ability to grasp difficult concepts, particularly in Maths
  - Overall improvement in marks and understanding across subjects

  Behavioural and Attitudinal Changes:

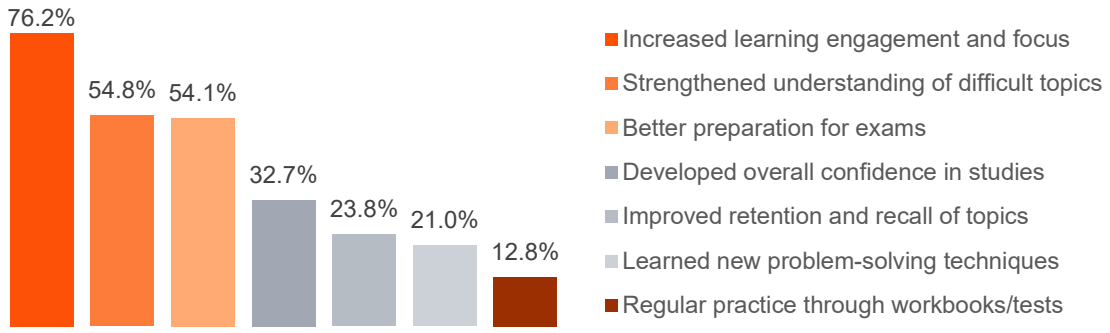
  - Increased confidence to ask questions and reduced hesitation in classroom participation
  - Greater curiosity, with children asking more questions at home about what they learned in class
  - More consistent study habits, with increased homework completion and practice

➢ Changes in future aspirations, with some students expressing interest in studying science

Improvement in academic performance

- Students and the parents informed that the student grades have improved for the subjects they studied in the Digital Classroom as it helps in covering the complete syllabus and revising the classroom learnings. They informed that the **live classroom sessions have been the most impactful in their educational journey as they feel connected while learning and it helps them understand better**.
- **90.7% (n=281) respondents** reported that they **found learning experience through digital classroom more effective** than regular classroom teaching.
- **97.5% (n=281)** respondents stated that the **digital classroom content helped them understand difficult concepts or** topics that they struggled with in regular classes.
- **96.8% of the respondents (n=281) responded that there was improvement in their overall academic performance after utilising the project benefits** showcasing the positive impact of the project and displays the project's effectiveness.
- The project enabled them to **increase learning engagement and focus (76.2%), strengthen understanding of the topics (54.8%)** and **better preparation for the exams (54.1%)** as depicted in Figure below.

Figure 34: Impact on Overall Academic Performance (n=281)

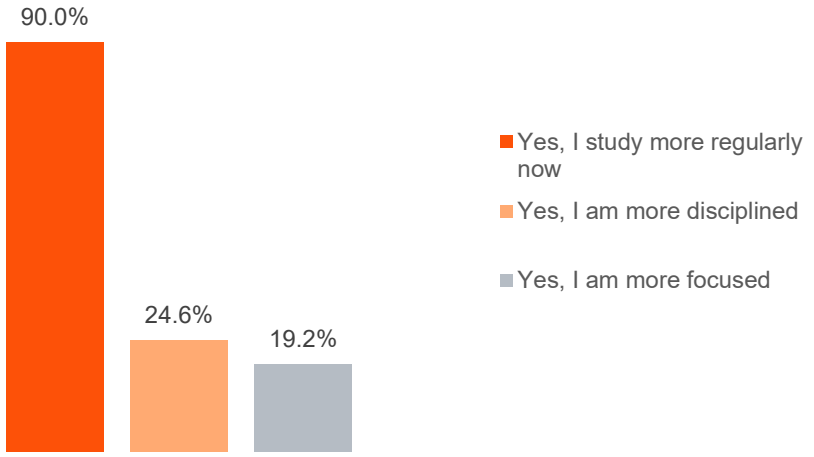


**Multiple Coding Question, Responses may add up to more than 100%*

Improvement in daily study habits and increased interest

- The respondents (n=281) also highlighted that the **project positively impacted their daily study habits** as they **study more now (90.0%)**, made them **more disciplined (24.6%) and more focussed (19.2%)**.

Figure 35: Project's Impact on Daily Study Habit (n=281)



**Multiple Coding Question, Responses may add up to more than 100%*

- Per the interaction with parents, **the students have developed increased interest in learning following the establishment of Digital Classrooms at their schools**. Parents reported **heightened curiosity among children**, who now actively ask questions at home. Similarly, class assistants reported that live classes have fostered greater interest in studies among students. **Both school headmasters and parents noted improvements in students' confidence levels. These outcomes have generated sustained interest in education among students over the long term.**

- **Majority (98.6%) of the respondents (n=281) responded that the project has instilled a long-term interest** among them towards education and learning. This **development of sustained interest in education and learning among students demonstrates the effectiveness of project implementation**.

- **63.3% (n=281) of the respondents** reported that they **noticed a decrease in the number of dropouts among their classmates** after the introduction of the digital classroom.

5. Positive student perception regarding different project aspects

Basis the survey responses, it was evident that the respondents have a positive perception towards the project activities. Following results[23] depict the **effectiveness of the project**:

Table 16: Experience Rating by Respondents

Project Component	Average Experience Rating (Out of 3)
Live classes (n=213)	2.93
Recorded video lessons (n=149)	2.91
Workbooks and worksheets (n=104)	2.87
Doubt session(s) (n=77)	2.84
Regular assessments/tests (n=53)	2.89
AI (Artificial Intelligence) Course (n=25)	2.80
Class Assistant support (n=281)	2.87

6. Synergising stakeholder engagement and capacity building

The project garnered support from varied stakeholders before and during its implementation. **eVidyaloka synergised with these different stakeholders to implement the project and also helped in capacity building of some of the stakeholders before engaging them for the content delivery**. Following table depicts the impact created by this project on the lives of stakeholders such as:

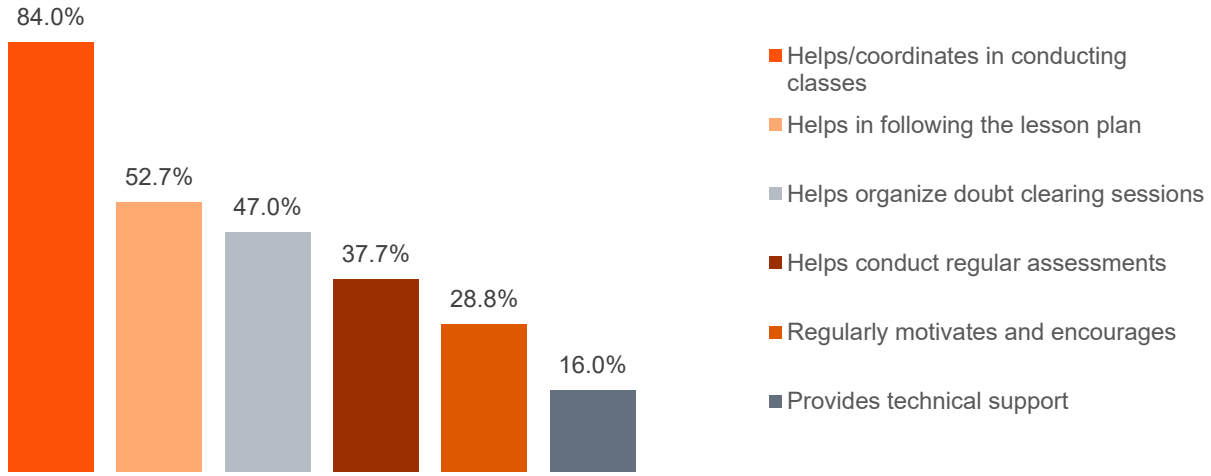
Table 17: Engagement and Impact on Project Stakeholders

Parameters	Type of stakeholders			
	Volunteer teachers	Field Coordinators	Class Assistants	Parents
Role in project	Responsible for the content delivery	Responsible for overseeing clusters of schools including liaising with schools, the Block Education Officers, the community and support for infrastructure maintenance and re-training[24] of Class Assistants.	Responsible for enabling volunteer-led sessions, with practice sessions to operate and maintain the digital infrastructure and to report data using eVidyaloka's portal	Continue motivating and supporting their children
Engagement model	Capacity building training from eVidyaloka Trust	Selected from the local community in and around school helping them improve their liaison skills and increase experience in the education field	Selected from the local community in and around school (usually alumnus of school) helping them increase experience in the education field	Engagement through parents-teacher's meetings

[23]On a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being poor and 3 being good
[24]The Class Assistants receive training during their initial orientation. However, if the Field Coordinator observes that a Class Assistant requires additional support, re-training is provided to help improve their performance.

Parameters	Type of stakeholders			
	Volunteer teachers	Field Coordinators	Class Assistants	Parents
Overall impact created	97.7% of the student respondents (n=213) reported volunteers to be interactive and inclusive during the live classes	Regular monitoring and reporting of the project at cluster level	84.0% respondents (281) reported that the class assistant helped in conducting classes at the digital classroom	Almost all (97.0%) of the student respondents (n=270) highlighted the response of their parents on the introduction of this project intervention in school was positive

Figure 36: Support of Class Assistant (CA) in respondents' education (n=281)



**Multiple Coding Question, Responses may add up to more than 100%*

> "This project has given me immense personal satisfaction. The ability to teach from home, with flexibility, fits well with my schedule. It has helped me develop teaching and communication skills, gain confidence handling children, learn technological tools for online education, and experience the joy of contributing meaningfully to society. Seeing students improve makes all the effort worthwhile."
>
> **Narrated by the community members during our interactions**

6.4 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 18: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project displayed inclusiveness as it is being **implemented in rural areas and catering to the state government schools**. The respondent profile comprised 52.7% (n=281) males and 47.3% females displaying a **balanced gender distribution**. • The availability of project aspects in preferred/regional language with contextual examples based on local geography makes it easily accessible and relatable to

Parameters	Assessment from the study
	students from diverse regional backgrounds, enhancing comprehension and engagement.
Relevance	• The project demonstrates its relevance by **addressing teacher shortage in government schools, where limited teachers manage multiple grades, by supplementing regular teaching through volunteer-led digital classes** that ensure continued quality education in core subjects like English, Maths, and Science. • The project provided **exposure to digital learning platforms and online education to students from remote rural areas who lacked access to technology-enabled learning.**
Effectiveness	• **Respondents' attendance increased from 75% to 77.5%** (on average), during the academic year when the project was implemented as compared to the previous year. • The lesson plan **was helpful in keeping the study schedule** of the respondents **(98.9%, n=266) on track.** • The project's live classes and interactive sessions contributed to respondents' **increased confidence** as **97.5% respondents (n=281) reported feeling more confident** in the subjects for which they utilised the project service(s). • 96.8% (n=281) respondents reported improvement **in their overall academic performance after utilising the project service(s).** • The **respondents (n=281) reported that the project impacted their daily study habits positively** by helping them study more now (90.0%) and making them more disciplined (24.6%). • **Majority (98.6%) of the respondents (n=281)** responded that the **project has instilled a long-term interest** among the respondents in education and learning. • **63.3% (n=281) of the respondents** reported that they **noticed a decrease in the number of dropouts** among their classmates after the introduction of the digital classroom.
Convergence	• The project **aimed to address the challenge of teacher shortage in 375 government schools**. To achieve this convergence with government systems, eVidyaloka followed a structured approval and coordination process by obtaining BO/DO (Block Officer/District Officer) approvals before entering any government school. • The **project aimed at rural educational landscape including implementation in Aspirational districts** aligning with the government priority to transform the country's most underdeveloped districts.
Sustainability	• At the time of exit, **eVidyaloka hands over the infrastructure (TV, laptop, webcam, speakers, inverter, batteries, and router) to the school administration** through written handover documentation, where the headmaster takes custody and confirms the school will use it as an asset. The **content catalog remains accessible through school login credentials on the eVidyaloka portal**, enabling school teachers to independently use videos, worksheets, and presentations anytime. The **project builds local capacity by training Class Assistants and school staff who can manage the technology and coordinate sessions, ensuring the sustainability of the project offerings.**

6.5 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project is well aligned with the CSR priorities of **Infosys Limited** and **EdgeVerve Systems Limited**, which emphasise support for initiatives that promote **education**. The project contributes to the thematic area by strengthening rural education infrastructure and bridging the digital divide by providing access to quality STEM education in underserved rural communities. The project is also aligned with the following **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)[25].**

SDG 4 – Quality Education: The project directly contributes to this goal by bridging educational gaps in rural areas through its multi-modal digital school model. By delivering subject-specific teaching, curriculum-aligned content in regional languages, and consistent learning support across 375 rural government schools, the project promotes equitable access to quality education for respondents who otherwise have limited academic opportunities.

6.6 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

6.7 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Gaining Confidence Through Digital Learning, STEM & Brainiac Exposure

Aarav (name changed), a 12-year-old Grade 7 student from a village in northern Karnataka, comes from a small farming family. His parents work as daily-wage agricultural labourers, and with fluctuating income, they are often unable to provide additional academic support or digital resources at home. Aarav was a sincere child but extremely shy, hesitant to ask questions, and often unsure of his abilities.

Before the Infosys Foundation supported Rural Digital & STEM Education programme began in his school, Aarav had never experienced a digital classroom. His school struggled with a shortage of subject teachers, especially for Math and Science, and he found it difficult to keep up with grade-level concepts. He rarely participated in class and kept to himself.

The introduction of the digital classroom completely changed his learning environment. Aarav began attending live Math and Science sessions led by volunteer teachers from across India. The use of videos, illustrations, and step-by-step explanations helped him understand topics more clearly. With patient guidance from the teachers and support from the trained Class Assistant in the school, he slowly started gaining confidence.

A major turning point came through STEM activities, where he could explore simple experiments and understand concepts through hands-on learning. These sessions allowed him to see science as something he could touch, build, and explore rather than memorise. The school also introduced Brainiac exposure, where students were introduced to basic ideas around problem-solving, patterns, and technology in simple, age-appropriate ways. Though new to him, Aarav enjoyed these sessions and participated actively.

As the year progressed, Aarav showed steady improvement. His science assessment scores improved significantly, and teachers observed that he was more comfortable raising his hand, asking doubts, and interacting with classmates. He became one of the most regular participants in the digital sessions, with over 90% attendance.

Aarav now dreams of studying further and hopes to work in a field related to technology or science. He says, "I did not know learning could be this interesting. Now I feel I can do more." His transformation shows how digital learning,

[25] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

supportive adults, and exposure to STEM and Brainiac concepts can help rural students build confidence and curiosity.

Case Story 2: Improving Language Skills and Discovering AI for the First Time

Saanvi (name changed), an 11-year-old Grade 6 student, struggled with English and Kannada due to limited exposure at home. She was quiet, hesitant to speak, and often found it difficult to understand lessons in class. With no digital resources available, language learning felt challenging for her.

Things changed when her school became part of the Infosys Foundation supported Rural Digital Education programme. Saanvi began attending live English and Kannada classes delivered through the digital classroom. The volunteer teachers explained concepts with audio, stories, and visuals, which made it much easier for her to follow. The Class Assistant supported her with reading practice and simple speaking tasks.

Saanvi was also introduced to basic AI exposure through Brainiac, where she learned in very simple terms how computers identify patterns, make predictions, and learn from examples. These sessions made her curious and helped her overcome her fear of using digital tools.

With regular attendance, Saanvi's language skills improved steadily. She started reading aloud in class, using new words in sentences, and participating confidently during digital lessons. Teachers noticed that she had become more active, expressive, and eager to learn.

Today, Saanvi dreams of studying further and becoming a teacher one day. She says, "I like English now, and I like learning about how computers learn too."

7. Project 4: Improved Cookstoves in Udaipur - Helping Women and Environment

7.1 About the Project

Rural households across India predominantly depend on traditional biomass and wood-fired stoves for their daily cooking needs. These conventional cooking methods generate **harmful indoor smoke, creating severe health hazards, especially respiratory complications**, that disproportionately impact women and children who spend more time near cooking areas. To address this critical challenge, **various government and development programs are actively promoting the adoption of improved cookstoves and cleaner fuel alternatives**[26]. These programs aim to safeguard public health while simultaneously reducing environmental degradation caused by inefficient fuel combustion.

Through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, Infosys Limited actively promotes environmental sustainability initiatives across various communities. A flagship project under this portfolio is **"Improved Cookstoves in Udaipur - Helping Women and Environment"**, which addresses both social and environmental challenges simultaneously. The current project (Phase III)[27] aims to support **19,000 households** with improved cookstoves (ICS) i.e., the Greenway Smart Stove and the Greenway Jumbo Stove and was carried out by **Udaipur Urja Initiatives Producer Company Limited (UUIPCL)**.

Below Figure provides an overview of the project specifics[28]:

Figure 37: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

Project Beneficiaries

~19,000 households

Project Period

FY 22 - FY 25*

Project Locations

Kotra, Jhadol, Gogunda, and Girwa blocks of Udaipur district

Total Project Outlay

₹ 10.49 Crore

7.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The team commenced the assignment with a kick-off meeting involving the Infosys Limited team to establish clear parameters for the assessment. This initial discussion served multiple objectives: **defining the scope of work, aligning stakeholder expectations and developing a comprehensive understanding of the project's design and implementations strategy**. Subsequently, the PWCALLP team received the following project documents from Infosys Limited team:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Infosys Limited and Udaipur Urja Initiatives Producer Company Limited, outlining the project's key activities and other operational modalities
- Database of project beneficiaries

[26] Source: https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1525934
[27] As a part of the Phase I and Phase II of the project, 18,500 households were supported with improved cookstoves since FY 15.
[28] Source: MoU signed between Infosys Limited and Udaipur Urja Initiatives Producer Company Limited (UUIPCL)
* Under this project, the cookstoves were distributed during the period of FY 22 - FY 23 with maintenance continuing until FY 25.

The PWCALLP team conducted a **comprehensive desk review** of the provided documents to deepen their **understanding of the project**, **develop a robust assessment framework, and identify key stakeholders for interactions,** in line with the preliminary interactions with project team. The study was **guided by the IRECS and SROI (Social Return on Investment) framework** wherein the team adopted a structured approach to evaluate the project's impact. IRECS framework focused on gauging the impact of this project on parameters such as Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness (and efficiency), Convergence, and Sustainability, providing an overall assessment in terms of producing the intended project outcomes. It also helps in gaining a qualitative understanding of the impact created, stakeholder perception, and the extent of collaboration with other partners. Additionally, the SROI method design helps to measure and account for value created quantifying the social, environmental, and economic value generated by the project and helps in assessing the costs and benefits.

In consultation with Infosys Limited, a **mixed-method approach** combining quantitative and qualitative research methodology was deployed to conduct the impact assessment study. The quantitative component focused on generating measurable insights and evidence regarding both current and projected impacts of the intervention. **Qualitative data** collection was utilised to capture stakeholder perspectives, and lived experiences, translating them into deeper understanding of the project's actual impact on beneficiaries. The research design incorporated multiple data collection techniques: quantitative methods such as **structured surveys** complemented by qualitative approaches including **In-depth Interviews (IDIs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with key stakeholders:

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 38: Research design for the study

- **Quantitative surveys** with a sample of **272** beneficiaries who received the cookstoves*
- **Six In-depth Interview (IDIs)** with beneficiaries who received the cookstoves
- **One Key Informant Interview (KII)** with the implementing partner representative
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Limited team

*Based on the data shared by Infosys Limited team, it was noted that **~19,000 beneficiary households** have been covered under the project. Hence, a sample size of **272** was estimated at 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error. Three out of four blocks were selected based on the number of beneficiaries and the sampling distribution for quantitative survey was as below:

Table 19: Distribution of quantitative sample across villages

District	Block	Villages	Sample
Udaipur	Jhadol	Ambasa	34
		Kada	26
		Panarva	24
	Kotda	Gura	49
		Mamer	32
		Gandhisarna	32
	Gogunda	Lohsing	30
		Chhali	24
		Bagdunda	21
Total			**272**

7.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key project stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

Prior to the intervention, the community confronted daily adversities stemming from conventional cooking methodologies. Based on discussions with technical partner and community respondents, the following challenges have been identified:

- **Indoor air pollution and associated health risks:** Women in these communities endured sustained exposure to noxious smoke and toxic gases during meal preparation, resulting in respiratory complications and ocular irritation. Multiple respondents reported experiencing mild to moderate eye issues while cooking, with one beneficiary from Gura village specifically noting that "her children's eyes became weak due to exposure to smoke from the traditional stove." The households faced eye irritation and breathing difficulties on a daily basis during cooking times. Children in close proximity faced equivalent hazards, with heightened vulnerabilities including fire-related accidents and health implications.
- **High Wood Consumption:** Traditional cookstoves necessitated substantially greater quantities of firewood, contributing to forest depletion and ecological deterioration. Data from the beneficiary interviews reveals striking consumption patterns - respondents reported that 20-30 kg of wood collected through self-collection from nearby forests would last only 2-3 days with traditional stoves. Women frequently undertook extensive journeys, spending approximately 4 hours per collection trip to procure fuel wood, significantly amplifying their physical burden and daily hardships. One beneficiary from Ambasa noted the frequency of these trips, with households requiring collection every 2-3 days to maintain their cooking fuel supply.
- **Time-Intensive Cooking Process:** Food preparation using traditional cookstoves proved considerably more laborious, demanding continuous supervision and repeated re-ignition. Respondents consistently reported spending approximately 2 hours daily on cooking (1 hour per meal for 2 meals), with the traditional stoves requiring constant attention to keep flames up. This time-intensive process constrained women's availability for alternative household responsibilities or recreational pursuits and personal well-being.

- **Restricted Mobility and Maintenance Challenges:** Traditional cookstoves (or mud stoves) remained anchored to designated locations within households, constraining their adaptability for utilization across different spaces. This immobile configuration consequently generated soot deposits - described by beneficiaries as "black soot on ceiling" and vessels - requiring an additional 30-60 minutes of cleaning time after each meal, totaling 1-2 hours daily purely for vessel and kitchen cleaning due to the residue produced by conventional cooking methods.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

This section summarizes the findings from the impact assessment study, forming the evidence base for recommendations and future project enhancements.

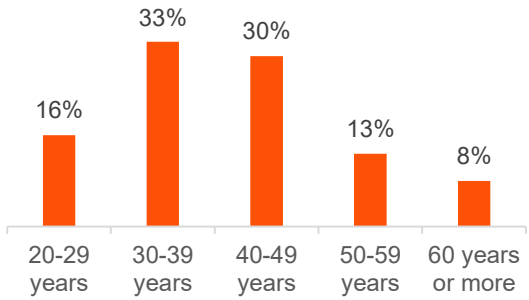
1. Profile of the respondents

Below analysis presents the profile of the respondents based on various demographic indicators including age, gender and economic profile depicted in below representations:

- The majority of respondents (86%, n=272) participating in this survey were women. Among participants, 33% (n=272) were aged 30-39 years, while 30% (n=272) fell within the 40-49 years age bracket, with all age distributions illustrated below. This diverse age **distribution demonstrates the project's commitment to inclusivity**, reflecting efforts to ensure representation across all demographic age groups.

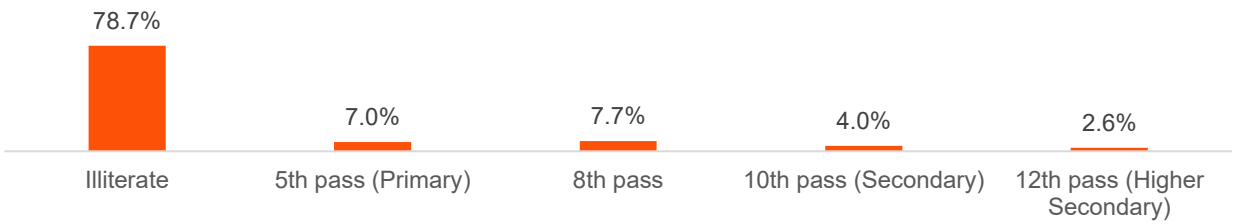
Figure 39 : Gender distribution of the respondents (n=272)

Figure 40 : Age distribution of the respondents (n=272)



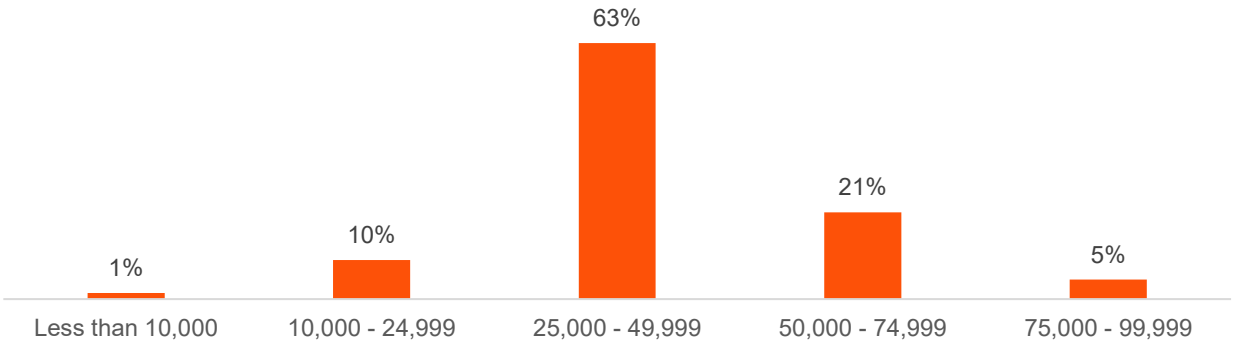
- **78.7% (n=272) of respondents reported being illiterate**, followed by 7.7% who completed 8th grade and 7.0% with primary education, demonstrating successful outreach to the most vulnerable populations.

Figure 41: Formal Education of the Respondents (n=272)



- **63%** of respondents (n=272) reported an **annual income between ₹ 25,000 – ₹ 49,999,** while **21%** indicated **annual income between ₹ 50,000 – ₹ 74,999.** Further, 60% of the respondents (n=272) stated that they belonged to the **Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**. This highlights the project's targeted approach to cater to **society's most disadvantaged populations.**

Figure 42: Annual Income of the Respondents (n=272)

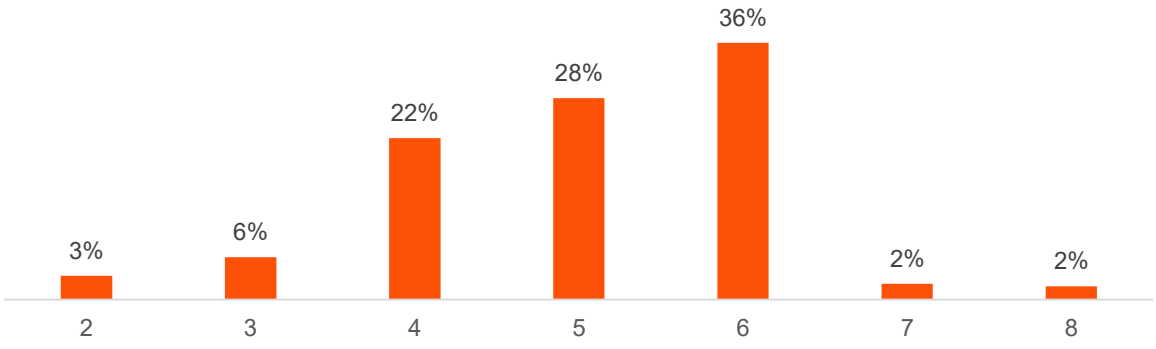


- The vast majority of respondents (**90%,** n=272) engage in farming or agricultural labour, demonstrating the **community's heavy reliance on agriculture.**

Figure 43: Occupation of the respondents (n=272)

- Among respondents (n=272), **36%** had **6-member households**, followed by **28% with 5 members** and **22% with 4 members**. This indicates that **larger households benefited** from receiving two improved cookstoves, enabling them to **adequately meet their cooking demands**.

Figure 44: Household Members of the Respondents (n=272)

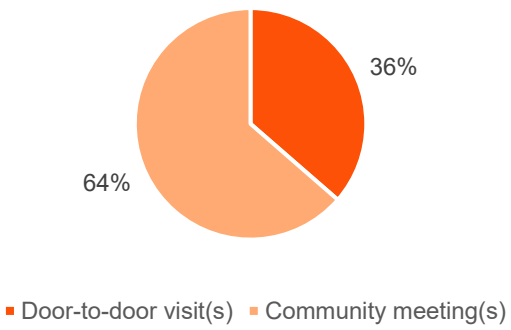


2. Awareness and Adoption of Improved Cooking Practices

- All respondents reported currently using the improved cookstoves provided under this project. However, 44% (n=272) respondents reported using the traditional chulhas parallelly in addition to the improved cookstoves mostly to reduce time for parallel cooking. Prior to receiving these stoves, every respondent (100%, n=272) **relied exclusively on traditional chulha (open-fire stoves),** a finding that was corroborated through qualitative interviews.

- All respondents (100%, n=272) acknowledged that the support provided through the project was funded by Infosys Limited. The survey indicated that **community meetings** (64%, n=272) and **door-to-door visits** (36%, n=272) were the primary sources of information about the project, underscoring its **strong community-driven approach**.

Figure 45: Source of Information about the Project (n=272)



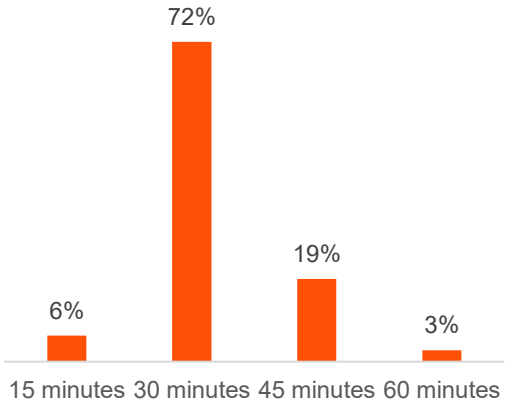
- All respondents (100%) reported **actively sharing information about the benefits of cookstoves within their communities**. Beneficiaries, during qualitative interactions, shared that they actively communicated the benefits of the cookstoves, such as improved health, lower cooking costs, and a cleaner environment, with **neighbours, family, and friends**. These insights reflect a strong sense of **community engagement and advocacy**, reinforcing the project's grassroots impact.

- All respondents (100%, n=272) felt that the project had contributed to **transforming the community**, highlighting its **positive influence on both household well-being and overall community awareness**.

3. Time Savings in Daily Cooking Activities

- Almost all respondents (~100%, n=272) reported that the improved cookstoves **reduced their cooking time**. The majority (72%) indicated saving an **average of 30 minutes per day**, while **19% reported a daily time saving of 45 minutes**.

Figure 46: Daily Time Saved in Cooking



- This time saving **highlights the project's effectiveness in improving cooking efficiency**. During qualitative discussions, beneficiaries shared that the time saved was redirected toward **productive or personal activities such as farming, household chores, and supporting their children's education**. Notably, 80% of respondents reported **increased productivity in household tasks**, while 55% utilized the extra time for **agricultural work**.

4. Enhanced Indoor Air Quality and Household Well-being

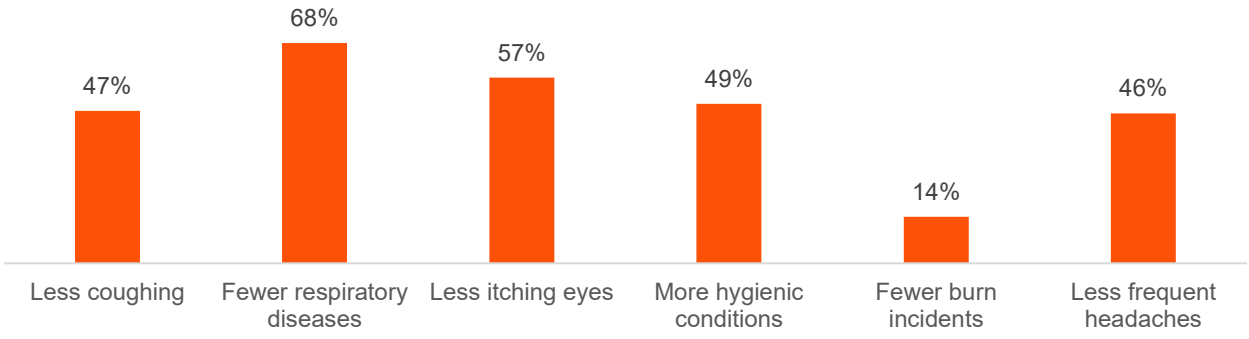
- Traditional cookstoves were a **major contributor to indoor air pollution**, often leading to **respiratory issues** and **eye irritation**. The introduction of improved cookstoves **positively impacted indoor air quality by reducing smoke emissions**. Qualitative feedback from beneficiaries confirmed that these cookstoves **produced noticeably less smoke, resulting in fewer health problems related to smoke exposure** such as cough and eye irritation.

- Majority of respondents (97%, n=272) agreed that the project **reduced smoke and gas emissions**. As a result, 77% observed **noticeable improvements in indoor air quality**, contributing to a healthier living environment and enhanced overall well-being.

- All respondents (100%, n=272) reported **improved health and well-being of women in their households** as a result of the project. This improvement was primarily attributed to **reduced smoke emissions**, which led to fewer respiratory issues and less eye irritation. Team also noted that:

    - Nearly half of the respondents (**49%**) reported experiencing **more hygienic conditions in their homes, indicating a cleaner and healthier cooking environment.**
    - **14%** of respondents reported experiencing **fewer burn incidents, indicating improved safety** with the use of improved cookstoves.
    - **68%** of respondents reported **a reduction in respiratory illnesses,** while **47% experienced less coughing,** highlighting the cookstove's role in reducing health issues linked to indoor air pollution.
    - **57%** of respondents reported experiencing **less eye irritation,** while **46%** noted **fewer headaches**, further reinforcing the health benefits associated with improved indoor air quality.

Figure 47: Changes in Health aspect due to Improved Cookstoves (n=272)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

5. Financial Impact of Improved Cookstove Adoption

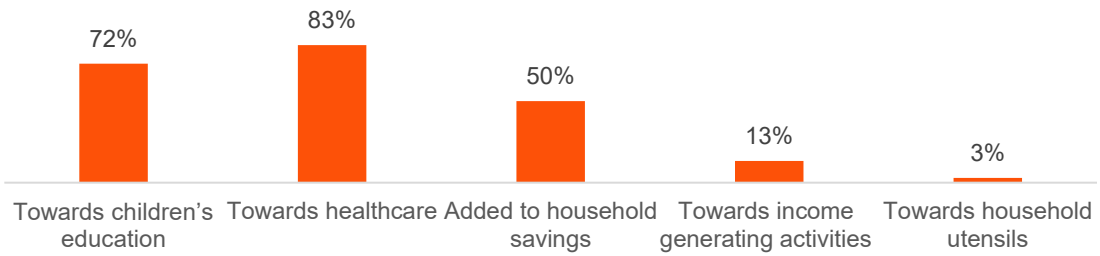
- 78% of respondents (n=272) reported a **reduction in household expenses related to cooking fuel** after adopting the improved cookstoves.

- The survey revealed a **noticeable reduction in monthly fuel expenses** following the adoption of improved cookstoves under the project. 64% (n=212) reported saving less than ₹ 500 monthly,

while 36% (n=212) saved between ₹ 500 - ₹ 999 per month. These findings underscore the **financial benefits of improved cookstoves in lowering household fuel costs**.

- The savings generated from using improved cookstoves were allocated by respondents to various purposes, as illustrated below:

Figure 48: Utilization of expenses saved due to cookstove (n=212)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

- During community interactions, it was noted that the improved cookstoves could be **easily ignited using thin twigs or dry grass, and once lit, the fire lasted significantly longer**. This reduced the need for frequent relighting or blowing air, **thereby improving cooking efficiency and lowering fuelwood requirements**.
- All respondents (100%, n=272) reported a **reduced need for fuelwood**. Among them, 76% indicated a **significant reduction of more than 50%**, while 22% **reported a moderate reduction of 25–50%** in fuelwood requirements.

> "Earlier, with traditional stoves, **20 kg of wood would last only two days**. Now, with the improved cookstoves, the **same amount of wood lasts five days**. This has made a big difference for us, **reducing fuel consumption and saving physical effort**."
>
> **Narrated by a community member during our interactions**

- All respondents (100%, n=272) reported feeling more **financially secure** after adopting the improved cookstoves. This reflects a significant **positive impact on household financial well-being**, driven by reduced fuel costs, time savings, and the **ability to redirect resources toward essential needs such as education, healthcare, and savings**.
- Out of the total sample of 272 respondents, 38 reported using the time saved for income-generating activities, with an average monthly income increase of INR 64.73 among these respondents.

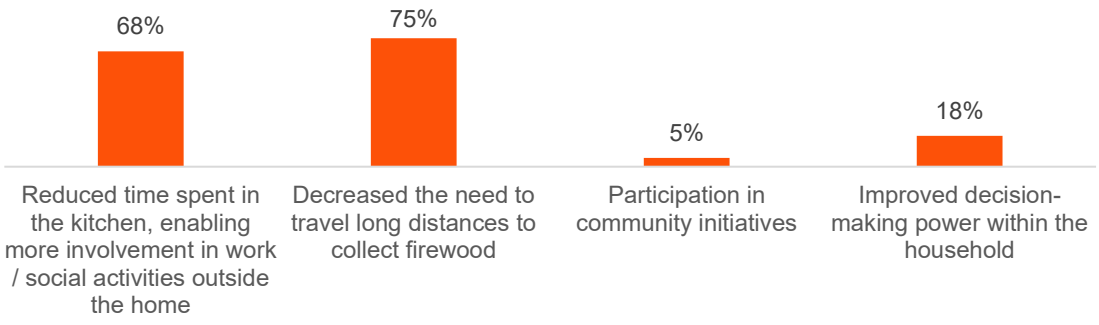
6. Holistic Impact on Women's Lives

- The project brought **meaningful improvements to the daily lives of women in households** adopting improved cookstoves. Respondents in interactions highlighted **several positive outcomes,** including **reduced cooking time** and **fuel consumption,** which significantly **eased the burden of wood collection**. The cookstoves also led to **quicker utensil cleaning due to**

reduced soot and contributed to better respiratory health, thereby enhancing overall well-being.

- Survey findings reaffirm the positive impact of improved cookstoves on women's lives. 75% (n=272) of respondents reported **reduced travel for firewood, saving time and easing physical strain**. Additionally, 68% noted that **less time spent in the kitchen enabled greater participation in income-generating and social activities**.

Figure 49: Impact on women (n=272)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

- Additionally, 97% of respondents (n=272) agreed that the improved cookstove **enhanced cooking safety within their households**. This consensus suggests that the cookstove **effectively addressed safety concerns by offering a more stable and secure cooking setup**, reducing risks associated with traditional open-fire methods and **contributing to a safer domestic environment**.

- Respondents also noted that the improved cookstoves were **well-suited to their traditional cooking practices** and offered **the flexibility for both indoor and outdoor use**. This adaptability made cooking more convenient and significantly reduced the need for maintenance.

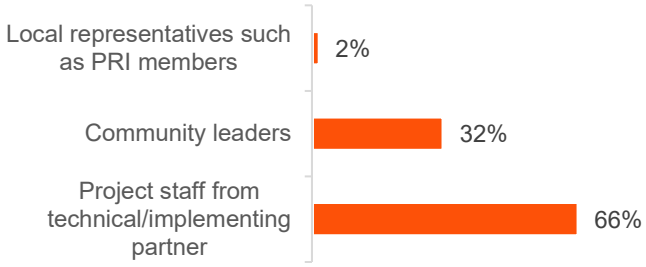
Figure 50: Outdoor and Indoor utilisation of Jumbo and Smart cookstove

7. Operational Viability and Sustainability of Cookstove

- The survey findings indicated **unanimous satisfaction with the durability of the improved cookstoves**. Every respondent (100%, n=272) **affirmed their satisfaction**, underscoring the cookstoves' reliable performance and long-lasting quality during extended use.

- **99% beneficiaries had received training on maintaining and caring** for the improved cookstove. Of those trained, **66% (n=268) reported that the training was provided by project staff of UUIPCL.**

Figure 51: Maintenance and Care Training Providers (n=268)



- These initiatives played a crucial role in ensuring that households were well-informed about the **proper use and maintenance of the improved cookstoves**, thereby enhancing their durability and operational efficiency. Qualitative interactions revealed that during routine visits by village monitors, beneficiaries **received regular guidance and refresher training on correct usage and upkeep practices**.

- A significant majority of respondents (96%, n=272) **reported no functionality issues with the provided cookstoves**, reflecting their robust durability and consistently reliable performance. Among the 4% of respondents who experienced issues with their cookstoves, 90% (n=10) **reached out to the project support or service centre**, while 10% opted to repair the cookstoves themselves. Notably, all respondents who received maintenance support (100%, n=9) **expressed satisfaction with the services provided.**

> “We have not encountered any functionality issues with these cookstoves **over the past three years**, and no repairs have been required to date. Given their proven durability, we anticipate a **continued lifespan of at least two more years**. Overall, we are **highly satisfied with the performance and reliability** of these cookstoves.”
>
> **Narrated by a community member during our interactions**

8. Improved Environmental Sustainability

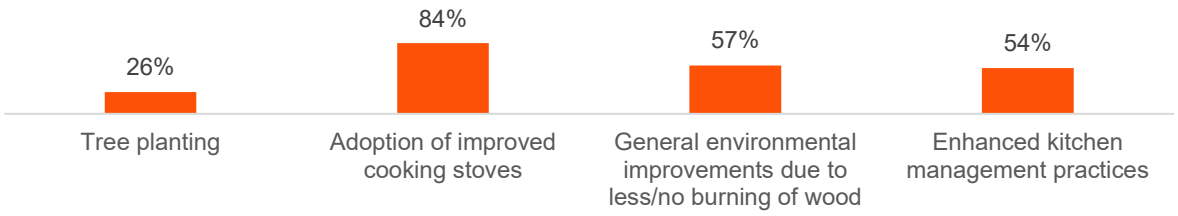
- All respondents (100%) reported a **reduction in waste generated from the efficient burning of fuelwood since adopting the new cookstoves**, indicating improved fuel utilization and **enhanced waste management practices**.

- During interactions, respondents shared that traditional stoves **generated significant amounts of unburnt wood and ash, making cleaning a cumbersome task**. Previously, large portions of fuelwood remained unburnt, contributing to waste and inefficiency.

- In contrast, the improved cookstoves, with their advanced combustion technology, enable more **efficient fuel utilization, resulting in noticeably reduced ash, minimal unburnt residues, and less soot accumulation on cooking vessels and ceilings**. This not only **simplifies daily cleaning** but also contributes to improved **household-level waste management**.

- Additionally, **87% (n=272)** of respondents had **received training on environmental aspects**, with the majority learning topics like **adoption of improved cookstoves (84%, n=236)**, **general environmental improvement due to less burning of wood (57%), tree planting (26%),** etc. as illustrated below:

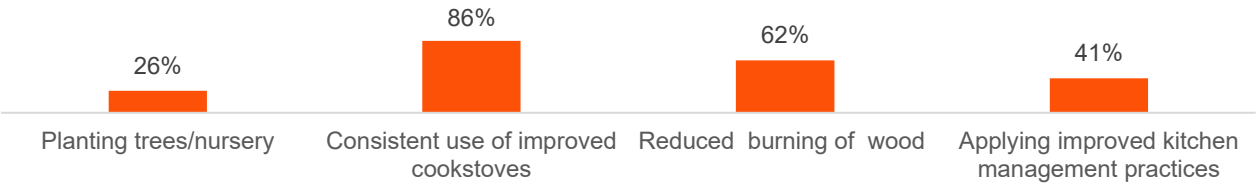
Figure 52: Training modules (n= 236)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

- When asked about the adoption of environmental practices introduced through project training, the most commonly adopted actions included consistent use of the improved cookstoves (86%, n=272) and a reduction in wood burning (62%, n=272). These practices reflect the project's positive influence in **promoting environmental sustainability within the community**.

Figure 53: Adopted environmental practices (n=236)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

7.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project for a period of 50 months, starting from FY 22 (i.e. January, 2022). The overall impact is calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight is the estimation of the benefits which would have occurred even in the absence of the project. For calculating the impact of the project, deadweight is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution (by others) is an estimate of what proportion of the impact may be attributed to the efforts of other stakeholders involved. Attribution by others is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Drop-off

Drop-off is factored in as in the subsequent years, the benefit or the impact would be slightly less than the previous year or may be attributed to other external factors as well. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any drop-off noted or reported. Hence, the drop-off factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been arrived at based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)

Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 58,54,46,894 across a period from FY 22 to FY 26.

Table 20: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Beneficiary Households (Women and Families)	• Distribution of improved cookstoves. • Training in operation & maintenance of improved cookstoves. • Community mobilization and awareness programs on clean cooking benefits.	• 37,962 improved cookstoves distributed. • 18,981 households shifting from traditional to improved cookstoves. • 37,962 cookstoves being utilised.	• Reduction in firewood usage. • Reduction in firewood collection, cooking and cleaning time. • Improved cooking environment (less smoke, soot, carbon residue) and reduction in respiratory/eye-related illnesses.	• Reduction in fuel-wood costs. • Time saved redirected to productive/income-generating activities. • Improved household health and reduced healthcare costs due to less indoor air pollution.

Note: The data points (pertaining to reach of the project) used in this impact map have been provided by the technical partner. As this report has been prepared to assess the social impact and calculate the social return on investment of the project only, verification or validation of these data points has not been conducted as part of the study.

Table 21: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution (by others)	Drop-off	Total value created in FY 22	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Total value created in FY 26	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Households	Decreased medical expenses	0%	0%	0%	0%	₹ 26,33,614	₹ 6,09,46,039	₹ 7,40,20,970	₹ 7,84,89,802	₹ 8,11,43,775	₹ 29,72,34,199
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	0%	0%	0%	0%	₹ 66,852	₹ 15,47,073	₹ 18,78,972	₹ 19,92,410	₹ 20,59,779	₹ 75,45,086
	Savings on fuel wood purchase	0%	0%	0%	0%	₹ 24,86,827	₹ 5,75,49,162	₹ 6,98,95,351	₹ 7,41,15,109	₹ 7,66,21,161	₹ 28,06,67,610
Total impact created						**₹ 51,87,293**	**₹ 12,00,42,274**	**₹ 14,57,95,292**	**₹ 15,45,97,320**	**₹ 15,98,24,715**	**₹ 58,54,46,894**

Table 22: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Financial Proxy Explanation	Source(s)
Households	Decreased medical expenses	The proxy is the average estimated annual saving on healthcare costs per household. This is calculated from survey data identifying the difference between the average monthly expenditure on health that could be attributed to the effects of using traditional cookstove (chulha) and average monthly expenditure on health when using the new cookstove(s). These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	The proxy is the average estimated monthly increase in income from the income generation/enhancement activities per household which had been possible due to the time saved from cooking activities. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Savings on fuel wood purchase	The proxy is the average estimated monthly savings that the household experienced due to the reduction in the fuelwood required by the improved cookstoves. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings

b. SROI calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.
Total Impact Value = ₹ 58,54,46,894

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 11,99,67,530[29]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is taken into account while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India FY 23 is considered[30].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact		NPV of Utilisation
₹ 47,98,37,707		₹ 10,44,48,123

[29] As per the MoU
[30] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette

Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project is estimated to be 4.59:1.	SROI Ratio
	4.59:1

The SROI value similarly is 4.59. This means that for every ₹ 1 being invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 4.59 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.

- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.

- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.

- An additional cost of ₹ 12,00,153 for an increase in the cost of registry fee excluding the tax (as per the MoU) had been equally divided and included in the year-wise utilisation along with 12% GST on the same.

- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

7.5 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 23: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• 79% (n=272) were **illiterate** displaying the reach of benefits to the **most vulnerable sections.** • 60 % of the respondents (n=272) belonged to the **BPL households and came from the marginalised socio-economic sections of society.** • **Community meetings** (64%, n=272) and **door-to-door visits** (36%, n=272) were the primary sources of information about the project, indicating **inclusiveness through community-driven approach.**

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Relevance	• Prior to receiving the improved cookstoves, all respondents **relied exclusively on traditional chulhas**. Currently, **every household uses the project-provided cookstoves**, reflecting **a strong preference and clear need for the improved technology**. Traditional stoves were associated with high fuelwood consumption, excessive smoke, indoor air pollution, and related health issues, **underscoring the relevance and impact of the intervention.** • All respondents (100%, n=272) reported that the project had a **significant positive impact on their community**, enhancing household well-being and raising awareness. The cookstoves were **well-suited to local cooking practices** and offered the flexibility for both indoor and outdoor use, making cooking more convenient and reducing maintenance requirements.
Effectiveness	• All users reported **improved cooking efficiency, with reduced cooking time and noticeable health benefits**. Additionally, 97% (n=272) observed **a significant drop in smoke and gas emissions**, and 77% reported better indoor air quality as a result**.** • The project yielded **notable improvements in women's health outcomes**. 78% of participants reported **reduced cooking fuel expenses,** with decreased wood consumption alleviating household financial pressures and enabling households **to redirect resources toward education, healthcare, and long-term savings**. • The project enhanced both **lifestyle and environmental outcomes. With 68% spending less time cooking, women increased their participation in work and social activities.** The low maintenance cookstoves reduced cooking waste for all users, **demonstrating effective waste management.** • The reduced need for fuelwood **contributed to environmental conservation**, with 86% of respondents adopting more sustainable practices such as **consistent use of the improved cookstoves and reduced wood burning** (62%, n=236).
Convergence	• The project is **well-aligned with the Central Government's Unnat Chulha Abhiyan programme**, which promotes biomass cookstoves as a clean cooking energy solution aimed at reducing fuelwood consumption through improved efficiency and lower emissions. • The project has been **implemented in collaboration with community institutions such as Panchayats (Village-level Governance Bodies) and Seva Mandir ensuring local participation and ownership.** Panchayats provided the institutional platform for community gatherings across villages and Sewa Mandir worked collaboratively to conduct community meetings at panchayat level, facilitate beneficiary identification and support project rollout activities.
Sustainability	• All respondents were satisfied with the cookstoves, citing their durability and long lifespan. The project-built **community capacity by training 99% of users in proper use and maintenance**. Those who accessed support services reported full satisfaction. Regular maintenance ensured continued performance and sustainability.

7.6 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project implemented is in alignment with **Infosys Limited's CSR policy**, which mentions, **environment sustainability** as one of the CSR focus areas for Infosys Limited. The project also contributes to relevant Sustainable Development Goals: **SDG 3- Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4- Quality Education, SDG 7- Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 13- Climate action.**[31]

SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being: emphasises ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The improved cookstove project reduces indoor air pollution, mitigating health risks for women and children and fostering healthier living conditions.

[31] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

SDG 4 - Quality Education: focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. By reducing the time spent on firewood collection and cooking, the project enables women and children with an opportunity to dedicate more time to education and skill development, supporting lifelong learning.

SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy: promotes access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. The introduction of improved cookstoves facilitates a shift towards efficient cooking.

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth: highlights promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. With more time available, women are empowered to be able to engage in productive activities.

SDG 13-Climate Action: supports climate action by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainability through reduction in wood cutting / deforestation. The adoption of improved cookstoves reduces greenhouse gas emissions, supporting global efforts toward environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

7.7 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

7.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Clean Cooking, Clear Future: Reena's Story of Health, Time, and New Possibilities

Reena (Name changed), a recent graduate and newlywed, faced daily challenges with her traditional cookstove in her new home. The inefficient stove consumed excessive time while producing thick smoke that irritated her eyes and caused coughing. Additionally, the heavy soot coating required hours of laborious vessel cleaning, further burdening her daily routine.

Learning about improved cookstoves through a community meeting, Reena recognized an opportunity for positive change. The project, which provided funded access to these efficient cooking solutions, aligned perfectly with her aspirations for a healthier lifestyle.

After adopting the improved cookstove, Reena experienced significant improvements. The smokeless operation eliminated her respiratory irritation and eye discomfort, creating a healthier cooking environment. Most significantly, she now saves 2-3 hours daily previously spent on cooking and cleaning tasks.

This newfound time has proven transformative. Reena dedicates these precious hours to preparing for competitive examinations, advancing her career prospects, while also contributing meaningfully to the family's farming activities. Her story exemplifies how improved cookstove technology creates a ripple effect: enhancing health, saving time, and enabling women to pursue education and economic opportunities that were previously constrained by inefficient cooking methods.

Case Story 2: Clean Cooking, Growing Income: Kamla's Economic Transformation Story

Kamla (Name changed), a dedicated homemaker in a rural household, spent hours daily battling her traditional cookstove. The smoky, inefficient stove not only affected her health but consumed precious time that could be invested elsewhere. Between lengthy cooking sessions and extensive cleaning due to soot accumulation, Kamla found herself confined to kitchen duties for most of her day.

When the improved cookstove project reached her community, Kamla eagerly embraced the opportunity. The transition proved life-changing in ways she hadn't anticipated. The clean-burning, efficient cookstove eliminated smoke-related health issues while dramatically reducing her cooking and cleaning time. Kamla now saves 3-4 hours daily, time she redirects toward her family's income-generating activities.

With her newfound freedom, Kamla dedicated her focused attention to cattle care. She also increased her involvement in farm work, contributing directly to crop cultivation and management. These activities have boosted her household's income streams.

Kamla's story demonstrates how improved cookstoves create economic empowerment opportunities for rural families. By liberating time from inefficient cooking methods, the technology enables homemakers to become active economic contributors, enhancing family prosperity while maintaining their traditional roles.

8. Project 5: Improved Cookstoves in Salumber - Helping Women and Environment

8.1 About the Project

Access to clean and safe cooking solutions remains a critical development challenge in rural India. Despite advancements in technology and infrastructure, **many households continue to rely on age-old cooking practices that are both inefficient and harmful**. The widespread use of traditional stoves and biomass fuels not only endangers the health of rural communities but also contributes to environmental degradation. Multiple initiatives and policy measures are underway **to expand access to clean cooking by phasing out traditional stoves in favour of safer, energy-efficient alternatives**[32]. Addressing this issue is essential for achieving sustainable development goals related to health, energy access, and climate action.

As part of its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Infosys Limited spearheads numerous environmental sustainability efforts that benefit local communities nationwide. A flagship project under this portfolio is **"Improved Cookstoves in Salumber - Helping Women and Environment"**, designed to tackle environmental and social issues in tandem. The **current Project (Phase V)** of the project aims to support **11,500 households** of Salumber District[33] to access the technology of improved cookstoves (ICS) viz., the Greenway Jumbo Stove and the Earthfit Arjun Stove and was carried out by **Udaipur Urja Initiatives Producer Company Limited (UUIPCL)** as a technical partner.

Below Figure provides an overview of the project specifics[34]:

Figure 54: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

8.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The PWCALLP team initiated the engagement through a kick off call with the Infosys Limited team to define clear evaluation criteria. This preliminary discussion achieved several objectives: **defining the scope of work, aligning stakeholder expectations, and developing a comprehensive understanding of the project's design and implementation strategy**. Following this, the PWCALLP team obtained the subsequent project documentation from the Infosys Limited team:

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Infosys Limited and UUIPCL, outlining the project's key activities and other operational modalities
- Database of project beneficiaries

The PWCALLP team conducted a **comprehensive desk review** of the provided documents to deepen their **understanding of the project**, **develop a robust assessment framework, and identify key stakeholders for interactions,** in line with the preliminary interactions with project team.

[32] Source: https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1525934
[33] Salumber is newly formed district of Rajasthan in FY 24 which was formerly part of Udaipur District.
[34] Source: MoU signed between Infosys Limited and UUIPCL
* Under this project, the cookstoves were distributed during the period of FY 23 - FY 24 with maintenance continuing until FY 25.

Following the IRECS and SROI (Social Return on Investment) framework, the research employed a **structured approach to assess the project's impact** where IRECS focuses on gauging the impact of development programmes on parameters of Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness (and efficiency), Convergence, and Sustainability giving an overall assessment of the project in terms of producing the intended project outcomes. It also helps in gaining a qualitative understanding of the impact created, stakeholder perception, and the extent of collaboration with other partners. Additionally, the SROI framework design helps to measure and account for value created quantifying the social, environmental, and economic value generated by the project and helps in assessing the costs and benefits.

In consultation with Infosys Limited, a **mixed-method approach** combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies was deployed to conduct the impact assessment study. The **quantitative component** focused on generating measurable insights and evidence regarding both current and projected impacts of the intervention. **Qualitative data** collection was utilised to capture stakeholder perspectives, and lived experiences, translating them into deeper understanding of the project's actual impact on beneficiaries. The research design incorporated multiple data collection techniques: quantitative methods such as **structured surveys** complemented by qualitative approaches including **In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with key stakeholders:

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 55: Research design for the study

- **Quantitative surveys** with a sample of **311** beneficiaries who received the cookstoves
- **Six In-depth Interview (IDIs)** with beneficiaries who received the cookstoves
- **One Key Informant Interview (KII)** with the implementing partner representative
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Limited team

Based on the data shared by Infosys Limited team, it was noted that **11,500 beneficiary households** have been covered under the project. Hence, a sample size of **272** was estimated at 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, we have covered more sample size (**311**) to ensure the appropriate representation of the findings from all the 9 villages in our sample. The quantitative sampling distribution was as below:

Table 24: Distribution of quantitative sample across villages

District	Block	Villages	Sample
Salumber[35]	Salumber	Devghad	48
		Ghater	48
		Karavali	52
		Kholdi	44
		Sati ki chori	42
		Manpur A	45
	Lasadiya	Berawal	15
		Dhai Khera	11

[35] Salumber is newly formed district of Rajasthan in FY 24 which was formerly part of Udaipur District.

District	Block	Villages	Sample
		Khajoori	6
Total			**311**

8.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key project stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

Prior to the intervention, the community confronted daily adversities stemming from traditional cooking methods. Based on discussions with technical partner and community respondents, the following challenges have been identified:

- **Indoor air pollution and associated health risks:** Women in these communities endured sustained exposure to noxious smoke and toxic gases during meal preparation, resulting in respiratory complications and ocular irritation. Multiple respondents from Raghunathpura village reported experiencing mild eye issues while cooking with their traditional mud chulhas. One beneficiary noted that the smoke was so severe that she had to spend ₹100 on travel charges for a doctor visit specifically for eye irritation treatment before FY 23, resulting in half a day lost for medical attention. Children in close proximity faced equivalent hazards, with respondents acknowledging that coughing during cooking was a regular occurrence for family members, particularly affecting the younger ones in the household.

- **High Wood Consumption:** Traditional cookstoves necessitated substantially greater quantities of firewood, contributing to forest depletion and ecological deterioration. Beneficiaries across Salumber block consistently reported that 20 kg of firewood would last only 2 days when using traditional mud chulhas. Women frequently undertook extensive journeys to procure fuel wood from nearby jungles, with respondents indicating they spent approximately 4 hours every 2 days (averaging 2 hours daily) on firewood collection alone, amplifying their physical burden and daily hardships.

- **Time-Intensive Cooking Process:** Food preparation using traditional cookstoves proved considerably more laborious, demanding continuous supervision and repeated re-ignition. Beneficiaries reported spending approximately 2 hours daily on cooking alone (1 hour per meal for 2 meals), constraining women's availability for alternative household responsibilities, agricultural work, or personal well-being. The lack of focused flame in traditional mud chulhas required constant effort to keep the fire burning, making the cooking process exhausting and time-consuming.

- **Restricted Mobility and Maintenance Challenges:** Traditional cookstoves (or mud stoves) remained anchored to designated locations within households, constraining their adaptability for utilization across different spaces. Notably, respondents from Raghunathpura and Pavati villages mentioned that due to the excessive smoke production, they were compelled to position their mud chulhas outside the house, creating additional challenges during adverse weather conditions. This immobile configuration consequently generated soot deposits on ceiling surfaces and cooking vessels through consistent usage patterns, with beneficiaries reporting spending 30-60 minutes after each meal (totaling 1-2 hours daily) just on cleaning vessels and kitchen surfaces blackened by soot.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

This section summarizes the findings from the impact assessment study, forming the evidence base for recommendations and future project enhancements.

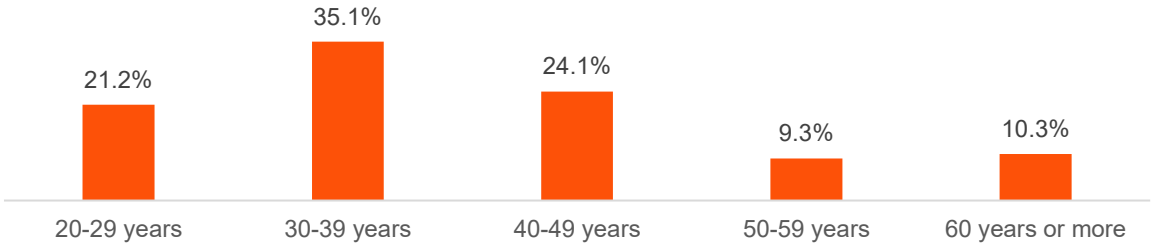
1. Profile of the respondents

Below analysis presents the profile of the respondents based on various demographic indicators including age, gender and economic profile depicted in below representations:

- All the beneficiaries (100%) **were women**, indicating that the project primarily **benefitted the women of the households**. Among participants, 35.1% (n=311) were **aged 30-39 years**, while 24.1% (n=311) fell within

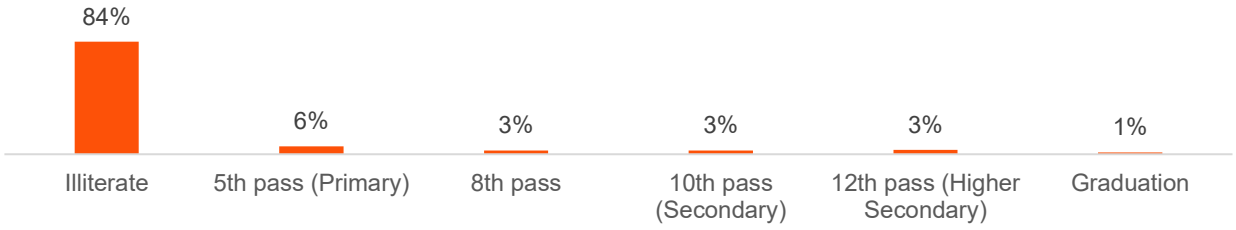
the 40-49 years age bracket, with all age distributions illustrated below. The project's diverse age representation reflects a **commitment to inclusivity**, ensuring **equitable representation** across generations.

Figure 56: Age distribution of the respondents (n=311)



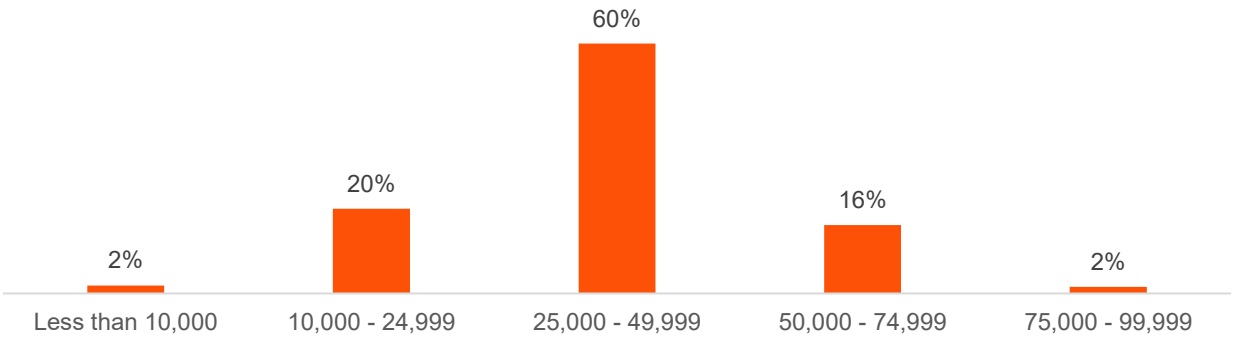
- 84% (n=311) of respondents reported **being illiterate**, followed by 6% who completed primary education, showcasing impactful outreach efforts among the most marginalised groups.

Figure 57: Formal Education of the Respondents (n=311)



- **60%** of respondents (n=311) reported an **annual income between ₹ 25,000 – ₹ 49,999,** while **20%** indicated **annual income between ₹ 10,000 – ₹ 24,999.** Further, 62% of the respondents (n=311) stated that they belonged to the **Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**. This underscores the project's **effective reach and meaningful engagement with the most vulnerable communities.**

Figure 58: Annual Income of the Respondents (n=311)

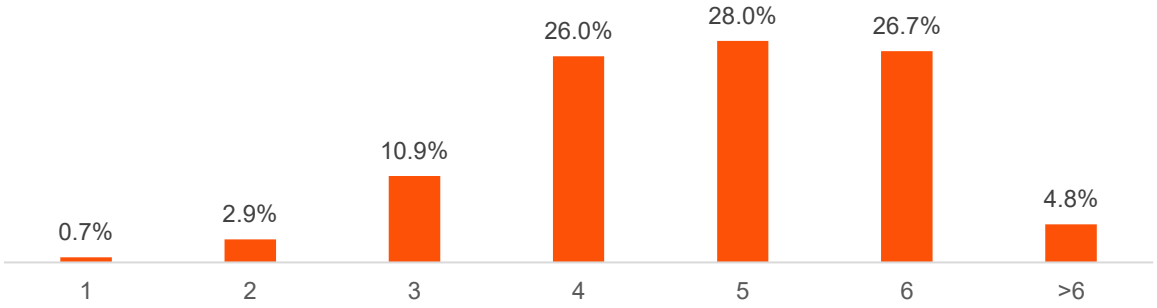


- Nearly all respondents (98%, n=311) are engaged in **farming on own land or agricultural labour**, illustrating the **community's significant economic dependence on agriculture-based livelihoods**.

Figure 59: Occupation of the respondents (n=311)

- Among respondents (n=311), **28.0%** had **5-member households**, followed by **26.7% with 6 members** and **26.0% with 4 members**. This suggests that households with more members were provided with cookstoves, **allowing them to effectively address their increased cooking requirements**.

Figure 60: Household Members of the Respondents (n=311)



2. Awareness and Adoption of Improved Cooking Practices

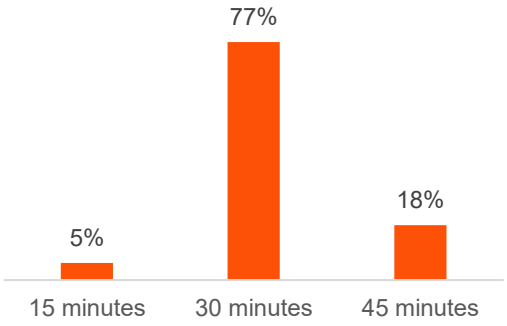
- All participants confirmed they are **currently using improved cookstoves**. Before receiving these, every respondent (100%, n=311) **relied solely on traditional chulhas (open-fire stoves)**, a finding further validated through qualitative interviews.
- Nearly all respondents (99%, n=311) acknowledged that project **support was funded by Infosys Limited**. Community meetings (52%, n=311) and door-to-door visits (48%, n=311) were the **primary sources of project information**, underscoring their **strong community-driven approach**.
- Nearly all respondents (99%, n=311) **actively shared cookstove benefits within their communities**. Interactions confirmed beneficiaries **communicated advantages** like improved health, reduced cooking costs, and cleaner environment to neighbours, family, and friends, **demonstrating strong community engagement and grassroots impact**.
- 94% of respondents (n=311) reported the **project transformed their community**, **improving both household well-being and community awareness.**

3. Time Savings in Daily Cooking Activities

- All respondents (100%, n=311) reported that the improved cookstoves **reduced their cooking time**. A majority (77%, n=311) indicated saving an **average of 30 minutes per day**, while **18% reported a daily time saving of 45 minutes**.

- This **considerable time saving underscores the project's effectiveness in enhancing cooking efficiency**. During discussions, beneficiaries indicated that saved time was channeled toward **productive or personal activities such as farming, household chores, and supporting their children's education**. Notably, 78% (n=311) of respondents reported improved productivity in household tasks, while 56% allocated the extra time to agricultural work and 37% gained increased time for leisure activities.

Figure 61: Daily Time Saved in Cooking



4. Enhanced Indoor Air Quality and Household Well-being

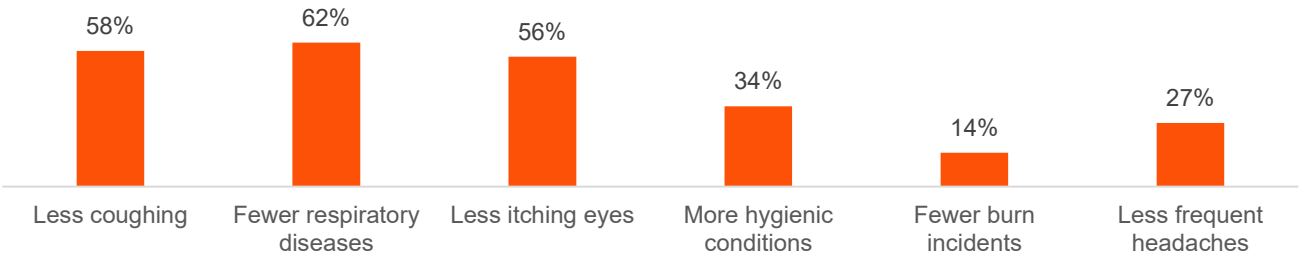
- **Traditional cookstoves were primary contributors to indoor air pollution, frequently causing respiratory issues and eye irritation**. The introduction of improved cookstoves substantially enhanced indoor air quality by reducing smoke emissions**.** Qualitative feedback from beneficiaries confirmed that these **cookstoves generated significantly less smoke, resulting in fewer health complications associated with smoke exposure**.

- Nearly all respondents (99%, n=311) confirmed that the project **reduced smoke and gas emissions**. Additionally, 68% experienced **substantial improvements in indoor air quality, fostering healthier living environments and improved overall well-being.**

- All respondents (100%, n=311) reported **noticeable improvements in the health and well-being** of women in their households following the adoption of improved cookstoves. These positive changes were largely attributed to the reduction in smoke emissions, which led to fewer respiratory problems and less eye irritation. On probing further on the health aspects of using the improved cookstoves team noted that:

  - **62%** of respondents reported **a reduction in respiratory illnesses,** while **58% experienced less coughing,** highlighting the cookstove's role in reducing health issues linked to indoor air pollution.
  - **56%** of respondents reported experiencing **less eye irritation,** while **27%** noted **fewer headaches**, further reinforcing the health benefits associated with improved indoor air quality
  - **34%** reported experiencing **more hygienic conditions in their homes, indicating a cleaner and healthier cooking environment**
  - **14%** of respondents reported experiencing **fewer burn incidents, indicating improved safety** with the use of improved cookstoves.

Figure 62: Changes in Health aspect due to Improved Cookstoves (n=311)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

5. Financial Impact of Improved Cookstove Adoption

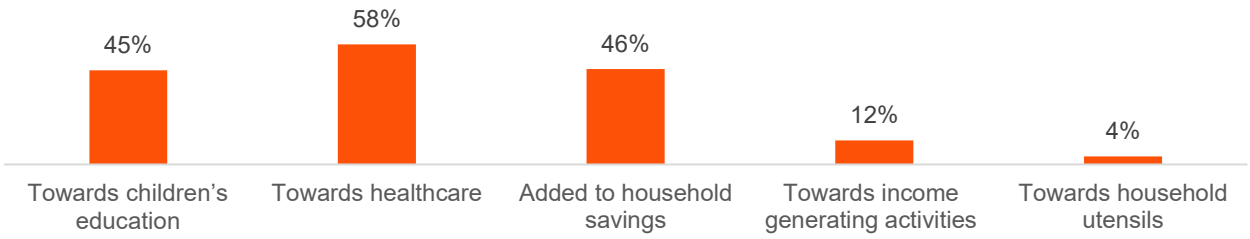
- 69% of respondents (n=311) reported **a decrease in household cooking fuel expenses** after switching to improved cookstoves.

- The survey indicated a **reduction in monthly fuel expenses following the adoption of improved cookstoves under the project**. Among the respondents (69%, n=311) from above, 61% (n=216) reported **savings less than ₹ 500 per month,** while 38% noted monthly savings ranging from **₹ 500 to ₹ 999**. These

findings **highlight the economic advantages of improved cookstoves in lowering household fuel costs**.

- The financial savings achieved through improved cookstoves were distributed by respondents among diverse purposes, as illustrated below:

Figure 63: Utilisation of expenses saved due to cookstove (n=216)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

- During community interactions, respondents highlighted that the improved cookstoves could be **readily ignited using thin twigs or dry grass,** and once ignited, **the fire endured considerably longer**. This reduced dependency on frequent relighting or manually blowing air, consequently **improving cooking efficiency and decreasing fuelwood consumption**.
- Nearly all respondents (99%, n=311) reported a **reduced need for fuelwood**. Among them, 86% (n=309) indicated a **significant reduction of more than 50%**, while 13% **reported a moderate reduction of 25-50%** in fuelwood requirements.

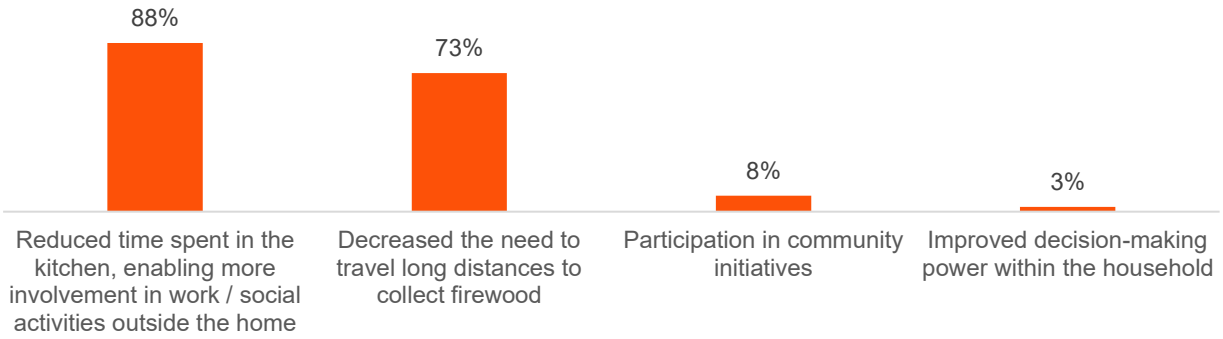
> "Formerly, with conventional stoves (mud chulha), **20 kg of wood would accommodate only two days** of use. Now, with the improved cookstoves, **the same quantity of wood persists for five days**. The upgraded stove **delivers a more concentrated flame which enhances cooking efficiency and decreases wood requirements**. This has established a significant transformation for us, **reducing fuel consumption and minimizing physical exertion during cooking and wood collection**.
>
> **Narrated by a community member during our interactions"**

- All participants (99%, n=311) **confirmed greater financial security upon using improved cookstoves**. This development represents a considerable **strengthening of household financial wellness**, attributed to reduced fuel spending, time conservation, and the flexibility to invest resources in **essential aspects such as education, healthcare, and savings**.

6. Holistic Impact on Women's Lives

- The project brought **improvements to the daily lives of women** in households that adopted improved cookstoves. Respondents consistently reported a range of **positive outcomes, including reduced cooking time and lower fuel consumption, which substantially eased the burden of collecting firewood**. Additionally, the cookstoves **produced less soot, making utensil cleaning quicker and more efficient**. Importantly, the reduction in indoor air pollution contributed to **better respiratory health, thereby contributing to enhancing overall well-being and quality of life**.
- Survey data reinforces the **positive effects of improved stoves on women's everyday activities**. An impressive 88% of survey participants (n=311) mentioned that **shortened cooking periods helped them engage more extensively in work and community involvement**. In addition, 73% reported **reduced frequency of firewood collection trips**, which concurrently preserved time and minimized physical exertion.

Figure 64: Impact on women (n=311)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

- Furthermore, 95% of respondents (n=311) **acknowledged that the improved cookstove boosted cooking safety within their residences**. This widespread consensus demonstrates that the cookstove effectively **addressed safety challenges** by delivering a more dependable and safe cooking system, **decreasing risks connected to traditional open fire-based cooking and establishing a safer home environment**.

- Respondents also observed that the **improved cookstoves were perfectly compatible with their customary cooking methods and provided versatility for both interior and exterior use**. This adaptable design made **cooking more accessible and substantially lowered upkeep demands**.

Figure 65: Outdoor and Indoor utilisation of Jumbo and Smart cookstove

7. Operational Viability and Sustainability of Cookstove

- The survey results revealed **beneficiary satisfaction on the durability of the improved cookstoves**. All participants (100%, n=311) **expressed their contentment**, highlighting the cookstoves' **dependable functionality and enduring quality throughout prolonged usage**.

- 99% (n=311) had **undergone training on upkeep and care of the improved cookstove**. Among those who received training (n=307), 49% reported that the training was delivered by **UUIPCL project personnel** while 45% stated it came from **community leaders.**

Figure 66: Maintenance and Care Training

- These efforts **fulfilled an essential purpose** in making certain that households possessed adequate knowledge about **appropriate handling and upkeep of the improved cookstoves**, consequently boosting their lifespan and functional performance. During discussions it was revealed that during regular check-ins by local monitors, respondents received **ongoing assistance and additional training on correct operation and maintenance techniques**.

- A substantial portion of participants (87%, n=311) encountered **no operational problems with the supplied cookstoves**, demonstrating their **strong build quality and steadily dependable function**. Among the 13% of respondents who experienced issues with their cookstoves, 68% (n=41) **sought help from community members,** 24%(n=41) **opted to repair the cookstoves themselves**, while 7% **reached out to the project support or service centre.**

> "We haven't faced any functionality issues with these stoves over the **last two years, and repairs haven't been needed until now**. Considering **their proven durability**, we anticipate a **continued lifespan of four more years**. We had previously acquired a locally made Sigri chulha costing 300 rupees, **but it failed to last even 3 months before breaking down**. In conclusion, we are thoroughly **content with the functionality and consistency of these improved stoves.**"
>
> **Narrated by a community member during our interactions**

8. Improved Environmental Sustainability

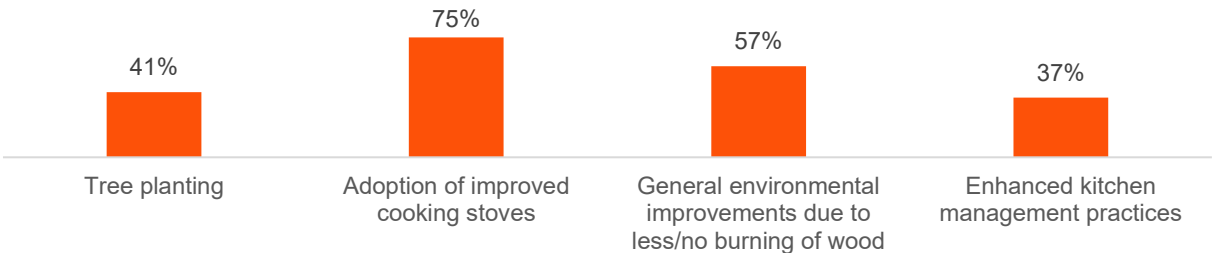
- Every participant (100%) observed a **decrease in waste produced from poor fuelwood combustion after implementing the improved cookstoves**, demonstrating better fuel efficiency and improved waste minimisation practices.

- During discussions, respondents mentioned that **traditional stoves produced considerable quantities of partially burnt wood and ash residue**, **making cleanup a laborious chore**. Earlier, substantial amounts of fuelwood stayed unconsumed, leading to wastage and poor performance.

- In comparison, the improved cookstoves, utilizing refined combustion processes, **ensure better fuel optimization, yielding substantially less ash, negligible unprocessed residues, and decreased soot formation on vessels and interior surfaces**. This not only streamlines **everyday cleaning tasks but also enhances domestic waste control practices**.

- Additionally, 91% of respondents (n=311) reported **receiving training on environmental topics**. Key areas of learning **included the adoption of improved cookstoves** (75%, n=283), **general environmental benefits from reduced wood burning** (57%), and **tree planting** (41%), as illustrated below:

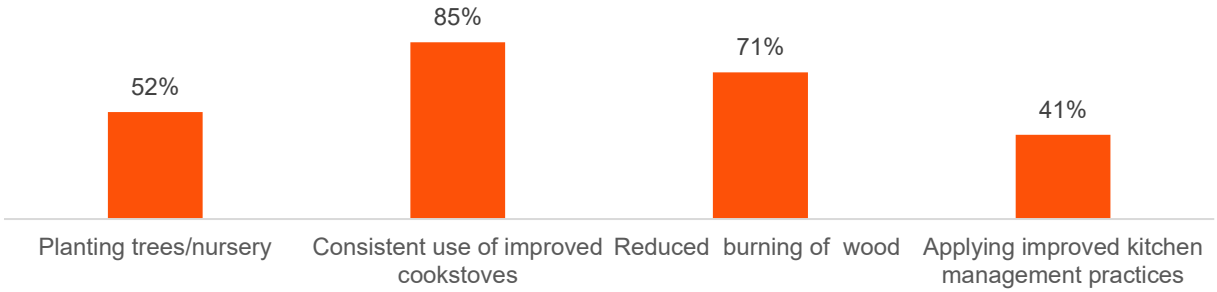
Figure 67: Training modules (n= 283)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

- The assessment indicates a **strong uptake of environmentally sustainable practices introduced through project training**. The most widely adopted measures include the regular use of improved cookstoves (85%, n=283) and a reduction in wood burning (71%, n=283). These outcomes **underscore the project's effectiveness in promoting behavioral change and advancing environmental sustainability within the target communities**.

Figure 68: Adopted environmental practices (n=283)



Multiple choice question, and total may not add upto 100%

8.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project for a period of 28 months, starting from FY 24 (i.e. December, 2023). The overall impact is calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight is the estimation of the benefits which would have occurred even in the absence of the project. For calculating the impact of the project, deadweight is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have

continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution (by others) is an estimate of what proportion of the impact may be attributed to the efforts of other stakeholders involved. Attribution by others is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Drop-off

Drop-off is factored in as in the subsequent years, the benefit or the impact would be slightly less than the previous year or may be attributed to other external factors as well. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any drop-off noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been assumed based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)

Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 16,79,65,416 across a period from FY 22 to FY 26.

Table 25: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Beneficiary Households (Women and Families)	• Distribution of improved cookstoves. • Training in operation & maintenance of improved cookstoves. • Community mobilization and awareness programs on clean cooking benefits.	• 22,868 improved cookstoves distributed. • 11,434 households shifting from traditional to improved cookstoves. • 22,868 cookstoves being utilised.	• Reduction in firewood usage. • Reduction in firewood collection, cooking and cleaning time. • Improved cooking environment (less smoke, soot, carbon residue) and reduction in respiratory/eye-related illnesses.	• Reduction in fuel-wood costs. • Time saved redirected to productive/income-generating activities. • Improved household health and reduced healthcare costs due to less indoor air pollution.

Note: The data points (pertaining to reach of the project) used in this impact map have been provided by the implementing partner. As this report has been prepared to assess the social impact and calculate the social return

on investment of the project only, verification or validation of these data points has not been conducted as part of the study.

Table 26: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Deadweight	Displacement	Attribution (by others)	Drop-off	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Total value created in FY 26	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Households	Decreased medical expenses	0%	0%	0%	0%	₹ 16,13,773	₹ 3,87,54,035	₹ 4,21,77,739	₹ 8,25,45,547
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	0%	0%	0%	0%	₹ 24,140	₹ 5,79,721	₹ 6,30,936	₹ 12,34,798
	Savings on fuel wood purchase	0%	0%	0%	0%	₹ 16,45,826	₹ 3,95,23,769	₹ 4,30,15,476	₹ 8,41,85,071
Total impact created						**₹ 32,83,740**	**₹ 7,88,57,525**	**₹ 8,58,24,151**	**₹ 16,79,65,416**

Table 27: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Financial Proxy Explanation	Source(s)
Households	Decreased medical expenses	The proxy is the average estimated annual saving on healthcare costs per household. This is calculated from survey data identifying the difference between the average monthly expenditure on health that could be attributed to the effects of using traditional cookstove (chulha) and average monthly expenditure on health when using the new cookstove(s). These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	The proxy is the average estimated monthly increase in income from the income generation/enhancement activities per household which had been possible due to the time saved from cooking activities. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Savings on fuel wood purchase	The proxy is the average estimated monthly savings that the household experienced due to the reduction in the fuelwood required by the improved cookstoves. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings

b. SROI calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.

Total Impact Value = ₹ 16,79,65,416

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 7,43,02,769[36]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is considered while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India since FY 24 is considered[37].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact	NPV of Utilisation
₹ 14,61,58,005	₹ 6,91,08,387

	SROI Ratio
Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project is estimated to be 2.11:1.	**2.11:1**

The SROI value similarly is 2.11. This means that for every ₹ 1 being invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 2.11 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.
- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.
- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.
- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

8.5 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

[36] As per the MoU
[37] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette

Table 28: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• 84% of respondents (n=311) were **illiterate**, underscoring the project's **reach to highly vulnerable groups**. • 62% of respondents (n=311) were from **Below Poverty Line (BPL) households**, reflecting the project's **targeted outreach to marginalized socio-economic segments**. • **Community meetings** (52%, n=311) and **door-to-door visits** (48%, n=311) were the **main channels** for project **information dissemination,** reflecting an **inclusive, community-based approach.**
Relevance	• Before implementation, all respondents **used only traditional chulhas**. At present, every household operates the project-allocated improved stoves, indicating **both a strong inclination and a clear necessity for this solution**. Traditional cooking methods were tied to **intensive fuelwood use, dense smoke emissions, compromised indoor air standards, and corresponding health concerns**, emphasizing the importance and success of the project. • All respondents (100%, n=311) affirmed that the project delivered **substantial benefits to their community, improving household well-being and increasing awareness**. The stoves aligned with **regional cooking methods** and **provided flexibility for both interior and exterior usage**, enhancing convenience while meal preparation and reducing maintenance needs.
Effectiveness	• All respondents reported improved cooking efficiency, characterized by **shorter cooking times and noticeable health improvements**. Additionally, 99% (n=311) respondents noted a significant **drop in smoke emissions**, and 68% reported considerable betterment in indoor air standards**.** • The project contributed significantly **to improving women's health outcomes**. Additionally, 68% of participants reported **lower cooking fuel expenses**, as reduced wood consumption eased financial strain on households. This **cost savings enabled households to allocate resources toward education, healthcare, and long-term savings, amplifying the project's socio-economic benefits.** • The project delivered notable improvements in **daily life and environmental outcomes**. With 88% (n=311) of respondents spending less time cooking, **women were able to engage more in income-generating and social activities**. Additionally, the low maintenance cookstoves **minimised cooking waste for all users, reinforcing effective household waste management.** • **Reduced dependence on fuelwood** has significantly contributed to environmental conservation. Moreover, 85% (n=283) of respondents reported adopting sustainable behaviours, including **consistent use of improved cookstoves and reduced wood burning** (62%, n=236), reinforcing the project's role in **promoting eco-friendly practices.**
Convergence	• The project is closely aligned with the **Central Government's *Unnat Chulha Abhiyan* programme**, which advocates biomass cookstoves as a clean cooking energy solution to **reduce fuelwood consumption through improved efficiency and lower emissions**. • The project has been **implemented in collaboration with community institutions such as Panchayats (Village-level Governance Bodies) and Seva Mandir ensuring local participation and ownership.** Panchayats provided the institutional platform for community gatherings across villages and Seva Mandir worked collaboratively to conduct community meetings at panchayat level, facilitate beneficiary identification and support project rollout activities.
Sustainability	• All respondents **expressed satisfaction** with the improved cookstoves, citing their **durability and long operational lifespan**. The project **strengthened community capacity by training 99% (n=311) of users in proper usage and maintenance**. Those who accessed **support services reported complete satisfaction and regular**

Parameters	Assessment from the study
	maintenance by beneficiaries ensured **sustained performance and long-term reliability**.

8.6 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project implemented is in alignment with **Infosys Limited's CSR policy**, which mentions, **environment sustainability** as one of the CSR focus areas for Infosys Limited. The project also contributes to relevant Sustainable Development Goals: **SDG 3- Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4- Quality Education, SDG 7- Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 13- Climate action.**[38]

SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being: emphasises ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The improved cookstove project reduces indoor air pollution, mitigating health risks for women and children and fostering healthier living conditions.

SDG 4 - Quality Education: focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. By reducing the time spent on firewood collection and cooking, the project enables women and children with an opportunity to dedicate more time to education and skill development, supporting lifelong learning.

SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy: promotes access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. The introduction of improved cookstoves facilitates a shift towards efficient cooking.

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth: highlights promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. With more time available, women are empowered to be able to engage in productive activities.

SDG 13 - Climate Action: supports climate action by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainability through reduction in wood cutting / deforestation. The adoption of improved cookstoves reduces greenhouse gas emissions, supporting global efforts toward environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

8.7 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

8.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Transforming Rural Livelihoods: How Improved Cookstoves Enhanced Madhu's Family Well-being

Madhu (Name changed), a dedicated homemaker from a rural farming community, exemplifies the transformative impact of sustainable cooking technology on women's economic empowerment. As the manager of a five-member household, Madhu previously struggled with the challenges of traditional chulha cooking.

The conventional cooking method presented numerous obstacles: extended cooking times, excessive smoke production causing respiratory discomfort, labour-intensive wood collection, and persistent soot accumulation on

[38] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

utensils requiring frequent cleaning. These challenges significantly constrained her ability to contribute effectively to her family's dual income sources: farming and retail operations.

During a community meeting, Madhu learned about an improved cookstove initiative funded by Infosys Limited. Upon receiving the enhanced cooking technology, her daily routine transformed dramatically. The improved cookstove eliminated smoke-related health concerns, reduced fuel consumption, and most importantly, saved her 2 hours daily.

This time liberation proved invaluable for family welfare. Madhu now allocates these saved hours to supporting agricultural activities and assisting with shop operations alongside her husband. The improved cooking efficiency has not only enhanced her family's health and reduced household drudgery but also strengthened their overall quality of life.

Case Story 2: From Chulha to Change: Kamini's Income Story

Kamini's (Name changed) daily routine in her village home revolved around an old mud chulha that demanded constant attention. She found herself spending most of her day managing cooking tasks and cleaning up the soot that covered her kitchen surfaces. The inefficient chulha meant longer cooking times and frequent interruptions to adjust the fire and add more fuel.

When an improved cookstove project was introduced in her area funded by Infosys, Kamini decided to participate. The new stove proved to be more efficient and produced significantly less smoke than her traditional mud chulha. Most importantly for her busy schedule, it cut down her daily cooking and cleaning routine considerably.

The time savings, while not dramatic, made a practical difference. She used this additional time to spend more attention on their small livestock - a few goats and chickens that supplemented the family's income. She could now feed them more regularly and keep their living area cleaner. She also had more time to help with their kitchen garden and assist with farm-related tasks.

These modest improvements in animal care and agricultural work resulted in an increase in their household earnings. The livestock became healthier and more productive, while their small-scale farming efforts yielded better results. Kamini's experience shows how improved cookstoves can provide practical benefits for low-income families. The time saved from more efficient cooking allows women to contribute additional effort toward income-generating activities, creating meaningful improvements in household financial stability.

9. Project 6: Sustainable Impact through Improved Cookstoves and Clean Energy Solutions

9.1 About the Project

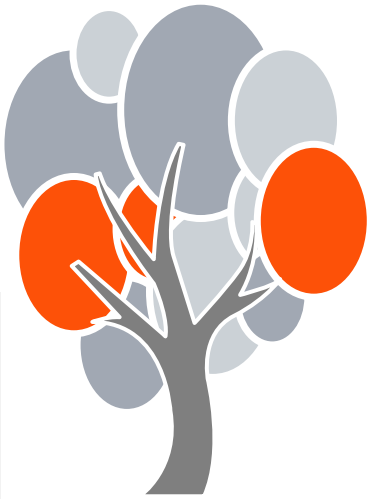
Access to clean cooking solutions and electricity in rural villages of Meghalaya is still a major challenge in India. Even with new technology and better infrastructure, many families continue to use old **cooking methods that are unsafe and wasteful.** Besides, many villages in Garo Hills have **no access to electricity and remain** in darkness after sunset. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving daily life in the rural villages of Meghalaya's Garo Hills, as well as for ensuring access to basic amenities such as electricity and modern cooking methods.

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts, Infosys Limited has been implementing several projects to promote environmental sustainability and support local communities across the country. One such initiative is the **"Sustainable Impact through Improved Cookstoves and Clean Energy Solutions" Project**, **which provided improved cookstoves (Jumbo Cookstove) to 10,000 households in Meghalaya**[39]. Additionally, the **project includes solar electrification for 464 households and further supported four primary health centres (PHCs) with solar electrification and medical equipment**. Infosys Limited partnered with **Global Himalayan Expedition (GHE)** to bring these benefits to the Garo Hills region in Meghalaya.

Figure 69: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

Project Beneficiaries

- 10,000 Household received improved cookstoves
- 464 Households received Solar electrification
- 4 PHCs received Solar electrification and medical equipment



Project Period

FY 23 - FY 25*

Project Location

Garo Hills, Meghalaya

Total Project Outlay

₹ 6.35 Crore

9.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment adopted an integrated and structured methodology to evaluate the project's social outcomes. The process commenced with a kick-off meeting with the Infosys Limited team, followed by a briefing session with GHE. These initial engagements enabled the research team to capture critical insights into the project's design and support mechanisms. Subsequently, the PWCALLP team was provided with key project documents as mentioned below:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Infosys Limited and GHE:** Outlined the project's key activities and other operational modalities
- **Beneficiary database for cookstove**: Provided an overview of number of cookstoves distributed to beneficiaries
- **Monitoring reports received from the Gold Standard platform**

The PWCALLP team then carried out a **detailed desk review of these documents.** This helped them **gain a deeper understanding of the project activities, build a strong assessment framework,** and **identify the main stakeholders** for further discussions, in line with the initial meetings with the project team.

[39] Source: MoU signed between Infosys Limited and Global Himalayan Expedition

* Under this project, the cookstoves were distributed during the FY 23 with maintenance continuing until FY 25.

In consultation with Infosys Limited, a **mixed-method approach** combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies was deployed to conduct the impact assessment study. The **quantitative component** focused on generating measurable insights and evidence regarding both current and projected impacts of the interventions. **Qualitative data** collection was utilised to capture stakeholder perspectives, and lived experiences, translating them into deeper understanding of the project's actual impact on beneficiaries. The research design incorporated multiple data collection techniques: quantitative methods such as **structured surveys** complemented by qualitative approaches including **In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with key stakeholders:

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 70: Research design for the study

- **Quantitative surveys** with a **sample of 284 beneficiaries** who received the cookstoves*
- **Fifteen In-depth Interview** (IDIs) with beneficiaries who received the cookstoves
- **Three Focus Group Discussions** (FGDs) with beneficiaries who received rooftop solar PV connection.
- **Two In-depth Interviews** (IDIs) with head doctor from PHC
- **One In-depth Interview** (IDI) each with the implementing partner and Infosys Limited Team

Based on the data shared by Infosys Limited team, it was noted that **10,000 beneficiary households** have been covered under the project. Hence, a sample size of **272** was estimated at 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error. However, we have covered more sample size (**284**) to ensure the appropriate representation of the findings from all the locations in our sample. The sampling distribution for quantitative survey was as below:

Table 29: Distribution of quantitative sample across villages

District	Block	Village	Sample covered
East	Samanda	Rongsak Songma	27
		Chinemgre	25
		Sampalgre	27
		Rongbing Boldak	27
West	Dalu	Gangbanga	28
		Upper Bamonpara	23
	Daddengre	Sadolpara	38
		Magalpara	35
		Bikonggre	29
		Rongdupara	25
Grand Total			**284**

9.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key project stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

Prior to the intervention, the community faced multiple challenges in their day-to-day lives. These difficulties were largely due to reliance on traditional cooking methods, the absence of electricity connections in the villages, and inadequate equipment in the PHC, which limited its functionality. Based on discussions with GHE and feedback from community respondents, the following challenges were identified:

- **Exposure to Indoor Air Pollution and Extended Cooking Duration:** In the Garo Hills of Meghalaya, during the qualitative interactions, 12 out of 15 beneficiaries /households[40] continue to rely on mud stoves fuelled by firewood, posing significant challenges for women. As the primary cooks, most of whom are women, they spend long hours (typically around one hour per meal) in poorly ventilated, smoke-filled kitchens. It is evident that prolonged exposure leads to respiratory illnesses, eye irritation and persistent coughing, while children nearby[41] are equally at risk of burns and smoke-related illnesses. The region's damp climate further complicates cooking, causing fires to extinguish quickly and require constant rekindling. As a result, meal preparation becomes slow and labor-intensive, limiting women's capacity to manage household duties and reducing their participation in farming, weaving, and community activities that are vital to Garo livelihoods and culture.

- **Restricted Mobility and Household Maintenance Issues:** Mud stoves in homes in this region are fixed installations, typically located in a corner of the kitchen. Their immobility causes soot to accumulate on bamboo ceilings and walls, blackening the interior. This lack of flexibility prevents families from cooking outdoors or in better-ventilated areas, exacerbating indoor air pollution.

- **Physical Fatigue and Limited Leisure:** Collecting firewood daily in the rugged terrain of the Garo Hills is physically demanding. Women frequently return from long trips bearing heavy loads (5 trips in a week with each trip taking 30-40 minutes), leaving them fatigued and with minimal time for rest or social interaction. This exhausting cycle limits their opportunities for leisure, cultural engagement, and overall well-being.

- **Limited Access to Electricity:** In many villages of Meghalaya, inadequate access to electricity remains a pressing challenge. Household members are compelled to complete their chores during daylight hours, as the absence of reliable lighting makes evening tasks difficult. Children struggle to study at night, often relying on dim and hazardous kerosene lanterns. Likewise, household livelihood activities such as bamboo basket weaving are severely restricted, limiting productivity and economic opportunities.

- **Inadequate Infrastructure in PHC:** PHC in the Garo Hills encountered persistent barriers that severely constrained their ability to deliver effective healthcare. The most critical challenge was unreliable electricity, with frequent power cuts during the rainy season leaving doctors unable to operate essential medical equipment such as baby warmers, sterilisation units, and diagnostic machines. This directly compromised maternal and child health services, while also disrupting safe deliveries, emergency care, and routine treatments. The absence of consistent power placed immense strain on medical staff, who were forced to provide care without the necessary tools, and exposed mothers, infants, and vulnerable patients to significant risks. For the wider community, these limitations translated into delays, financial hardship, and long journeys to distant facilities for even basic healthcare, thereby eroding trust in local PHCs and leaving rural populations without dependable medical support.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

This section summarizes the findings from the impact assessment study, based on our interactions with various stakeholders across the three project components:

Component 1 - Distribution of improved cookstoves

1. Profile of the respondents

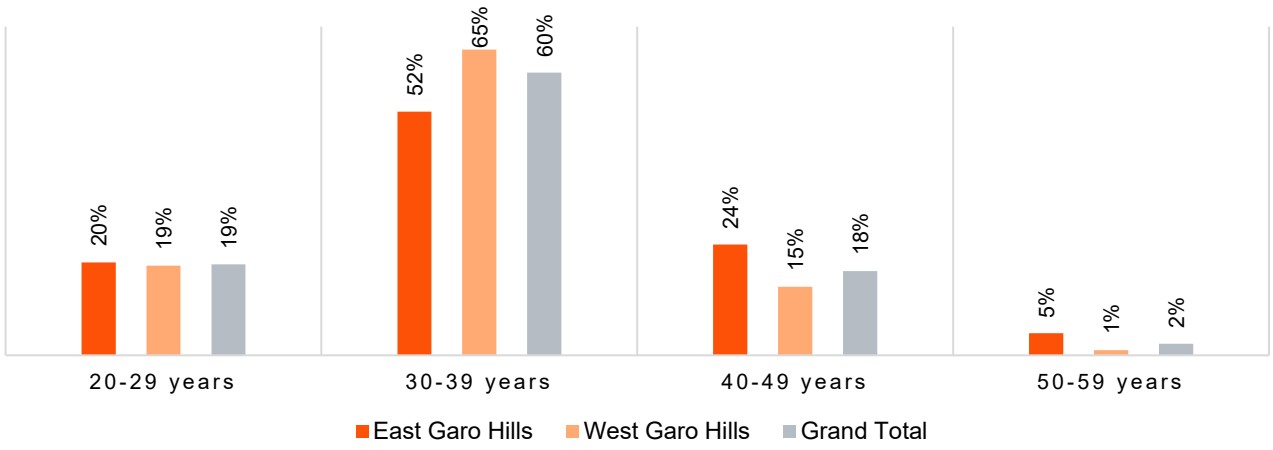
Below analysis presents the profile of the respondents based on various demographic indicators including age, gender and economic profile depicted in below representations:

- **All beneficiaries were women (100%)**, confirming the programme's focus on women within participating households.
- Age distribution shows broad **cross-generational reach**, with the **largest cohort aged 30–39 years (60%)**, followed by 20–29 years (19%), 40–49 years (18%), and a small share aged 50–59 years (2%).

[40] Definition of household: A household is defined as a group of people or a person, often a family, who live together under the same roof
[41] https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/87d41dbc-fcd5-4b20-b05b-954e28c477f3/content

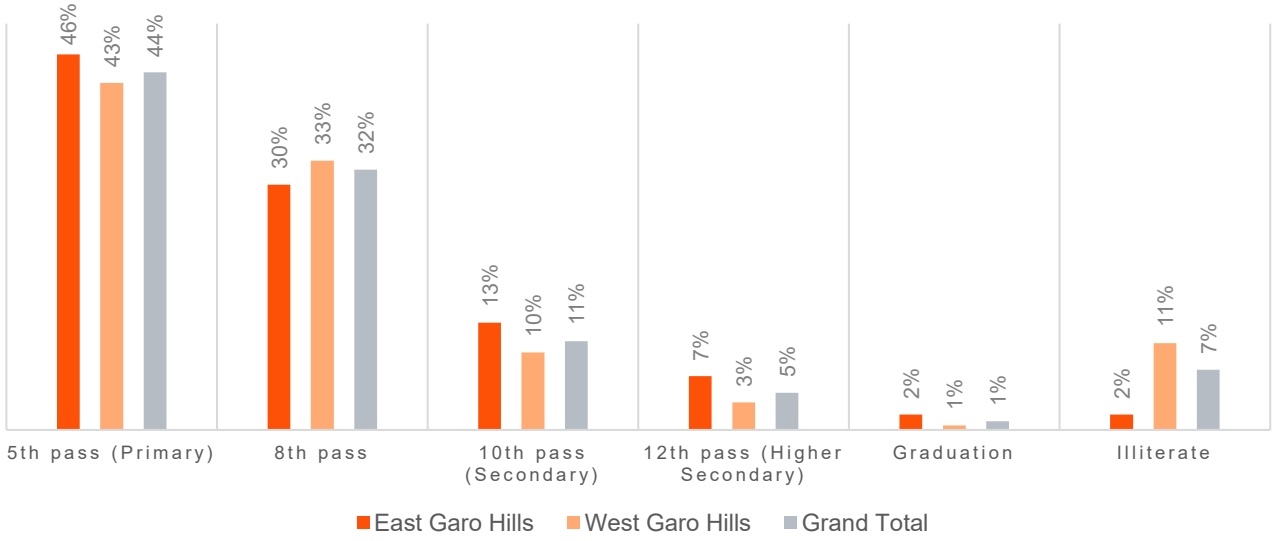
- **West Garo Hills has a larger share of women aged 30–39 (65%) compared to East Garo Hills (52%)**. East Garo Hills has more women aged 40–49 (24% vs. 15%) and 50–59 (5% vs. 1%). The 20–29 age group is similar in both districts, around 19–20%.

Figure 71 : Age group of respondents (N=284)



- The **majority of participants across both districts have completed only basic schooling,** primarily up to the 5th or 8th grade (Figure 108). East Garo Hills shows slightly higher educational attainment overall, with greater proportions completing 10th grade, 12th grade, and graduation compared to West Garo Hills. West Garo Hills has a notably higher illiteracy rate (11%) compared to East Garo Hills (2%), indicating regional disparities in educational access or quality.

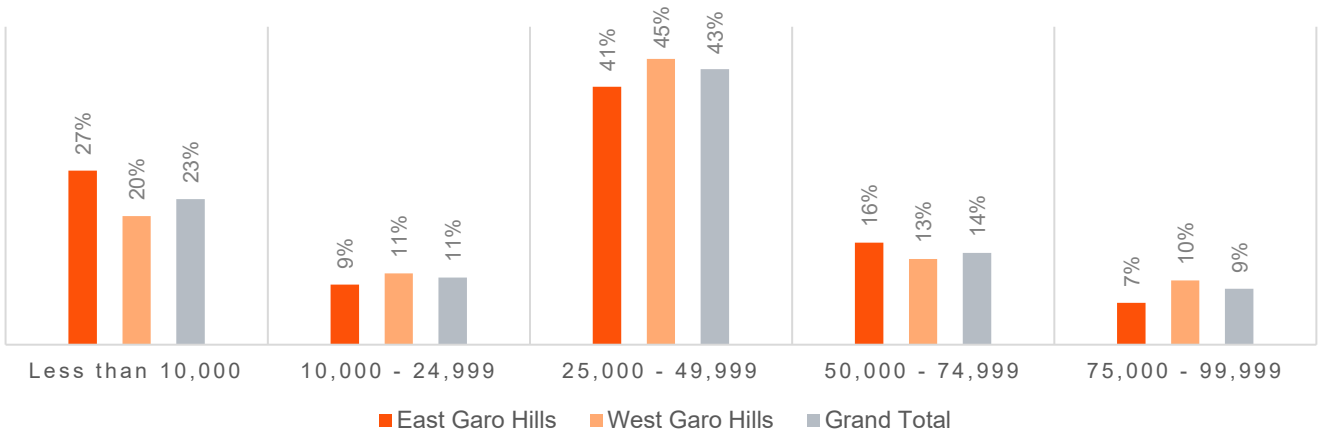
Figure 72: Formal Education of the Respondents (N=284)



- **Nearly all households in both East and West Garo Hills (98%) possess a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card**, indicating widespread economic vulnerability. Income distribution (Figure 109) reveals that 43% of households earn between ₹ 25,000 and ₹ 49,999 annually, while 34% fall below ₹ 25,000, with a higher proportion of vulnerable households in East Garo Hills (36%) compared to West Garo Hills (31%). Conversely, West Garo Hills has a slightly larger share of households in the higher income bracket of ₹ 75,000 to ₹ 99,999 (10% versus 7% in East).
- Socio-economic data at the district level highlight clear income disparities associated with occupational segmentation; farming households predominantly occupy the lower-income tiers, whereas small business and shop owners tend to achieve moderate income levels.[42]

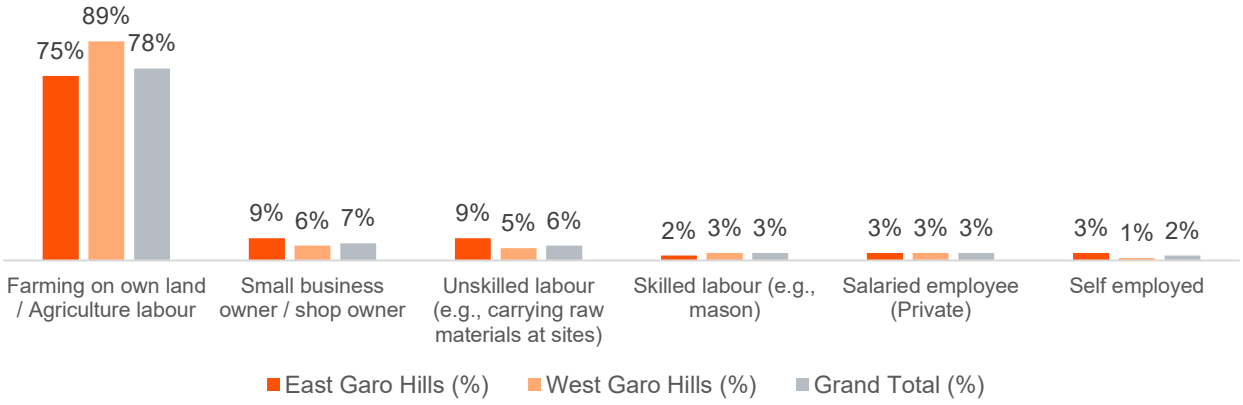
[42] Source: https://www.indiastatdistrictagri.com/meghalaya-state

Figure 73: Annual Income of the Respondents in ₹ (N=284)



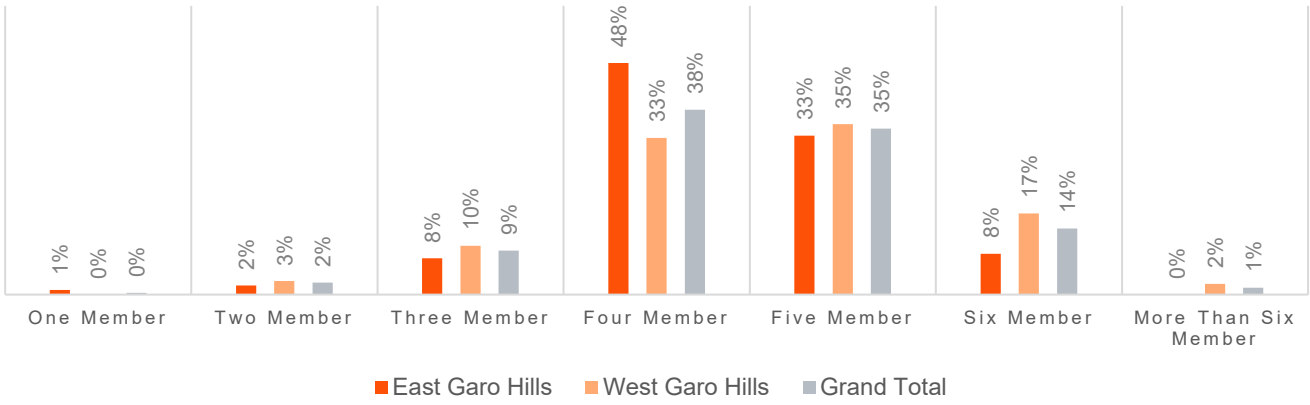
- Agriculture dominates livelihoods (75% East, 80% West) as depicted in Figure below. Small businesses are modest but slightly stronger in East (8% vs 6%). Agrarian livelihoods remain the backbone of the district economy, with limited diversification into non-farm sectors.[43]

Figure 74: Occupation of the respondents (N=284)



- Among respondents (n=284), **14%** had **6-member households**, followed by 35**% with 5 members** and **38% with 4 members**. This suggests that households with more members were provided with cookstoves, **allowing them to effectively address their increased cooking requirements**.

Figure 75: Household Members of the Respondents (n=284)



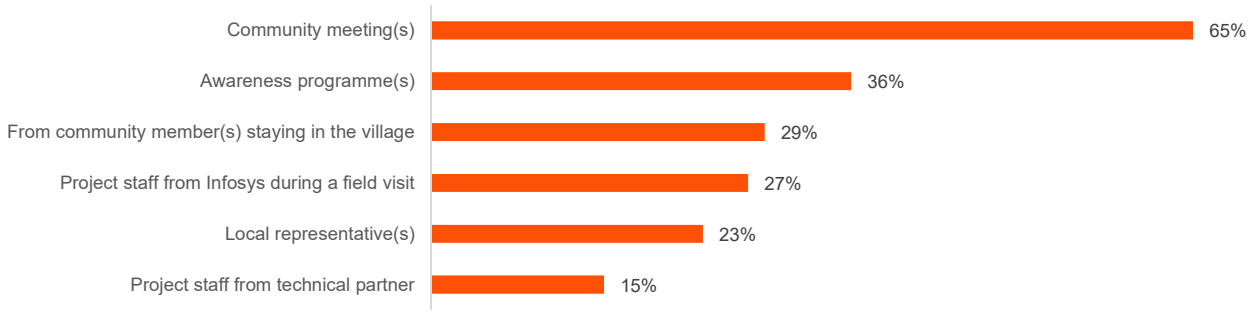
[43] Source: Ibid

2. Increased Awareness and Adoption of Improved Cooking Practices

- Currently, **99% (N=284) reported to be using the improved cookstoves**. Prior to receiving these stoves, 98% (N=284) of current users had relied on traditional chulhas (open-fire stoves) and 2% on the Kerosene Stove.

- All respondents (100%, N=284) were aware that the project support was funded by Infosys Limited. As depicted in Figure below, community meetings were the leading source of information (65%), underscoring the project's community-driven approach. This was followed by awareness programmes (36%), information shared by community members living in the village (29%), and field visits by Infosys Limited's project staff (27%). Fewer respondents cited local representatives (23%) and staff from the technical partner (15%) as their primary sources.

Figure 76 : Source of Information about the Project (N=284)



Multiple choice question, total may not add to 100 %

- Approximately **95% of beneficiaries shared information about the benefits of improved cookstoves** within their communities. During qualitative interactions, they emphasized that these discussions often focused on enhanced health outcomes, reduced fuel costs, and positive environmental impacts, such as decreased deforestation. This active exchange of experiences contributed to expanding the project's reach and strengthening advocacy efforts across the community.

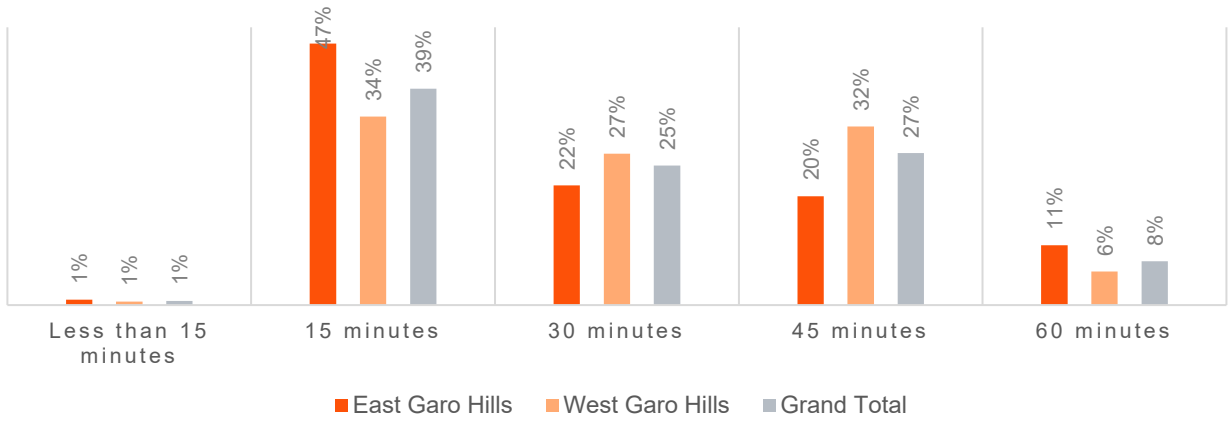
- Majority of them **(95%) expressed strong support for expanding the improved cookstove project** to their own or neighbouring villages. This highlights the **community's positive reception and perceived benefits of the project**.

- **91% felt that the project had contributed to transforming their community**, indicating a positive impact on household well-being and awareness about the advantages of using improved cookstoves. However, 34% (N=284) still continue to use traditional cookstoves alongside the improved cookstoves due to the following reasons:

    - A key factor was the need for parallel cooking to reduce overall cooking time, as indicated by **70% (N=96) of respondents.**
    - Beneficiaries also noted that **traditional cookstoves are often preferred during family events or gatherings**, as they can accommodate the larger quantities of food required for many guests.

3. Time Savings in Daily Cooking Activities

Figure 77 : Daily Time Saved in Cooking (N=267)



- A **majority (94% N=284) report that the improved cookstoves have reduced their cooking time**. The most common reduction is 15 minutes overall (39% N=267), driven by East Garo Hills where nearly half (47%) cite a 15-minute saving; in West Garo Hills this figure is lower (34% N=267). Larger savings are more prevalent in West Garo Hills: 32% report a 45-minute reduction compared with 20% in East Garo Hills.

- Overall, **91% (N=267) of respondent's report reductions of between 15 and 45 minutes**; only 1% report less than 15 minutes, while 8% report a 60-minute saving. **Estimated average time saved per cooking session is about 30 minutes (overall per meal / per day)**; approximately 31 minutes in West Garo Hills and 29 minutes in East Garo Hills.

4. Enhanced Indoor Air Quality and Family Well-being

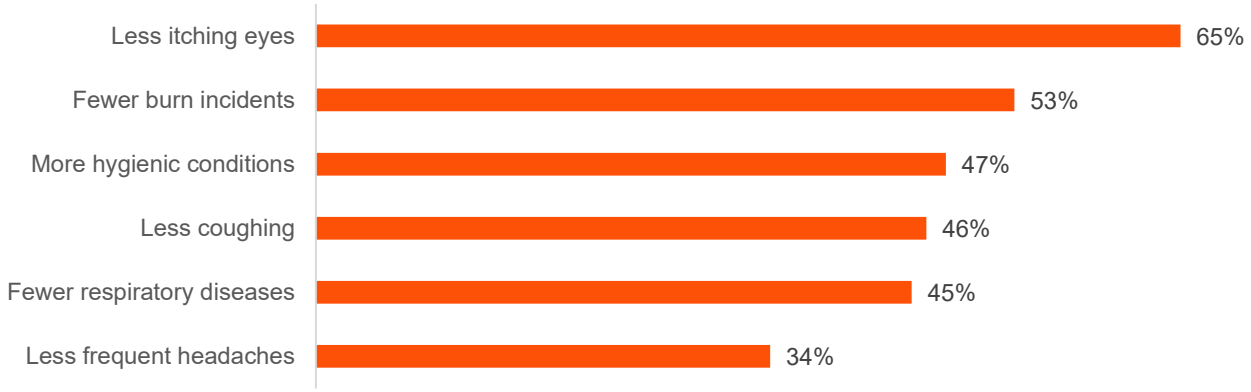
- **Traditional cookstoves were primary contributors to indoor air pollution, frequently causing respiratory issues and eye irritation**. The introduction of improved cookstoves substantially enhanced indoor air quality by reducing smoke emissions**.** Qualitative feedback from beneficiaries confirmed that these **cookstoves generated significantly less smoke, resulting in fewer health complications associated with smoke exposure**.

- Nearly all respondents (99%, N=284) validated that the project **contributed to reducing smoke and gas emissions**. Additionally, 95% experienced **improvements in indoor air quality, fostering healthier living environments and improved overall well-being.**

- All respondents (88%, N=284) reported **noticeable improvements in the health and well-being of their households following the adoption of improved cookstoves.** These positive **changes were largely attributed to the reduction in smoke emissions, which led to fewer respiratory problems and less eye irritation**. On probing further on the health aspects of using the improved cookstoves team noted that:

    - **45%** of respondents reported **a reduction in respiratory illnesses,** while **46% experienced less coughing,** highlighting the cookstove's role in reducing health issues linked to indoor air pollution.
    - **65%** of respondents reported experiencing **less eye irritation,** while **34%** noted **fewer headaches**, further reinforcing the health benefits associated with improved indoor air quality.
    - **47%** reported experiencing **more hygienic conditions in their homes, indicating a cleaner and healthier cooking environment.**
    - **53%** of respondents reported experiencing **fewer burn incidents, indicating improved safety** with the use of improved cookstoves.

Figure 78: Changes in Health aspect due to Improved Cookstoves (N=272)

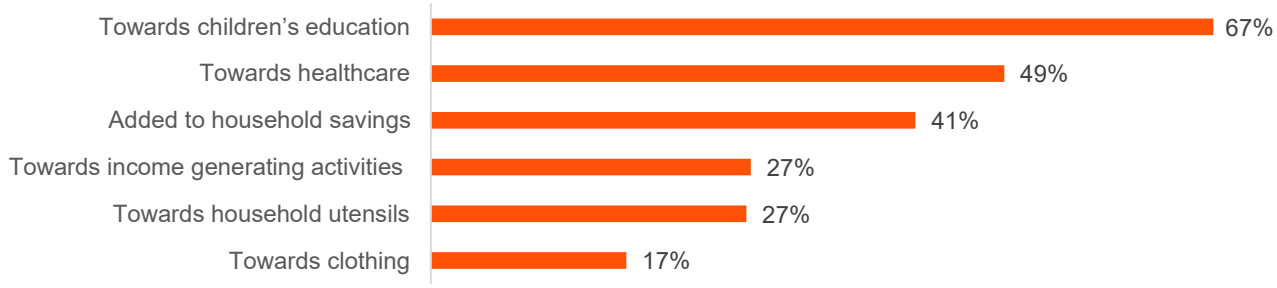


Multiple choice question, and total may not add up to 100%

5. Financial Impact of Improved Cookstove Adoption

- 93% of respondents (N=284) reported **a decrease in household cooking fuel expenses** after switching to improved cookstoves.
- The survey indicated a **reduction in monthly fuel expenses following the adoption of improved cookstoves under the project**. Among the respondents (N=265), 84% reported **saving is in between ₹ 500 – ₹ 999 per month**. These findings **highlight the economic advantages of improved cookstoves in lowering household fuel costs**.
- The financial savings achieved through improved cookstoves were distributed by respondents among diverse purposes, as illustrated below:

Figure 79: Utilisation of expenses saved due to cookstove (n=265)



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

- During community interactions, respondents highlighted that the improved cookstoves could be **readily ignited using thin twigs or dry grass,** and once ignited, **the fire endured considerably longer**. This reduced dependency on frequent relighting or manually blowing air, consequently **improving cooking efficiency and decreasing fuelwood consumption**.
- Nearly all respondents (96%, N=284) reported a **reduced need for fuelwood**. Among them, 68%(N=273) indicated a **significant reduction of more than 50%**, while 22% **reported a moderate reduction of 25-50%** in fuelwood requirements

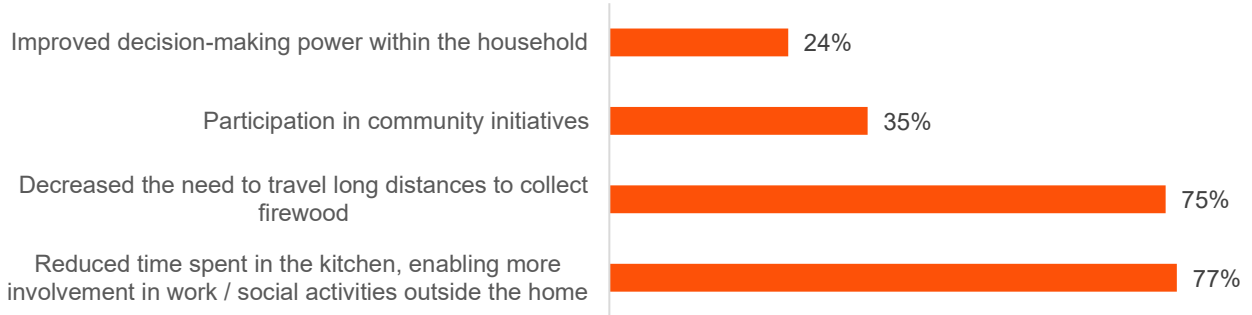
- Among all respondents (94%, N=284), the **use of improved cookstoves was reported to enhance financial security**. This shift marks an improvement in household financial well-being, driven by reduced fuel costs, time savings, and the ability to channel resources toward essential priorities such as education, healthcare, and savings.

> During our interactions, community members vividly described the transformative impact of adopting improved cookstoves. One respondent explained that, with the traditional mud chulha, 15 kilograms of firewood lasted only two days. In contrast, the improved cookstove allows the same quantity of wood to sustain cooking needs for up to five days. This shift has brought about a profound change in household routines. The upgraded stove produces a more concentrated flame, which not only enhances cooking efficiency but also reduces the amount of wood required. As a result, families are experiencing lower fuel consumption, less time spent on firewood collection and reduced physical strain during cooking. Women emphasised how these improvements have eased their daily burdens. In Meghalaya, households traditionally stack and cut wood during the early winter season to prepare for cooking throughout the year. With the improved cookstoves, the time and effort required for this seasonal task has also reduced considerably, freeing up valuable time that women can now devote to other responsibilities and opportunities. Equally important was the substantial reduction in indoor air pollution, which contributed to improved respiratory health among household members. This enhancement in physical well-being not only reduced health-related burdens but also elevated the overall quality of life.
>
> **Narrated by the community members during our interactions**

6. Holistic Impact on Women's Lives

The project has **delivered notable improvements to the daily lives of women in households that adopted improved cookstoves**. Respondents consistently highlighted a wide array of positive outcomes, among these were the considerable reduction in cooking time and the marked decrease in fuel consumption, both of which significantly alleviated the demanding task of firewood collection. Furthermore, the improved cookstoves generated far less soot, thereby making the cleaning of utensils quicker, easier, and more efficient. Equally important was the substantial reduction in indoor air pollution, which contributed to improved respiratory health among household members. This enhancement in physical well-being not only reduced health-related burdens but also elevated the overall quality of life. Taken together, these outcomes underscore the transformative impact of improved cookstoves, particularly in empowering women by easing domestic responsibilities and fostering healthier, more sustainable living conditions. The project saves time and effort for women. **77% spend less time in the kitchen and 75% travel less to collect firewood**. Fewer women report social gains: 35% join community activities more, and only 24% have more say at home.

Figure 80: Impact towards women in the HH



7. Improved Environmental Sustainability

- Every participant (100%) observed a **decrease in waste produced from poor fuelwood combustion after implementing the improved cookstoves**, demonstrating better fuel efficiency and improved waste minimisation practices.

- During discussions, respondents mentioned that **traditional stoves produced considerable quantities of partially burnt wood and ash residue**, **making cleanup a laborious chore**. Earlier, substantial amounts of fuelwood stayed unconsumed, leading to wastage and poor performance.

- In comparison, the improved cookstoves, utilizing refined combustion processes, **ensure better fuel optimization, yielding substantially less ash, negligible unprocessed residues, and decreased soot formation on vessels and interior surfaces**. This not only streamlines **everyday cleaning tasks but also enhances domestic waste control practices**.

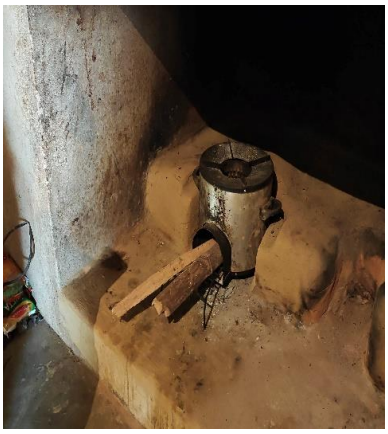
> “Living here in the Garo Hills, the improved cookstove has truly changed my life. Before, I spent so many hours collecting firewood and cooking meals, and it was exhausting. Now, with this stove, cooking takes much less time, and we use far less fuel, which means I don’t have to go out as often to gather wood. The stove produces hardly any soot, so cleaning my pots and pans has become so much easier. Most importantly, the air inside my home feels cleaner. My family and I breathe better, and we don’t suffer as much from coughs or breathing problems. I feel healthier, and I have more energy to take care of my children and focus on other important things. This cookstove has lifted a burden from my shoulders and given more freedom in my daily life. It truly improved our well-being and made our home a happier place.
>
> **Narrated by a community respondent during our interactions** ”

- Additionally, 91% of respondents (N=284) reported **receiving training on environmental topics**. Key areas of learning included (N=260)**:**
    - **The adoption of improved cookstoves** (63%),
    - **General environmental benefits from reduced wood burning** (60%), and
    - **Tree planting** (58%)

Figure 81: Training modules (N=260)

- Beneficiaries can contact the implementing partner through a toll-free helpline number to register their complaints. Once a complaint is received, the implementing partner creates a service ticket and schedules the repair accordingly. The necessary actions are then carried out as per the roster. As the project area is located in a hilly region, the time required to complete repairs may extend to 4–5 days.

Figure 82 : Improved Cookstove in HH



Component 2: Solar PV and Medical Equipment Support for Four PHCs in Garo Hills, Meghalaya

1. Powering Health, Empowering Lives

- Healthcare in remote regions of India faces serious challenges. In the Garo Hills of Meghalaya, PHCs are the first point of care for rural communities. Yet, these centres have long struggled with unreliable electricity and a lack of essential medical equipment. **Power cuts, especially during the rainy season**, meant that doctors **could not use diagnostic tools, baby warmers, or other life-saving devices**. This situation put mothers, infants, and other vulnerable patients at risk and often forced communities to travel **long distances to district headquarter -Tura** (which is approximately 20 km away), for availing basic healthcare services.

- The head doctor at the PHCs reported that they faced multiple challenges that **severely limited their ability to provide effective healthcare**. Unreliable electricity was a major issue, with frequent **power cuts during heavy rain leaving doctors unable to deliver care after dark**. This lack of consistent power also meant that essential medical equipment such as baby warmers, sterilisation units, and diagnostic machines often remained non-functional, directly affecting maternal and child health services. The **strain on PHC staff was immense**, as they struggled to ensure safe deliveries and emergency care without the necessary tools and reliable power supply. For the community, especially mothers and infants, this **translated into delays, risks, and hardship, as patients were forced to depend on distant facilities or face inadequate treatment locally.** These challenges created a cycle of vulnerability, undermining trust in local healthcare and leaving rural populations without dependable medical support.

- To address the pressing challenges faced by PHCs in the Garo Hills, this intervention by Infosys Limited established sustainable **healthcare infrastructure by installing rooftop solar PV systems**. These systems now provide consistent, renewable electricity even during heavy **rainfall and power cuts, supporting a monthly footfall of approximately 400 patients**. Alongside this, essential maternal and child health equipment such as baby warmers and diagnostic tools were supplied, ensuring that **critical devices remain functional at all times**.

- To maintain efficiency, digital monitoring dashboards were introduced for real-time system checks and upkeep, while **Annual Maintenance Contracts (AMC) were established with government involvement** to guarantee long-term sustainability. This integrated solution has **transformed healthcare delivery in the region**, enabling doctors to **provide uninterrupted care and strengthening community confidence** in local health services.

- The intervention has already brought a positive change to the PHC in the Garo Hills. With the installation of solar PV systems, continuous electricity supply became available even during heavy rains and power cuts, ensuring that **healthcare services were no longer interrupted.** This **reliable power allowed critical**

equipment such as baby warmers, sterilisation units, and diagnostic machines to function consistently, which greatly improved maternity and childcare. Doctors, who had previously struggled to deliver safe care without electricity, were able to provide treatment at all hours, reducing stress and saving lives. The transformation **strengthened the capacity of medical staff and ensured that emergencies could be handled promptly and effectively**.

For the community, the impact proved transformative. Patients no longer face delays or the hardship of **traveling long distances to private hospitals trips that typically cost around ₹ 1,500 for treatment and travel expenses.** Now, they spend only **about ₹ 100 on travel to reach local PHCs**, which has fostered greater confidence and trust in these facilities. The presence of modern equipment and uninterrupted services such as maternal and child health services, further reassures families that quality healthcare is accessible and affordable within their own communities.

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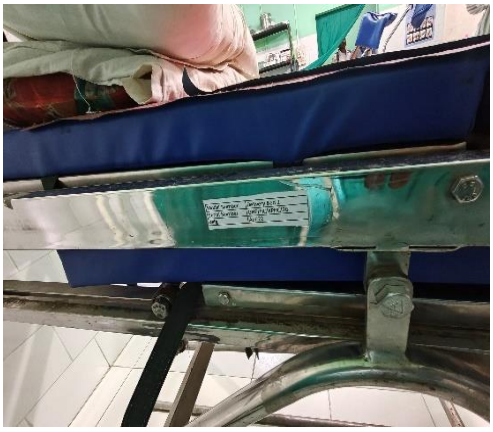
- Further during the qualitative interactions with the GHE, team noted that the **integration of solar energy reduced the carbon footprint and promoted sustainability in the PHCs**. This holistic solution not only addressed immediate medical needs but also safeguarded the environment, creating a resilient healthcare system that stands as a model of how renewable energy can drive meaningful social impact in underserved regions.

Figure 83 : Images of the Medical equipment, PHC Kherapara
Top Left – Operation Theatre bed, Top Middle – Cold storage unit for Vaccine, Top Right - Portable Vaccine Refrigerator; Bottom Left – Observation Monitor, Bottom Middle – Handheld Fetal Doppler, Bottom right – Newborn Baby Warmer





Component 3: Village Electrification through Decentralised Solar Grids

1. **Lighting up lives, powering livelihoods:**
   - Rural households in remote regions of Meghalaya face severe electricity poverty. With no access to modern electricity, families rely on kerosene lamps, candles, and inefficient cookstoves. These outdated technologies are costly, hazardous to health, and environmentally damaging. Moreover, **households spend a significant share (approx. 30%) of their income on unsafe energy sources**, while their productivity and educational opportunities remain constrained. Traditional grid-based electrification is capital-intensive, geographically challenging, and results in unaffordable tariffs for dispersed populations. Consequently, **poor households often pay more than urban consumers, creating a structural inequity in energy access.**

   - With support from Infosys Limited, **each household was provided with photovoltaic panels, tubular lead-acid batteries (100–200Ah), and safe 12/24V DC distribution systems to 464 Households in the Garo Hills region**. This configuration minimises conversion losses, enhances safety in villages located far from medical facilities, and delivers reliable electricity during evening and night hours.

   - The electrification of 464 households in the Garo Hills illustrates the transformative impact of decentralised solar solutions. **Villagers, previously constrained to daylight hours, can now extend livelihood activities such as basket-making, weaving handbags etc**. into the evening, increasing **daily individual income by approximately ₹ 50**. Children benefit from improved study conditions, enhancing educational outcomes. Communities previously without electricity now enjoy energy independence, experiencing clear improvements in health, productivity, and quality of life. The intervention has **generated strong local demand, with neighbouring villages requesting similar projects**.

   - Beyond immediate benefits, the initiative aligns with climate action goals, reduces reliance on fossil fuels, and propels communities from pre-industrial living conditions towards participation in the fourth industrial revolution. In addition, GHE **identifies and trains local youth as "Village Solar Entrepreneurs" to ensure sustainability of this project component.** Training programmes cover solar energy fundamentals, AC/DC grid basics, and hands-on installation exercises, fostering both technical capability and entrepreneurial spirit. Additionally, to serve clusters of villages, the implementing partner GHE has established a centralised service center offering maintenance, repairs, and spare parts. When probed further, they stated they have managed with **more than 50 cases to date**.[44]

Figure 84 : HH Solar connection at Chiwatgre villages Left – Solar PV Panel, Right – Storage Battery

[44] However, the programme was designed to target households without electricity connections. For the purpose of calculating Social Return on Investment (SROI), if these households had access to electricity, they would save approximately ₹800–₹1,000 per month in electricity expenses.

9.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the Impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project for a period of 48 months, starting from FY 23. The overall impact is calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight is the estimation of the benefits which would have occurred even in the absence of the project. For calculating the impact of the project, Deadweight is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution (by others) is an estimate of what proportion of the impact may be attributed to the efforts of other stakeholders involved. Attribution by others is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Drop-off

Drop-off is factored in as in the subsequent years, the benefit or the impact would be slightly less than the previous year or may be attributed to other external factors as well. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any drop-off noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been arrived at based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)

Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 40,80,13,641 across a period from FY 22 to FY 26.

Table 30: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Beneficiary Households	• Distribution of improved cookstoves. • Training on operation & maintenance of improved cookstoves. • Community mobilization and awareness programs on clean cooking benefits. • Distribution of solar roof top for HH. • Public health centres provided with solar power and medical equipment	• 10,000 improved cookstoves distributed • 10,000 households shifting from traditional to improved cookstoves. • 464 Household solar roof top is distributed • 4 PHCs provided with solar power and medical equipment	• Reduction in firewood usage. • Reduction in firewood collection, cooking and cleaning time. • Improved cooking environment (less smoke, soot, carbon residue) and reduction in respiratory/eye-related illnesses. • Improved access to health care services from the PHCs • Improved number of household having access to electricity	• Time saved redirected to productive/income-generating activities • Improved household health and reduced healthcare costs due to less indoor air pollution. • Improved household health and reduced healthcare costs due to easy accessibility • Improved access to electricity

Table 31: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Total value created in FY 26	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Households	Decreased medical expenses	₹ 1,46,99,700	₹ 1,95,99,600	₹ 1,95,99,600	₹ 1,95,99,600	**₹ 7,34,98,500**
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	₹ 12,68,110	₹ 2,05,63,944	₹ 2,05,63,944	₹ 2,05,63,944	**₹ 6,29,59,941**
	Savings related to distance less travelled + medical expenses due to PHC upgrade	₹ 3,62,88,000	₹ 7,25,76,000	₹ 7,25,76,000	₹ 7,25,76,000	**₹ 25,40,16,000**
	Electricity bill amount saved	₹ 25,05,600	₹ 50,11,200	₹ 50,11,200	₹ 50,11,200	**₹ 1,75,39,200**
Total Impact Created		**₹ 5,47,61,410**	**₹ 11,77,50,744**	**₹ 11,77,50,744**	**₹ 11,77,50,744**	**₹ 40,80,13,641**

Table 32: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Calculation of the financial proxy	Source
Households	Decreased medical expenses	The proxy is the average estimated annual saving on healthcare costs per household. This is calculated from survey data identifying the difference between the average monthly expenditure on health that could be attributed to the effects of using traditional cookstove (chulha) and average monthly expenditure on health when using the new cookstove(s). These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Survey Findings
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	The proxy is the average estimated monthly increase in income from the income generation/enhancement activities per household which had been possible due to the time saved from cooking activities. This is calculated from survey data.	Survey Findings
	Savings related to distance less travelled + medical expenses due to PHC upgrade	From qualitative interactions with the PHC staff and the head doctor, it was noted that prior to the intervention the community incurred an average estimated expenditure of ₹ 1500 for a normal check-up, including travel and medicine. After the intervention, this cost was reduced to ₹ 500 for a similar consultation and medicine, inclusive of travel. The difference between these two amounts has been considered as the average savings in health-related expenditure resulting from the intervention.	Survey Findings (Qualitative)
	Electricity bill amount saved	Even though the programme was designed to target households without electricity connections. For the purpose of calculating Social Return on Investment (SROI), if these households had access to electricity, they would save approximately ₹ 800– ₹ 1,000 per month in electricity expenses	Survey Findings (Qualitative)

b. SROI Calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.
Total Impact Value = ₹ 40,80,13,641

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 6,37,35,022[45]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is taken into account while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India FY 23 is considered[46].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact		NPV of Utilisation
₹ 35,07,12,373		₹ 5,95,04,349

[45] As per the MoU
[46] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette

Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project is estimated to be 5.89:1.	**SROI Ratio**
	5.89:1

The SROI value similarly is 5.89. This means that for every ₹ 1 being invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 5.89 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.

- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.

- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.

- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

9.5 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 33: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project primarily reached **low-income rural households in East and West Garo Hills with 98% of the respondents possess a BPL card**. Since most families depend on agriculture, the initiative reflects its inclusive nature by targeting economically vulnerable, agrarian communities. • All surveyed **direct stove beneficiaries were women (100%)**, across all age groups. The intervention was **tailored to reduce drudgery, improve health, and increase safety for primary cooks**, advancing gender equity outcomes. • The intervention also **prioritised remote, underserved communities in the Garo Hills**, **bringing dependable healthcare and clean energy to households** historically excluded from reliable services.
Relevance	• The **intervention directly addresses critical challenges like indoor air pollution, unsafe cooking, excessive fuelwood use, lack of electricity, and compromised healthcare** due to unreliable power. • The cookstoves improve combustion efficiency and reduce smoke, while decentralized rooftop solar and safe DC distribution provide reliable power in locations where grid extension is difficult and costly. • **Solarizing four PHCs ensures continuity of maternal-child services and essential diagnostics**, directly responding to rainy-season outages and frequent power cuts.

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Effectiveness	• **99% of the households surveyed currently use improved cookstoves;** 91% felt the project transformed their community. Information sharing within communities (95%) indicates strong social buy-in. • **94% reported reduced cooking time**, with average savings of around 30 minutes per session. This translates into less time in kitchens and less time spent collecting fuelwood. • **95% reported improved indoor air quality**; 45% fewer respiratory illnesses; 46% less coughing; 65% less eye irritation; 53% fewer burn incidents. PHCs now provide uninterrupted care with solar-backed equipment, improving maternal and child health service reliability. • **93% saw reduced fuel expenses**; among respondents, 84% saved ₹ 500–999 per month. Households redirected savings to essentials like education, healthcare, and savings. • **96% reported reduced fuelwood need**; 68% observed >50% reduction; 100% noted less ash and unburnt residue. Training on environmental topics reached 91% of respondents, with tree planting knowledge among 58%. • Decentralised solar addressed electricity poverty where grid expansion is geographically difficult and economically infeasible, replacing unsafe fuels that consume about 30% of household income. • Children benefit from improved lighting for evening study, while exposure to smoke from kerosene lamps has been reduced.
Convergence	• The project is closely aligned with the **Central Government's *Unnat Chulha Abhiyan* programme**, which advocates biomass cookstoves as a clean cooking energy solution to **reduce fuelwood consumption through improved efficiency and lower emissions**. Consistent with this approach, the project has been **implemented in collaboration with community institutions, ensuring local participation and ownership**. • The initiative integrates renewable energy with primary healthcare delivery, aligning energy access with public health outcomes.
Sustainability	• Durable improved stoves and rooftop solar with DC distribution reduce conversion losses and safety risks. AMCs for PHCs and digital dashboards support preventive maintenance. Local entrepreneurs and service centers provide ongoing repair and spares access. • **Household fuel savings (often ₹ 500–999 per month) and increased evening incomes enhance financial resilience**. PHCs reduce outage-related costs and service disruptions. • The initiative integrates renewable energy with primary healthcare delivery, aligning energy access with public health outcomes.

9.6 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project implemented is in alignment with **Infosys Limited's CSR policy**, which mentions, **environment sustainability** as one of the CSR focus areas for Infosys Limited. The project also contributes to relevant Sustainable Development Goals: **SDG 3- Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4- Quality Education, SDG 7- Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 13- Climate action**.[47]

SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-Being: emphasises ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages. The improved cookstove project reduces indoor air pollution, mitigating health risks by preventing hard menial work for women and fostering healthier living conditions.

[47] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

SDG 4 - Quality Education: focuses on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. By reducing the time spent on firewood collection and cooking, the project enables women and children with an opportunity to dedicate more time to education and skill development, supporting lifelong learning.

SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy: promotes access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all. The introduction of improved cookstoves facilitates a shift towards efficient cooking.

SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth: highlights promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth by creating jobs, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. With more time available, women are empowered to be able to engage in productive activities.

SDG 13 - Climate Action: supports climate action by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainability through reduction in wood cutting / deforestation. The adoption of improved cookstoves reduces greenhouse gas emissions, supporting global efforts toward environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

9.7 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

9.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Beyond Smoke and Strain – Anima's Story of Empowerment Through Improved Cooking

In the rural village of Chiwhegre, Anima (name changed), a 29-year-old woman supporting a family of seven, earns her livelihood through cultivating pomelos and oranges on her family's three bighas of land. Living in a government-provided cement house and without access to government ration cards, Anima's household income ranges between ₹60,000 to ₹70,000 annually.

Before the introduction of the improved cookstove project supported by Infosys, Anima used a traditional mud stove fuelled by firewood she collected herself. She made as many as **five trips weekly** to nearby forests to gather wood, a task that demanded significant time and physical effort. Cooking took about 1.5 hours approx., although her family did not suffer any health problems from smoke.

Anima first heard about the improved cookstove from a community mobilizer who clearly explained its benefits and proper usage. In FY 23, she received one improved stove free of cost and underwent training, which emphasized important safety practices, such as avoiding burning plastic. Since then, Anima has used the stove daily and appreciates its faster cooking time, less fuel consumption, reduced smoke, and more comfortable kitchen environment.

While she occasionally uses her traditional stove during large gatherings due to its greater capacity, Anima prefers the improved stove for everyday cooking. The frequency of her firewood collection has decreased from five times to two times per week, saving her substantial time and effort. Additionally, cleaning the stove and kitchen takes less time given the lower soot and residue produced.

The time saved has allowed Anima to expand her kitchen garden, cultivating vegetables that have boosted her family income by approximately 10%. Although Anima does not anticipate the improved stove lasting many years and plans to return to her traditional stove when it wears out, she values the immediate improvements it has brought to her life.

Anima reports no current health improvements or increased environmental awareness linked directly to the stove but notes the practical benefits it offers. In her community, all households have received the stove, so Anima has not had cause to advocate further.

Anima's experience illustrates how the combination of community engagement, free distribution, and user training can enable improved cookstove adoption that saves time, reduces drudgery, and modestly enhances livelihoods in rural settings. Her story shines a light on the quiet, meaningful ways such projects can enrich women's lives and foster sustainable household practices.

Case Story 2: Empowering Women, One Stove at a Time - Meena's Improved Cookstove Experience

In the small village of Dalu in Tura district, Meena (name changed), a 30-year-old mother of eight, struggled daily with the exhausting task of cooking on a traditional mud stove. Before receiving the improved cookstove through the project supported by Infosys, Meena spent up to three hours several days a week collecting firewood, and cooking two meals took about four hours each day. The smoke from the stove caused her and her family frequent coughing and eye irritation, leading to monthly medical expenses of ₹ 250 on cough syrups and other related treatments.

Meena was not aware of improved cookstoves before the project began, but after learning about it during a Mobilisation activity / Initial survey by the implementing partner, she received one improved stove free of cost in FY 23, along with training on its use and maintenance. Since then, her cooking time has reduced significantly to just 30 minutes per meal. Firewood collection frequency has halved, saving her 2 to 3 hours weekly, and the kitchen environment is much less smoky, improving the health of her family and eliminating the need for medical treatments related to smoke exposure.

Although Meena has not started any new income-generating activities, the time saved is dedicated to supporting her children's education, which she values deeply. She experiences less physical strain and back pain due to reduced wood collection and easier cooking. Encouraged by her own experience, Meena has recommended the stove to about 15 neighbouring households, helping to spread the benefits throughout her community.

Meena's story reveals the transformative impact of improved cookstoves on women's daily lives -reducing drudgery, improving health, and affording more time for family and education. While she hopes for ongoing repair support and improved stove durability, her enthusiasm underscores the project's success in bringing lasting change to rural households in Tura.

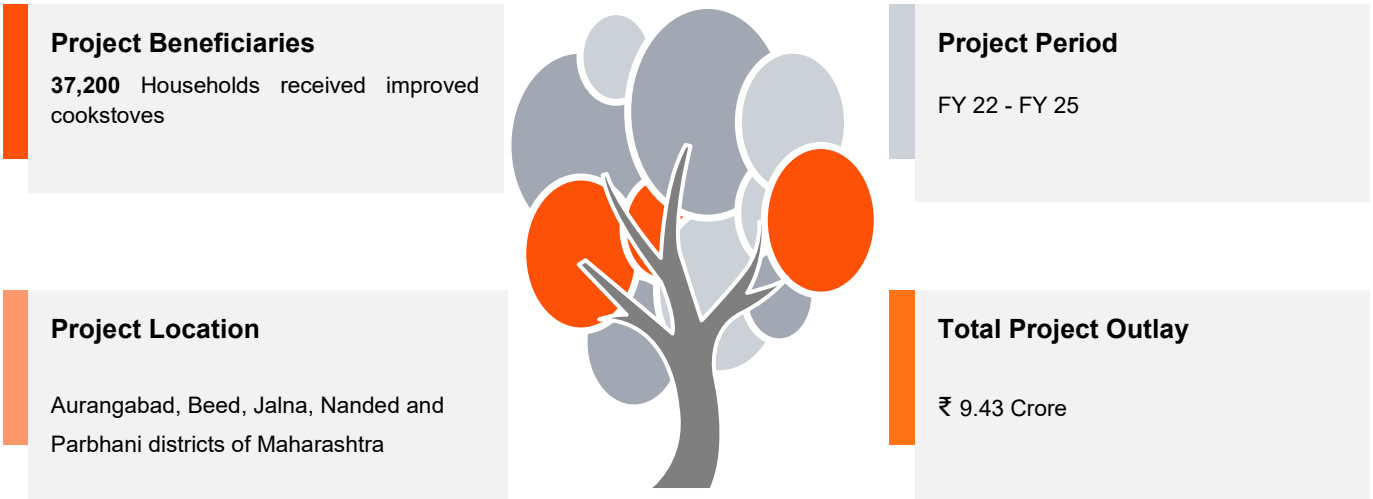
10. Project 7: Improved Cookstoves in Maharashtra - Helping Women and Environment

10.1 About the Project

Most individuals from low-income backgrounds depend heavily on fuelwood for cooking, sourcing it from nearby natural areas. This extensive fuelwood collection is a major cause of deforestation, which **exacerbates climate change** in the **region and increases the burden on women**. Additionally, burning fuelwood in traditional mud chulhas **generates smoke and releases large amounts of greenhouse gases (GHGs)**[48], leading to indoor air pollution and various health problems, particularly among women, children, and the elderly. The most commonly reported health issues associated with using traditional chulhas include eye irritation, respiratory problems, headaches, and coughing.

As part of its **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** efforts, **Infosys Limited (Infosys)** has implemented various projects aimed at promoting environmental sustainability and supporting local communities across India. One notable project is the **"Improved Cookstoves in Maharashtra- Helping Women and Environment"** aimed at distributing improved cookstoves to **37,200 households** in five districts of Maharashtra, including **Aurangabad, Beed, Jalna, Nanded and Parbhani**. This project has been implemented by Infosys Limited in collaboration with **Envirofit India Private Limited (Envirofit).**

Figure 85: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics



10.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment employed an integrated and structured methodology to evaluate the project's social outcomes. It began with a **kick-off meeting with the Infosys Limited team**, followed by a briefing session with Envirofit. These interactions provided the research team with essential insights into the project's design and support mechanisms. Subsequently, the PWCALLP team received key project documents, including:

- **The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Infosys Limited and Envirofit**, outlining the project's key activities and operational modalities
- **The beneficiary database for cookstoves**, providing an overview of the number of cookstoves distributed

The PWCALLP team conducted a **detailed desk review** of these documents, **enabling a deeper understanding** of project activities, the development of a robust assessment framework, and the identification of key stakeholders for further discussions, aligned with the insights gained during the initial meetings.

[48] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/355422990_Impact_of_wood_burning_mud_cookstove_on_indoor_air_quality_vis-a-vis_human_health_in_Western_Himalayan_Region

* Under this project, the cookstoves were distributed during the period of FY 22 - FY 23 with maintenance continuing until FY 25.

The impact assessment study employed a **mixed-method approach**, combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. The quantitative component focused on generating measurable insights and evidence, while qualitative data collection captured stakeholder perspectives and lived experiences to provide a deeper understanding of the project's actual impact on beneficiaries. The research design included multiple data collection techniques, such as **structured surveys** conducted with **beneficiaries who received the improved cookstoves**, alongside in-depth interviews (IDIs) with key stakeholders to gather qualitative insights.

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 86: Research design for the study

- **Quantitative surveys** with a sample of **304** beneficiaries who received the cookstoves
- **Ten In-depth Interview (IDIs)** with beneficiaries who received the cookstoves
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with the technical partner (Envirofit)
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Limited Team

Based on data provided by the Infosys Limited team, the project covered **37,200 beneficiary households**. Accordingly, a sample size of **272** was calculated using a 90% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. However, to ensure better representation across all locations, we surveyed a larger sample of **304 households**. The sampling distribution for the quantitative survey is as follows:

Table 34: Distribution of quantitative sample across villages

District	Block	Village name	Sample covered
Aurangabad	Gangapur	Gangapur	27
		Ranjangaon (s)	22
Beed	Georai	Georai (Rural)	50
		Sirasmarg	14
Jalna	Jalna	Deomurti	15
		Jalna City	61
Nanded	Nanded	Balirampur	14
		Nanded	26
Parbhani	Parbhani	Daithana	12
		Parbhani	63
Grand Total			**304**

10.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key project stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

Prior to the intervention, the local community in the project locations faced numerous challenges in their daily lives. Based on interactions with these stakeholders, the following key issues were identified:

- **Fuelwood Dependency and Collection Burden**: Most beneficiaries relied entirely on fuelwood collected from nearby forests and farmland, spending 15 to 20 hours per week on this physically demanding task, which reduced their leisure and rest time. Traditional chulhas consumed large quantities of fuelwood, requiring frequent collection trips and constant maintenance such as relighting and blowing air. This created considerable physical

strain, especially for women, while the significant time needed for cooking and cleaning further added to their workload and exhaustion.

- **Health Problems from Smoke Exposure**: Cooking with traditional chulhas generated large amounts of smoke and greenhouse gas emissions, leading to various health problems within the community. Common issues included eye irritation, coughing, breathing difficulties, headaches, and tearing. These frequent health problems require regular hospital visits, resulting in higher medical expenses (₹ 350-400) and an estimated loss of around 24 workdays per year.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

This section summarises the findings from the study, based on our interactions with various stakeholders:

1. Profile of the respondents

Out of the total beneficiaries surveyed (n=304):

98% were female and 2% were male.

95% of respondents were married, 2.3% unmarried, 2% widowed, and 0.3% divorced.

60% of respondents possess a BPL card, while 40% do not.

The average family size is 4 members.

90% of respondents live in owned houses, while 10% reside in rented accommodations.

Figure 87: Age group of respondents (n=304)

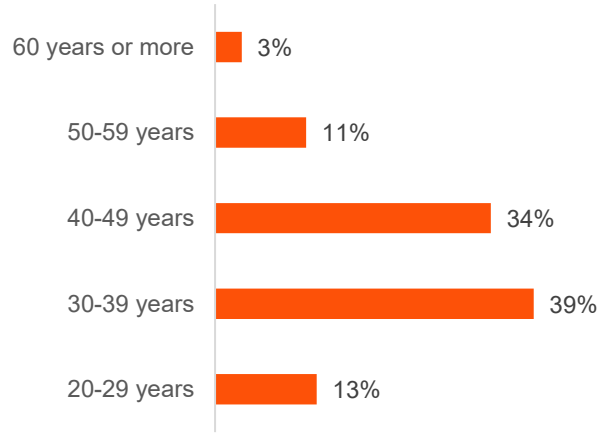
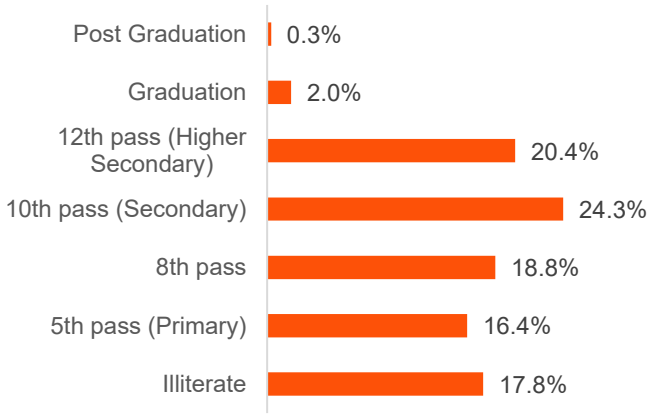


Figure 88: Highest education level of respondents (n=304)



- As shown in above Figure, **39% of respondents (n=304) belong to the 30-39 age group**, while 48% are above 40 years old. Figure 88 highlights that **24.3% of respondents (n=304) have completed secondary education** (10th pass), followed by **20.4% who have completed higher secondary education** (12th pass), and 18.8% who have passed the 8th grade. A small percentage have completed graduation (2%) and post-graduation (0.3%).

Figure 89: Occupation of the respondents (n=304)

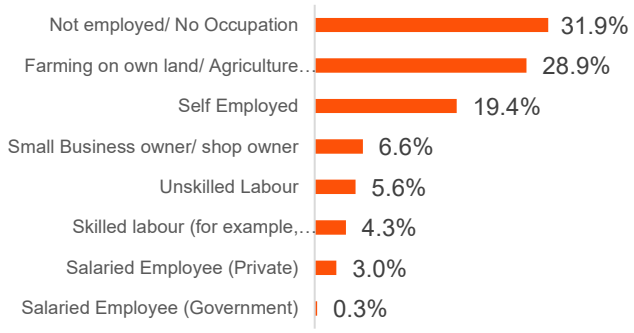
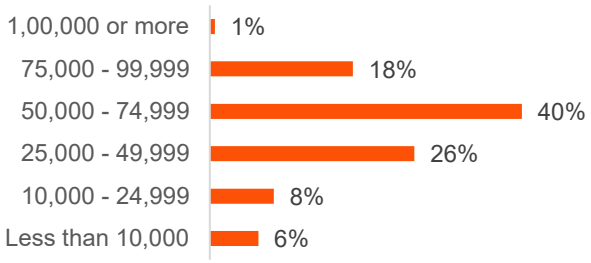


Figure 90: Annual household income of respondents (n=304)



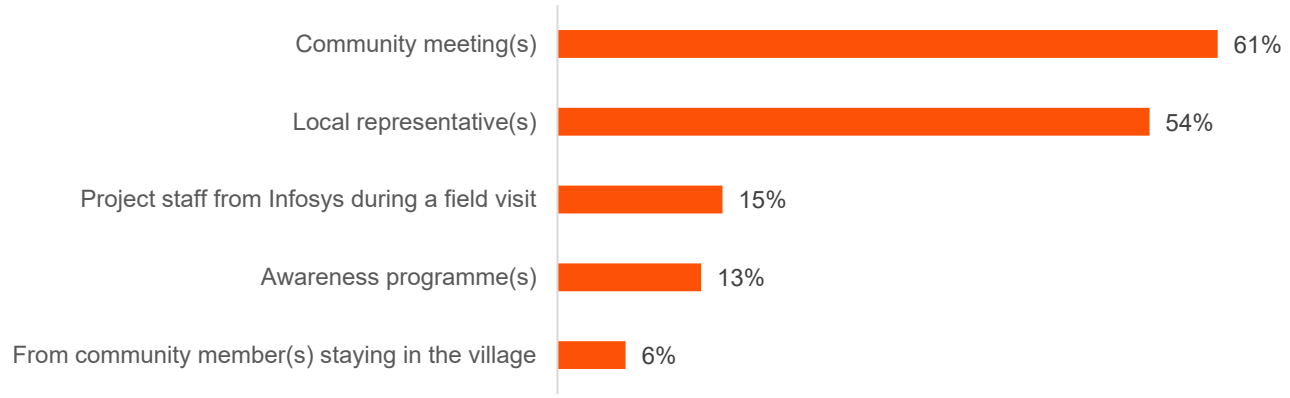
- As shown in above Figure, **the majority of respondents (n=304) either have no employment or occupation (32%)** or depend on agriculture, either by farming their own land or working as agricultural labourers (~29%). Additionally, 19% are self-employed. This distribution indicates that the targeted beneficiaries predominantly belong to poor and marginalized groups.

- Supporting this, **40% of respondents report an annual household income between ₹ 50,000 and 74,999,** while 26% earn between ₹ 25,000 and 49,999. These figures demonstrate that the project has effectively focused on low-income segments within the community.

2. Increased Awareness and Adoption of Improved Cooking Practices

- 99% of respondents are aware that the **project is supported by Infosys Limited**. As shown in the figure below, the majority (n=304) learned about Infosys's support through **community meetings (61%),** followed by **54% who were informed by local representatives**, and 15% of respondents reported hearing about it from Infosys Limited's project staff both during cookstove distribution field visits and community outreach activities conducted as part of the project.

Figure 91: Source of Information about the Project (n=304)



Multiple choice question, total may not add to 100 %

- 99% of respondents (n=304) are **currently using the improved cookstove**. Before receiving it, 97% (n=304) of these users depended on traditional chulhas (open-fire stoves), while 3% used kerosene stoves.

- 99% of beneficiaries shared information about the **benefits of improved cookstoves within their communities**. During qualitative discussions, they reported key advantages such as **improved health outcomes, reduced fuel consumption, enhanced cooking efficiency**, and **positive environmental** impacts like decreased deforestation due to lower fuelwood needs. However, beneficiaries also noted that

limited availability and high cost of improved cookstoves in local markets prevent interested individuals from purchasing them.

- Of the respondents who shared information about the benefits of improved cookstoves within their communities, **99% (n=304) strongly supported expanding the project** to their own or neighbouring villages, demonstrating a high level of community endorsement and enthusiasm for the initiative.

- **84% of respondents (n=304) believed that the cookstove project has brought transformation to their community**, reflecting a positive effect on household well-being and greater awareness of the advantages of using cookstoves. However, 36% of respondents (n=304 continue to use traditional cookstoves alongside the improved ones for the following reasons:

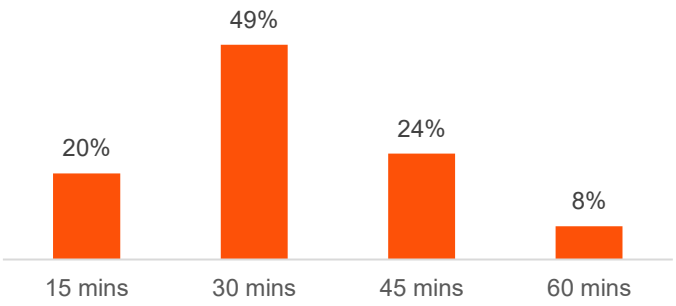
    - The main reason was **parallel cooking to reduce overall cooking time**, reported by 91% of respondents (n=108).

    - Additionally, **25% mentioned that the improved cookstoves break down frequently**. Beneficiaries also noted during qualitative interactions that they use traditional chulhas for boiling water and cooking large quantities of food during family events.

3. Greater efficiency in Daily Cooking Activities

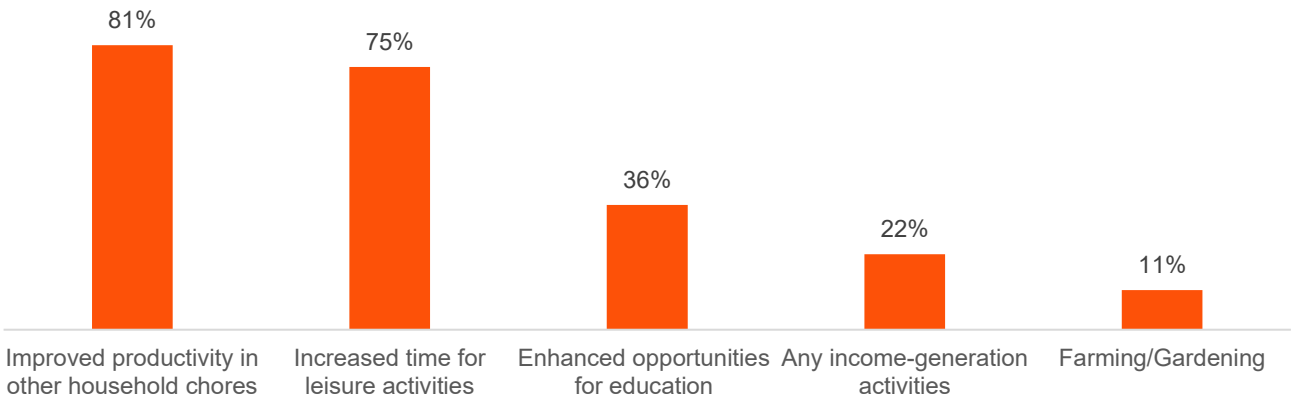
- **90% of respondents (n=304) reported that the cookstove improved cooking efficiency** by reducing overall cooking time. Among those who experienced a reduction in cooking time (n=292), 49% reported saving 30 minutes, 24% saved 45 minutes, and 20% saved 15 minutes.

Figure 92: Daily time saved in cooking (n=292)



- As an impact, community members noted during qualitative interactions that the time saved by using the cookstove has **enabled them to devote more time to productive and personal activities**, including income-generating work, childcare, and children's education. As shown in the figure below, **81% of respondents (n=292) experienced increased productivity in other household chores**, while 75% are now able to engage in leisure activities with the time saved.

Figure 93: Utilisation of time saved on cooking (n=292)



Multiple choice question, total may not add to 100 %

4. Enhanced Indoor Air Quality and Family Well-being

- Community members reported that **traditional cookstoves were a major source of indoor air pollution**, often causing **headaches, respiratory problems, coughing, and eye irritation**. The introduction of

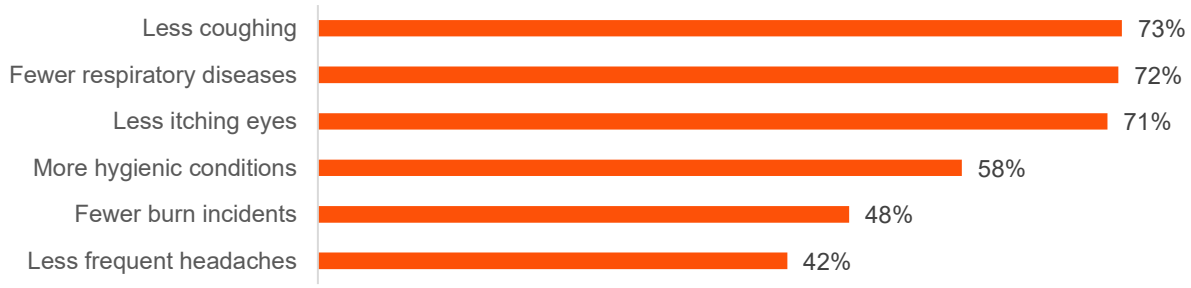
improved cookstoves **significantly improved indoor air quality** by reducing smoke emissions. Beneficiaries also noted that the decreased smoke exposure has resulted in a marked decline in health issues related to smoke.

- Nearly all respondents (99%, n=304) reported that the project **contributed to reducing smoke and gas emissions**. Furthermore, **99% experienced improved indoor air quality**, resulting in healthier living environments and enhanced overall well-being.

- Almost all respondents (99%, n=304) reported **noticeable improvements in their household health and well-being** following the adoption of improved cookstoves. These positive changes were primarily attributed to the **reduction in smoke emissions, which led to fewer headaches, respiratory problems, coughing, and less eye irritation**. Upon further inquiry into the health impacts, the team observed that:

    - **72% of respondents reported a decrease in respiratory illnesses**, while 73% experienced less coughing, underscoring the cookstove's role in mitigating health issues related to indoor air pollution.
    - **71% reported reduced eye irritation**, and 42% noted fewer headaches, further highlighting the health benefits of improved indoor air quality.
    - **58% observed more hygienic conditions** in their homes, indicating a cleaner and healthier cooking environment.
    - **48% reported fewer burn incidents**, reflecting enhanced safety with the use of improved cookstoves.

Figure 94: Changes in Health aspect due to Improved Cookstoves (n=304)



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

5. Financial Impact of Improved Cookstove Adoption

- Beneficiaries reported that improved cookstoves **reduce fuelwood consumption** by burning fuel more efficiently, converting a larger portion of the fuel's energy into useful heat instead of smoke. Unlike traditional cookstoves, the flame and hot gases in improved cookstoves are directed to make direct contact with the cooking pot, minimizing heat loss.

- 99% of respondents (n=304) reported that the **improved cookstove reduced their need for fuelwood**. When asked about the extent of this reduction, **55% (n=301) indicated a moderate decrease of 25-50%,** while 44% reported a significant reduction of more than 50%.

- During community interactions, respondents noted that improved cookstoves can be easily ignited, and once lit, the fire burns much longer. This reduces the need for **frequent relighting or manually blowing air**, thereby improving cooking efficiency. Beneficiaries also reported that previously, frequent relighting required their constant attention, preventing them from multitasking. However, after adopting the **improved cookstoves, they are now able to attend to other household chores while cooking.**

- All respondents **(100%, n=304) reported that using improved cookstoves enhanced their financial security**. This improvement in household financial well-being is attributed to lower fuel costs, time savings, and the opportunity to allocate resources to key priorities such as education, healthcare, and savings.

> “Before receiving the improved cookstove, we used a traditional mud chulha that consumed a lot of firewood because the flame extended beyond the stove, causing significant smoke and related health issues like coughing and eye irritation. Collecting fuelwood took 8-10 hours weekly, which was exhausting, and cooking also took considerable time. Since receiving the improved cookstove, cooking time has significantly decreased, and fuelwood consumption has dropped by nearly 50%. The stove burns longer, produces less smoke, and is easier to clean. These improvements have enhanced our health, reduced medical expenses, and freed up time for other household tasks. I am very thankful for this support.”
>
> **Narrated by the community members during our interactions**

6. Comprehensive Impact on Women’s Lives

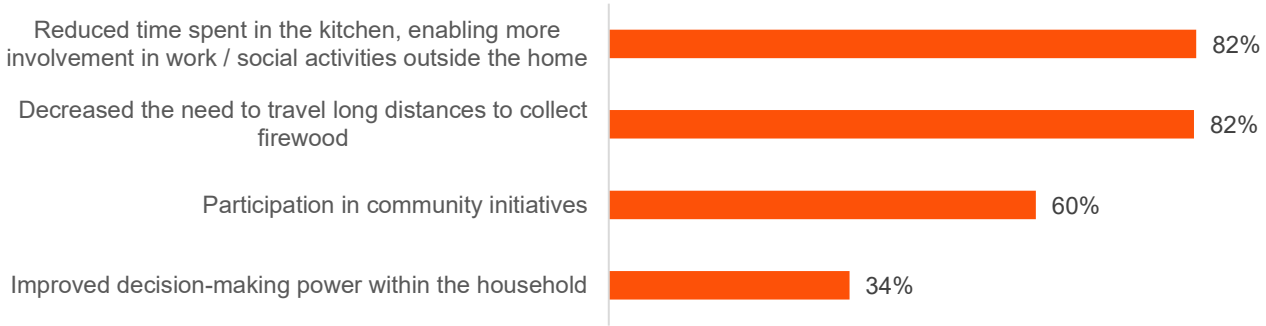
- The project has brought **comprehensive improvements to the daily lives of women in households that adopted improved cookstoves**. During interactions, women shared that the **improved cookstoves have reduced their cooking time and fuelwood consumption**, easing their physical burden. Additionally, **cleaning utensils and kitchen areas has become easier**, as the stove produces less waste and prevents the buildup of soot and blackening on walls and ceilings, a task that previously required considerable time and effort.

- Beyond reducing physical strain, the **project has delivered notable health benefits**. Beneficiaries reported a **significant reduction in indoor air pollution due to decreased smoke and gas emissions**, which has nearly eliminated health problems such as headaches, coughing, and respiratory issues among women and their families.

- Women also highlighted that prior to using the improved cookstoves, frequent smoke-related illnesses caused them to lose 20-24 workdays annually. After adopting the **improved cookstoves, these health issues have been resolved, and they no longer miss work due to illness**. Improved cookstove has not only eased the **physical workload of women but also enhanced their health and overall well-being**, contributing to increased productivity and improved quality of life.

- **82% of respondents (n=304) reported that the improved cookstove has reduced the time they spend in the kitchen**, while 82% also noted a decrease in travel time for firewood collection. Additionally, 60% are now able to participate more actively in community initiatives, and 34% have experienced improved decision-making power within their households.

Figure 95: Impact towards women in the HH (n=304)



Multiple choice questions, and total may not add up to 100%

7. Improved Environmental Sustainability

- **95% respondents (n=304) reported a reduction in waste generated** from incomplete fuelwood combustion after adopting improved cookstoves, indicating enhanced fuel efficiency and better waste reduction.

- During discussions, respondents noted that **traditional stoves produced large amounts of partially burnt wood and ash residue, making cleaning a tedious and time-consuming task**. Significant portions of fuelwood went unburned, resulting in waste and inefficient stove performance. In contrast, improved cookstoves utilise **advanced combustion techniques that optimise fuel use**, producing less ash and minimal unburned residues, thereby reducing waste. Community members reported that the decreased fuelwood consumption has led to less frequent collection from nearby forests and farmland, **helping to reduce deforestation and create a positive environmental impact**.

- As reported by the beneficiaries, most of them used traditional cookstoves before receiving the improved ones, which **caused a smoky environment in the village, especially during cooking times in the morning and evening**. However, since receiving the improved cookstoves, the environmental conditions have improved significantly.

> “Since receiving the improved cookstove, my trips to the forest to collect fuelwood have significantly decreased. The improved cookstove burns wood more efficiently, enabling quicker cooking. This has saved me both time and effort. Additionally, the stove has health benefits by reducing smoke and harmful gas emissions. Many others who have received the improved cookstove are also collecting less fuelwood, which has contributed to the regeneration of vegetation in the forest and surrounding areas.”
>
> **Narrated by a community respondent during our interactions**

- Additionally, **99% of respondents (n=304) reported receiving training on following environmental topics:**
  - General environmental benefits from reduced wood burning (84%)
  - The adoption of improved cookstoves (79%)
  - Tree plantation (49%)
  - Enhanced kitchen management practices (41%)
  - Soil and water conservation (30%)

Figure 96: Improved Cookstove in HH



10.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the Impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project for a period of 48 months, starting from FY 23 (i.e. April 2022). The overall impact is calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight is the estimation of the benefits which would have occurred even in the absence of the project. For calculating the impact of the project, Deadweight is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution (by others) is an estimate of what proportion of the impact may be attributed to the efforts of other stakeholders involved. Attribution by others is assumed at 0% for this project, as primary data and stakeholder consultations indicate the absence of comparable alternative clean cooking or clean energy interventions in the project geographies during the assessment period. In the absence of the project, beneficiary households would have

continued to rely on traditional cooking practices, resulting in no comparable health, time-saving, or environmental benefits.

Drop-off

Drop-off is factored in as in the subsequent years, the benefit or the impact would be slightly less than the previous year or may be attributed to other external factors as well. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any drop-off noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been arrived at based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)

Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 39,88,03,168 across a period from FY 23 to FY 26.

Table 35: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Beneficiary Households	• Distribution of improved cookstoves. • Training on operation & maintenance of improved cookstoves. • Community mobilization and awareness programs on clean cooking benefits.	• 37,200 improved cookstoves distributed • 37,200 households shifting from traditional to improved cookstoves.	• Reduction in firewood usage. • Reduction in firewood collection, cooking and cleaning time. • Improved cooking environment (less smoke, soot, carbon residue) and reduction in respiratory/eye-related illnesses.	• Time saved redirected to productive/income-generating activities • Improved household health and reduced healthcare costs due to less indoor air pollution.

Table 36: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Total value created in FY 26	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Households	Decreased medical expenses	₹ 6,29,40,168	₹ 7,72,27,200	₹ 7,72,27,200	₹ 7,72,27,200	₹ 29,46,21,768
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel	₹ 2,22,56,315	₹ 2,73,08,362	₹ 2,73,08,362	₹ 2,73,08,362	₹ 10,41,81,400

	wood collection and cleaning)					
Total Impact Created		**₹ 8,51,96,483**	**₹ 10,45,35,562**	**₹ 10,45,35,562**	**₹ 10,45,35,562**	**₹ 39,88,03,168**

Table 37: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Calculation of the financial proxy	Source
Households	Decreased medical expenses	The proxy is the average estimated annual saving on healthcare costs per household. This is calculated from survey data identifying the difference between the average monthly expenditure on health that could be attributed to the effects of using traditional cookstove (chulha) and average monthly expenditure on health when using the new cookstove(s). These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated on a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of distribution of the cookstove was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Survey Findings
	Economic value of time saved from cooking activities (fuel wood collection and cleaning)	The proxy is the average estimated monthly increase in income from the income generation/enhancement activities per household which had been possible due to the time saved from cooking activities. This is calculated from survey data.	Survey Findings

b. SROI Calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.

Total Impact Value = ₹ 39,88,03,168

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 2,33,90,055[49]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is taken into account while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India FY 23 is considered[50].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact		NPV of Utilisation
₹ 34,59,40,523		₹ 2,18,05,815[51]

[49] As per the MoU
[50] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette
[51] Project Investment was shared by Infosys Limited team and NPV of the investment was calculated by applying the inflation rate 5.7 - https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?end=2024&locations=IN&start=2022

Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project is estimated to be 15.86:1.	**SROI Ratio**
	15.86:1

The SROI value similarly is ₹ 15.86. This means that for every ₹ 1 invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 15.86 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.

- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.

- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.

- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

10.5 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 38: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project targets low-income, **marginalised communities** across five districts in Maharashtra, focusing on households with **high dependency on fuelwood** and facing health and economic challenges. • Majority of the beneficiaries are women (98%), many holding **Below Poverty Line (BPL) status,** ensuring that vulnerable and underprivileged groups are included. • The project engages multiple stakeholders, including community members, local representatives, implementing partners (Envirofit), and Infosys Limited, ensuring broad involvement.
Relevance	• The project addresses **urgent environmental issues such as deforestation and climate change** triggered by traditional fuelwood consumption. • Responds directly to critical health problems caused by **indoor air pollution among women, children, and elderly in rural communities**. • The project aligns with local needs to address issues such as **fuelwood dependency, health and drudgery reduction**.

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Effectiveness	• Nearly all surveyed households **(99%) currently use improved cookstoves**, with **84% reporting that the project has transformed their community**. Information about the benefits of improved cookstoves is widely shared, as 99% of respondents actively disseminate this knowledge, reflecting strong community support. • A significant majority **(96%) experienced reduced cooking times**, saving between 15 and 60 minutes per session. 49% saved 30 minutes, 24% saved 45 minutes, 20 percent saved 15 minutes and 8% saved 60 minutes. These time savings result in less time spent in the kitchen and reduced hours collecting fuelwood. • **Improved indoor air quality was reported by 99% of respondents**, leading to notable health improvements. 72% saw fewer respiratory illnesses, 73% experienced less coughing, 71% had reduced eye irritation, and 48% reported fewer incidents of burns. • **Nearly all beneficiaries (99%) reported a reduced need for fuelwood**. 44% observed reductions greater than 50 percent, while 55% saw decreases between 25-50 percent. All respondents noted less ash and unburnt residue. Furthermore, 99% received training on environmental topics, with 49% gaining knowledge about tree planting.
Convergence	• The project is strongly aligned with the **Central Government's Unnat Chulha Abhiyan programme**, which promotes biomass cookstoves as a **clean cooking energy solution aimed at reducing fuelwood consumption by enhancing efficiency and lowering emissions**. Following this strategy, the project has been carried out in partnership with community institutions to ensure active local involvement and ownership.
Sustainability	• The project emphasises sustainability through **comprehensive training** provided by the implementing partner, which **promotes long-term behaviour change in stove operation and maintenance**. This approach ensures the improved cookstoves remain durable and functional over time. Beneficiaries **actively apply the knowledge gained by regularly cleaning and maintaining their cookstoves, reflecting strong community ownership and commitment to preserving the benefits of technology**. However, a potential sustainability challenge exists, as many community members reported that they would be unable to afford replacement stoves if theirs become obsolete.

10.6 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project implemented is in alignment with **Infosys Limited's CSR policy**, which mentions, **environment sustainability** as one of the CSR focus areas for Infosys Limited. The project also contributes to relevant Sustainable Development Goals: **SDG 3- Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4- Quality Education, SDG 7- Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 13- Climate action**.[52]

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being: The project reduces indoor air pollution by replacing traditional cookstoves with improved cookstoves that emit less smoke and harmful gases. This has led to significant health improvements among women, children, and the elderly, reducing respiratory illnesses, headaches, and other smoke-related conditions, thereby enhancing overall community well-being.

SDG 4: Quality Education: Time saved from reduced fuelwood collection and shorter cooking times allows women and children to allocate more time to education and skill development. The project also includes training for beneficiaries on stove operation and maintenance, promoting knowledge sharing and capacity building.

SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy: By providing efficient cookstoves that burn fuelwood more effectively, the project offers a cleaner and more sustainable energy source for cooking. This reduces fuel consumption and dependence on unsustainable energy sources, promoting access to affordable and clean energy.

[52] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: Highlights promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth by creating jobs, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. With more time available, women are empowered to be able to engage in productive activities.

SDG 13: Climate Action: Supports climate action by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting sustainability through reduction in wood cutting / deforestation. The adoption of improved cookstoves reduces greenhouse gas emissions, supporting global efforts toward environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

10.7 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

10.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Transforming Lives with Improved Cookstoves

Saraswati Patil* (name changed) is a 30-year-old resident of Gangapur, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad) district, Maharashtra. She has completed education up to the 10th standard. Saraswati lives with her husband and a child in a kaccha house, and her family is categorised under the Below Poverty Line (BPL). Their primary occupation is agricultural labour, as they do not own cultivable land.
Before receiving the improved cookstove, Saraswati's family cooked on a traditional mud chulha located outside their home, using fuelwood collected from nearby farmland and forest areas. Collecting fuelwood was exhausting and time consuming, requiring around 8 to 10 hours per week. Cooking took approximately 1.5 hours daily, and cleaning soot and ash covered utensils and kitchen areas was labour intensive. Smoke from the traditional chulha caused frequent health problems for the family, including coughing, eye irritation, headaches, and breathing difficulties. These health issues led to frequent hospital visits, increasing medical expenses and resulting in the loss of up to 24 workdays annually, which strained the family financially.

Saraswati was unaware of improved cookstoves before the project and could not afford LPG refills due to limited income. Through the implementing partner's team, she learned about the improved cookstove project, its benefits, and received a stove free of cost along with training on proper usage and maintenance.

Since adopting the improved cookstove, Saraswati's daily cooking time has reduced significantly from about 2 hours to 1 hour, allowing her to complete other household chores simultaneously, which was not possible before. Fuelwood consumption dropped by nearly 50 percent, reducing the time spent collecting firewood by 4 to 5 hours each week. The stove produces much less smoke, greatly improving indoor air quality and significantly reducing health issues. As a result, the family no longer misses work due to smoke related illnesses, and medical expenses have decreased considerably. Cleaning time has also decreased dramatically, from nearly an hour to just 5 to 10 minutes daily, due to reduced ash and soot buildup. The stove is easy to maintain, and with proper care, Saraswati expects it to last for at least five years.

The time and energy saved have allowed her to focus more on childcare, support her child's education, and be more active in community activities. Although she has not started new income generating activities, Saraswati is now able to work more efficiently as an agricultural labourer. The overall improvements in her family's health, finances, and time management have made a meaningful difference in their daily lives. Saraswati is deeply grateful to Infosys for their invaluable support. The improved cookstove has truly transformed her home and her family's life.

Case Story 2: Namita Pawar's Journey to a Healthier and More Productive Life

Namita Pawar*(Name changed), a 35-year-old resident of Georai in Beed district, Maharashtra, lives with her family of five in a kaccha house. Without any agricultural land, Namita runs a flour mill and operates a sewing machine to support her family's livelihood.

Before the implementation of the improved cookstove project, Namita relied on a traditional cookstove that consumed a large amount of fuelwood. She had to spend around three hours, three days a week, collecting fuelwood, a labour-intensive task that took time away from running her flour mill and sewing machine. Cooking with the traditional stove was inefficient, taking 1.5 to 2 hours daily. The stove allowed flame and heat to escape beyond the pot, wasting fuelwood and producing significant smoke and harmful gases. This smoke adversely affected her family's health, causing multiple respiratory problems.

In FY 23, Namita learned about the improved cookstove through the implementing partner. Excited by the prospect of reduced fuelwood consumption, less smoke, and better health outcomes, she received an improved cookstove along with training on its operation and maintenance to ensure long term use.
Namita shared that the improved cookstove has truly transformed her daily life. Fuelwood consumption has decreased by nearly 50 percent, reducing her fuelwood collection trips to once or twice a week. The stove burns fuelwood more efficiently, keeping the flame contained within the stove, which lowers cooking and cleaning time. This time savings has allowed Namita to focus more on her flour mill and sewing machine work, leading to increased productivity and income.

Additionally, the reduction in smoke and harmful gases has brought significant health improvements for Namita and her family, creating a safer and healthier home environment. Namita is grateful for the support and training that empowered her to improve her family's well-being and livelihood through this sustainable technology.

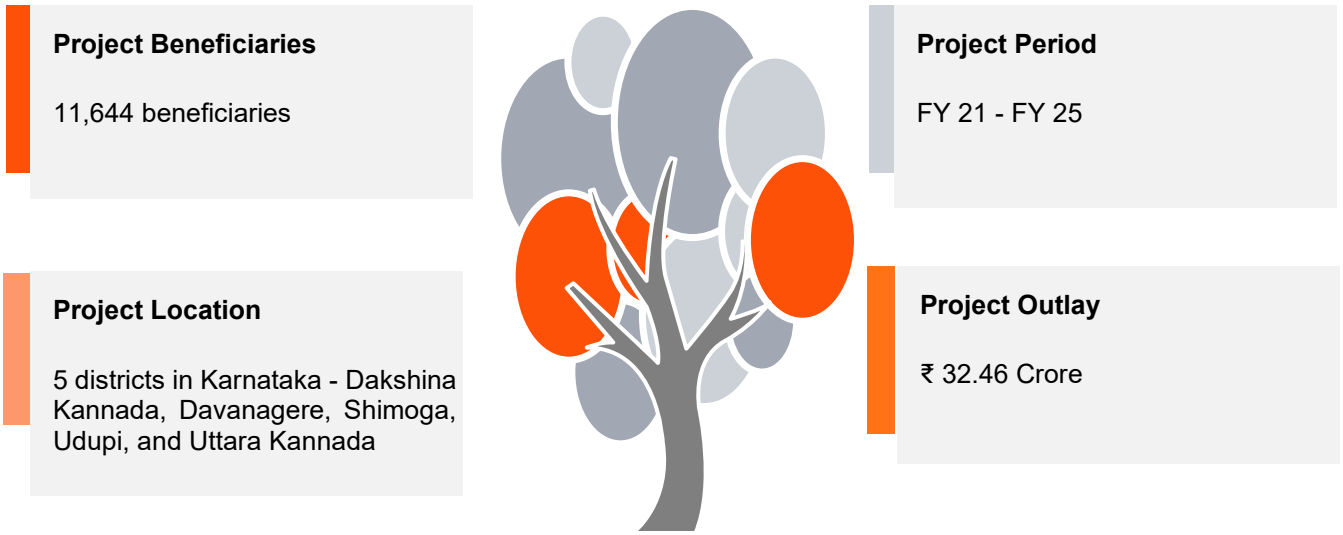
11. Project 8: Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Karnataka

11.1 About the Project

In rural India, **a large proportion of households continue to rely on traditional biomass-based cooking methods such as fuelwood-based cookstoves**. The widespread use of these fuels contributes to indoor air pollution, causing respiratory and cardiovascular illnesses, eye irritation and other chronic health problems, particularly among women and children.[53] Fuelwood dependence also puts pressure on local forests, while unmanaged cattle dung releases methane, exacerbating greenhouse gas emissions. These practices collectively result in environmental degradation, health burdens and significant drudgery for women who spend several hours each day collecting fuelwoods for household needs.

To address these interconnected challenges, Infosys Limited, under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, implemented the **"Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Karnataka"** project in partnership with Savayava Krushi Parivara (SKP) across five districts of Karnataka. Under this project, **11,644[54] rural households were provided with biogas units of 2 m³/day capacity, determined as per the household cooking needs, family size, and the quantity of cattle dung available**. The project leveraged digester technologies supplied by Buen Manejo Del campo India Private Limited (Sistema Bio), Green Connect and GOBAR TESCO, deploying both floating-drum and balloon-type digesters that converted cattle dung into clean cooking gas. This contributed to improved household well-being, reduced emissions and enhanced environmental sustainability.[55]

Figure 97: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics



To ensure that support reached households with genuine, Infosys Limited and SKP **defined clear eligibility criteria**. Priority was given to low-income rural households relying on traditional fuelwood chulhas[56], using limited LPG (≤4 cylinders/year), and having sufficient cattle dung (2-4 baskets/day). Households with small landholdings (<5 acres), modest housing size, family size between 2-6 members, and no four-wheeler ownership, were considered eligible. These criteria helped target households most likely to adopt and sustain biogas use.[57]

[53] Source: https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10305975/?utm

[54] As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the project initially targeted 25,000 rural households for the installation of biogas plants across select districts of Karnataka. As per the SKP team, the implementation plan was revised in consultation with Infosys Limited due to operational challenges and disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, a total of 11,644 biogas plants were installed during the reporting period, prioritising households that met the eligibility criteria and were accessible under the prevailing field conditions.

[55] Source: Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Infosys Limited and SKP, June 2019

[56] A traditional Indian cooking stove, where wood, animal dung cakes, kerosene and crop residue are used as fuel

[57] Source: as shared by implementing partner during the field visit

* Under this project, the biogas units were installed during the period of FY 21 - FY 23 with maintenance continuing until FY 25.

11.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment study utilised an integrated and cohesive approach to evaluate project's social impact. The process began with a kick-off meeting with Infosys Limited team, followed by a briefing call with the SKP team. These interactions provided vital insights into the project's specific support elements. Following this meeting, Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP) team received the following project documents for desk review:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed with Savayava Krushi Parivara
- **Monitoring reports** containing progress updates, installation data and performance metrics of biogas units
- **Database** of project beneficiaries

Accordingly, PWCALLP team conducted a desk review of the above documents utilising insights gained from the kick-off meeting. This process helped in **designing the assessment framework** and **finalising the key stakeholders** for the interactions.

The research utilized a structured methodology based on the **IRECS framework and SROI (Social Return on Investment)** method to evaluate the project's impact. The IRECS framework assesses the impact of development programs by examining dimensions such as **Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness (and efficiency), Convergence, and Sustainability**, providing a comprehensive evaluation of the project's success in achieving its intended outcomes. It also facilitates a qualitative understanding of the impact created, stakeholder perceptions, and the degree of collaboration with partner organizations. Complementing this, the SROI method is **designed to measure and account for the value generated by the project**, quantifying its social, environmental, and economic benefits, and enabling an assessment of the associated costs and returns.

A mixed method approach, comprising both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, was leveraged for the impact assessment study. The quantitative survey was conducted with the beneficiaries for generating insights regarding the project's impact, while qualitative interactions were also held with the project stakeholders. This approach facilitated the exploration of individual experiences and provided a deeper understanding of the perspectives of project stakeholders.

Key stakeholders were identified (Figure 135) and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 98: Research design for the study

- **Five Focused Group Discussion (FGD)** with Beneficiaries
- **Ten In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Field Operators
- **Two In-depth Interviews** with Local Government Officials
- **One Key Informant Interview (KII)** with SKP representative
- **One In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Infosys Limited team

*Based on the data shared by Infosys Limited team, it was noted that 11,644 beneficiary households have been covered under the project. A sample size of **272 beneficiaries was estimated at 90% confidence level and 5% margin of error**. Two blocks from each of the districts were selected based on the highest number of beneficiaries. Sampling distribution for quantitative survey was as shown below in Table.

Table 39: Distribution of quantitative sample across districts

District	Block	Sample Size
Dakshina Kannada	Belthangadi	28
	Puttur	22
Davanagere	Harihar	11
	Honnali	10
Shimoga	Hosanagara	49
	Sorab	33
Udupi	Karkal	56
	Kundapura	16
Uttara Kannada	Siddapur	23
	Sirsi	24
Grand total		**272**

11.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with key stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

The team noted following challenges that emerged prior to project intervention:

- **High dependence on traditional biomass for food preparation:** Most rural households relied on traditional chulhas using fuelwood, crop residues, or dried cattle dung as primary cooking fuels. This dependence not only resulted in **inefficient energy use** but also contributed to **significant indoor air pollution**, exposing women and children to harmful smoke and particulate matter during long hours of food preparation.

- **Health risks from indoor air pollution:** Women and children were disproportionately affected by smoke inhalation, leading to **respiratory illnesses, eye irritation, and chronic coughing.** Continuous exposure to indoor air pollution caused by biomass burning was widely reported, with several families **lacking awareness or access to cleaner alternatives.**

- **Excessive drudgery for women:** Collecting and carrying large quantities of fuelwood was a **time and labour-intensive activity**, often undertaken by women and adolescent girls. In several communities, **women spent two to four hours daily** gathering wood from forest fringes, **limiting their time for productive or income-generating work**, rest, or social participation.

- **Unmanaged and underutilised cattle dung:** Despite the prevalence of small and marginal farmers with cattle, most **lacked systems to convert dung into biogas** or organic manure. In most households, cattle dung was **regularly dumped in open pits** or heaps, where it stayed unused. Without any structured system for processing or managing this dung, large quantities accumulated near homes and cattle sheds, **creating unhygienic conditions** for households. It also resulted in a lost opportunity to convert the dung into a productive resource such as biogas, limiting households' ability to adopt sustainable agricultural practices or benefit from cost savings associated with reduced chemical fertiliser use.

- **Pressure on local forests and environmental degradation:** High levels of fuelwood extraction placed continuous **pressure on local forest ecosystems**, leading to **depletion of tree cover** and degradation of common lands. This unsustainable dependence contributed to local deforestation and loss of biodiversity, particularly in forest-fringe villages of Uttara Kannada, Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

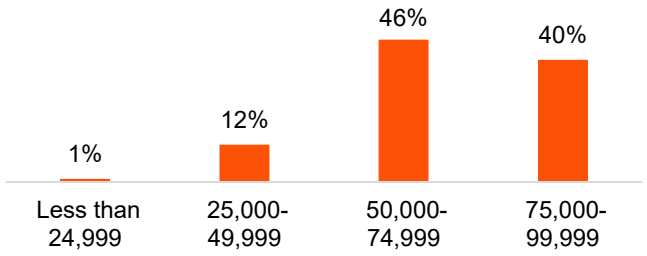
1. Profile of the respondents

This section discusses the socio-demographic profile of 272 beneficiaries based on the quantitative interactions carried out with them.

Table 40: Socio-economic characteristics of the respondents (n=272)

	• **58%** of the respondents are female and **42%** were male
	• **47%** of the respondents are aged between **40 to 49 years** and 38% are between 50 to 59 years
	• **94%** of the respondents had completed **secondary school** or less
	• **63**% reported owning **less than 1 acre of agricultural land**, followed by 25% owning 1–2 acres • **93%** of respondents were engaged in **farming on their own land**, while 4% worked as agricultural labourers
	• Respondents owned an average of **three cattle per household** that produced on average **32kg of dung per day**

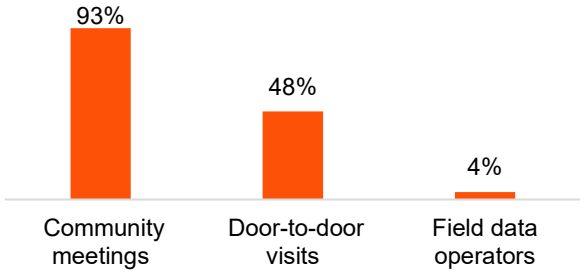
Figure 99: Annual income category of respondents in ₹ (n=272)



- **46% reported an annual household income between ₹ 50,000–74,999**, followed by 40% earning ₹ 75,000–99,999, as shown in Figure.
- Additionally, **100% of respondents had a Below Poverty Line (BPL) card**, highlighting that the project successfully reached low-income rural households (n=272).

2. Enhanced community awareness and participation in clean energy transition

Figure 100: Source of information about the project (n=272)

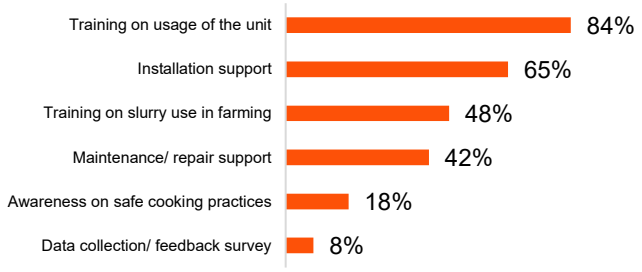


Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- **100%** of respondents were aware that the biogas unit was provided with funding support from Infosys Limited (n=272).
- Respondents first learned about the project through **community meetings (93%) and door-to-door outreach (48%)** (Figure) (n=272)**.** As per field staff, this outreach model ensured that households clearly understood the project's purpose, eligibility criteria and long-term relevance, enabling informed participation across villages.

- **Local youth were selected** and trained as field operators by SKP**.** Their role included beneficiary mobilisation, site marking for installation, supporting household pit digging, helping vendors with installation, conducting household trainings on operation and maintenance and slurry usage, periodic follow-ups and troubleshooting, and data collection and verification.

Figure 101: Type of support given by field operator



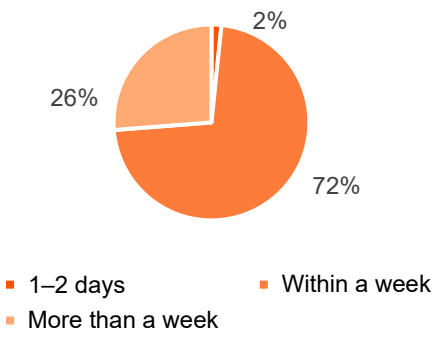
Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- **100%** of respondents confirmed that field operators or mobilisers visited their households for **installation, maintenance and follow-up** (n=272). Visit frequency varied, with **64%** reporting **occasional** visits and **25%** reporting **frequent** monthly visits (n=272).

- Beneficiaries consistently highlighted that support was available when required. This was in the form of training on the usage of the biogas unit (**84 %) and installation-related assistance (65%) (n=272)**.

- **25% (n=272)** of respondents experienced technical issues with the biogas unit post-installation. Among those who did, **93% reached out to the operator** for assistance (n=67). 74% **reported that issues were resolved within 1–6 days**, while 26% stated that resolution took more than a week (n=62). Delays were primarily attributed to the need for on-site visits in **remote locations**, availability of **spare parts**, and the **complexity of certain technical repairs**. (n= 62).

Figure 102: Time taken by field operators to resolve issues (n=62)



- The reliance on **local youth technicians** was unanimously viewed as beneficial, with **100% confirmed that having trained local youth increased accessibility and responsiveness** (n=272). SKP staff explained that youth technicians received hands-on training, enabling them to undertake **troubleshooting, replace faulty components, clear pipeline blockages, and provide operational guidance** during household visits.

- Satisfaction with the support system was overwhelmingly positive, with **98% rating the quality of service provided by field operators as excellent** (n=272).

3. Improved health outcomes and enhanced household safety

- Before receiving biogas, **99% of respondents used traditional methods for food preparation** (*chulhas*) and 87% relied on wood as their main cooking fuel (n=272). Respondents noted that **traditional cookstoves result** in continued use within enclosed indoor spaces. This led to **poor ventilation, smoke accumulation, and soot deposits on household walls and ceilings**. In contrast, **biogas units supply clean fuel through a piped gas system,** enabling indoor cooking without smoke exposure and remaining fully independent of external weather conditions.

Figure 103 : Biogas digester

- Respondents faced multiple **health and safety concerns** associated with indoor fuelwood use. Open-fire stoves increased the risk **of accidental burns, unstable flame control, and exposure to sparks**, particularly in poorly ventilated kitchens. Fuelwood combustion also increased the likelihood of **kitchen fires** and contributed to poor indoor air quality.

- Respondents reported a **complete shift** from traditional fuelwood-based food preparation to biogas **post-installation of the units**, **with 99% using biogas as their**

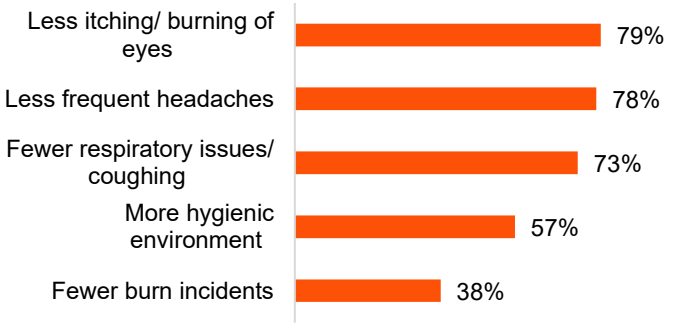
main fuel source. All respondents **100% (n=272)** stated that they are currently **using the biogas unit provided under the project**.

- Field staff shared that biogas systems provided a more **controlled and enclosed flame** that **reduced the risk of accidental burns** and household fire outbreaks. The fixed biogas burner and pipeline configuration created a **safer cooking setup** by avoiding direct contact with fuelwood and embers. Households using biogas typically experienced **fewer fire-related injuries** and 99% of the respondents agreed that the biogas unit enhanced safety at home (n=272).

Figure 104: Biogas double-burner stove connected through the H_2S filter

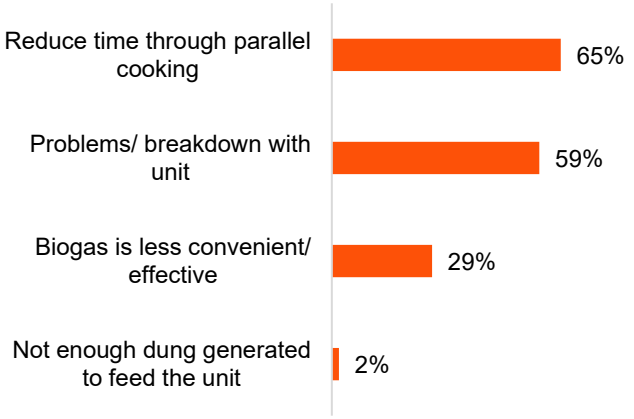
- Biogas had a positive impact on indoor air quality with **reduced smoke exposure** during daily food preparation activities. A noticeable improvement in health was reported after shifting to biogas. Respondents noted **less itching or burning of eyes (79%), fewer headaches (78%), and reduced respiratory issues (73%) (n=272).** In addition, 57% observed a more hygienic kitchen environment, and 38% reported fewer burn incidents (Figure).

Figure 105: Health improvements because of using biogas



- After adoption, **82% of respondents relied exclusively on biogas** for their daily food preparation needs, while 18% continued to use other fuels alongside it (n=272). Among those who used additional fuels, the most common reasons were the **need for parallel cooking to save time**, reported by 65%, and occasional **unit breakdowns**, reported by 59% as depicted in Figure 106 (n=49).

Figure 106: Reasons for continuing to use other cooking methods (n=49)

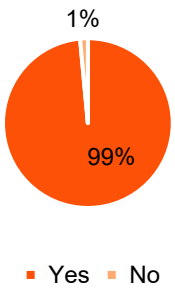


Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- During interactions, respondents shared that they used the **traditional cookstove occasionally during festivals or in winter months to boil water** for bathing. Some respondents, particularly from Dakshina Kannada, mentioned that they used the mud stove to **boil paddy, as they consume paddy rice directly after long boiling** (4–5 hours), a process they felt was easier to manage on the traditional stove.

4. Strengthened sustainable farming practices and environmental resilience

Figure 107: Use of slurry for farming or kitchen gardening (n=272)



- Figure 107 reveals that **99% used slurry** from the biogas unit for **farming or kitchen gardening** (n=272). Slurry was either channelled directly from the digester to fields or stored for later application in drums or in pits dug on the farm, an alternative frequently used by households for whom purchasing drums was unaffordable. This pattern of storage and reuse was commonly described across beneficiary households. On average, respondents **applied half (50%) of the total slurry produced to their farm/ garden plots** (n= 268).

- Field observations indicated that beneficiaries **mixed slurry with dry farm compost** such as bund residue, kitchen waste and crop waste to prepare enriched potting material, which supported **faster vegetative growth**. This aligned with survey findings, where **95% reported that they expanded farming/ kitchen gardening** on their plots after slurry adoption (n=268).

Figure 108: Processing of slurry by households

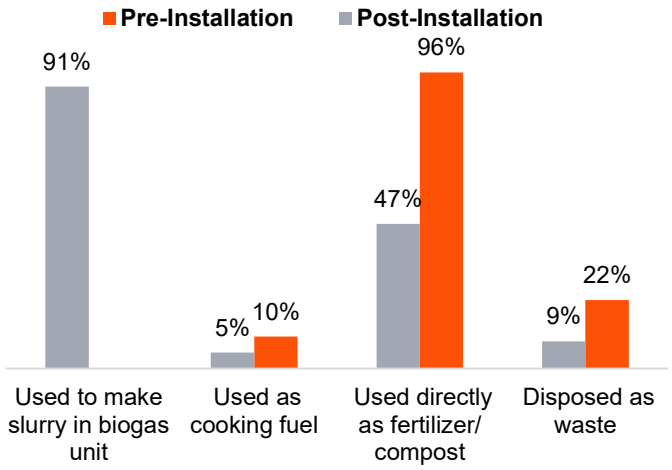
Cemented slurry storage structure

Slurry transported to farm using containers

Slurry from biogas unit mixed with dry compost

- **Improvements in produce quality were noted by 89% of the respondents** (n=268)**,** who felt that crops grown using slurry had **better taste, appearance, and shelf life.** This also enabled households to intensify organic cultivation, and respondents reported practising **organic farming on 74% of the plot on average** (n=268). As a result, some households began to **sell organically grown crops at premium prices in the market.**

Figure 109: Usage of cattle dung pre- and post-installation (n=272)



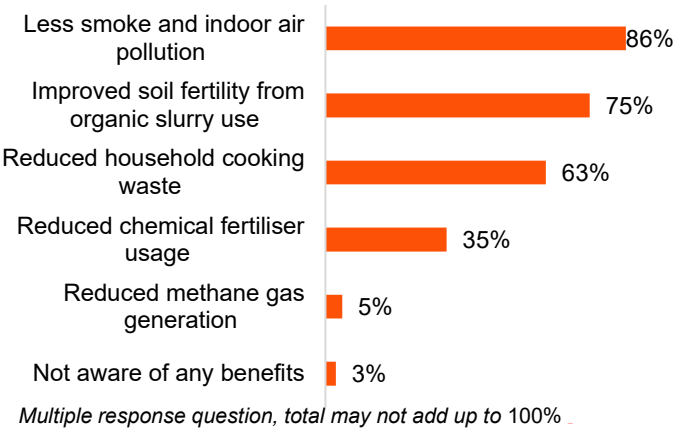
•As reported by respondents and corroborated by field staff, the biogas project facilitated a change in the treatment of dung**,** from being a low-value by-product to being used as **a core agricultural input**. Prior to installation, **22%** of households disposed of dung as waste and **96% used it as traditional compost or fertiliser**.

•After installation, the primary disposal pathway shifted to the digester, with **91%** reporting that they used **dung for slurry production** and only 9% stating that they disposed it as waste (n=272). This indicates that the intervention **effectively transformed an unmanaged waste stream into controlled anaerobic digestion, which created a productive source of nutrients for farming.**

- This transition **contributed to environmental resilience by reducing methane emissions at the household level**, an issue repeatedly highlighted by SKP team during qualitative interactions. Beneficiaries frequently explained that feeding dung to the biogas unit **prevented open dumping, kept cattle sheds cleaner, and reduced foul odours** during monsoon months.

- Environmental awareness generated through the project is reflected in Figure. Survey responses indicated that **households recognised multiple environmental benefits of biogas use, with 86% linking it to less smoke and indoor air pollution and 75% associated it with improved soil fertility (n=272)**.

Figure 110: Environmental benefits (n=272)



Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- **Direct field application emerged** as the predominant method of slurry use, adopted by **87%** of respondents, followed by mixing slurry with irrigation water (33%) and composting with farm residue (16%), as seen in Figure. Furthermore, these application practices supported both larger field plots and household kitchen gardens, contributing to **wider adoption of organic nutrient management.**

Figure 111: Method of utilising slurry as fertiliser

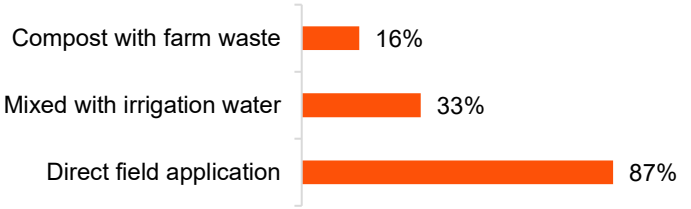
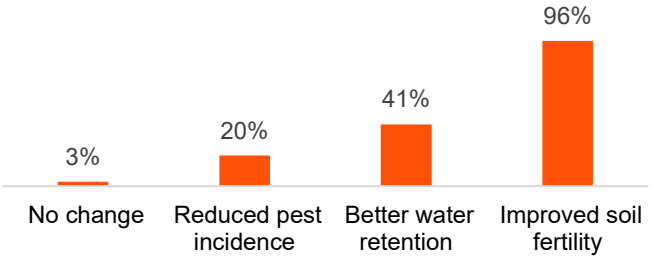
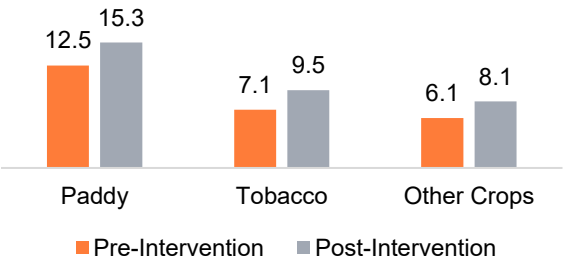


Figure 112: Change in soil quality after using slurry (n=268)



Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

Figure 113: Change in yield due to slurry application (quintal/ acre) (n=222)



- Respondents consistently shared that slurry application was beneficial for both soil health and crop yield, the same is reiterated in quantitative data. **96% observed improved soil fertility** and 41% noted better water retention (n=268). The same improvement extended to crop outcomes, with **83% indicating higher yields** from slurry-supported cultivation that enhanced the quality of produce (n=268).

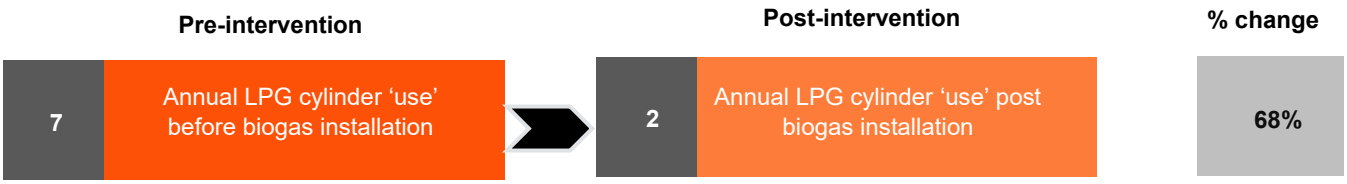
- Among respondents whose crop yields changed after adopting slurry (n=222), paddy yields increased from **12.5 to 15.3 quintals per acre, tobacco from 7.1 to 9.4 quintals per acre**, and other crops like **sugarcane and coconut from 6.1 to 8.1 quintals per acre**.

5. Improved household income and economic well-being

- During discussions with the SKP team, it appeared that the **biogas project strengthened household economic well-being by reducing expenditure on cooking fuels, lowering agricultural input costs, and enabling new income-generation opportunities**.

- Prior to biogas adoption, households depended on collected fuelwood and LPG cylinders for food preparation, both of which needed **recurring financial outlays**. With biogas becoming the primary cooking fuel, the economic burden associated with these fuel sources reduced considerably. As illustrated in Figure below, LPG usage reduced from an average of **7 cylinders** per year before biogas **to 2 cylinders** per year after installation – **a 68% decline**.

Figure 114: Change in annual LPG cylinder usage before and after biogas installation (n=272)



- Households recorded **quantifiable reductions in recurring expenses** across key consumption and agricultural inputs after shifting to biogas. These reductions contributed to greater financial stability for respondent households.

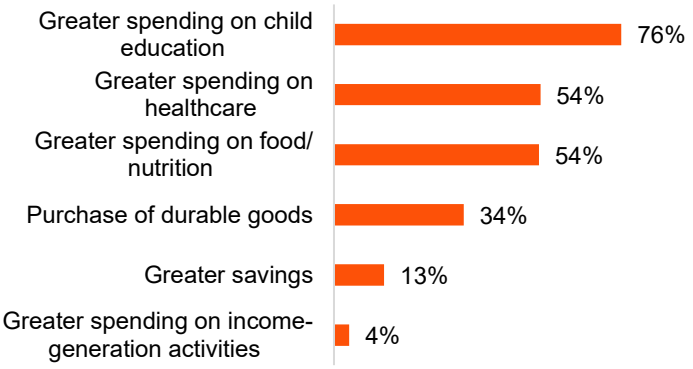
Figure 115: Annual savings from biogas utilisation

	Annual savings of **₹ 4,543** from reduced **LPG cylinder usage** after biogas adoption (n=272)
	Annual savings of **₹ 3,540** due to the decline in **fuelwood-related expenses** (n=162)
	Annual savings of **₹ 4,536** from reduced smoke-related **health expenditure** (n=211)

- Greater savings **were reallocated toward essential needs,** with 76% directing their savings toward **education**, 54% towards **healthcare**, and 54% toward **food and nutrition** (n=272). This reallocation demonstrates improved financial flexibility for low-income rural households and is visually represented.

- The adoption of slurry **reduced chemical fertiliser requirements for 76%** of the respondents (n=268), resulting in **average annual fertiliser cost savings of ₹ 16,921** (n=203).

Figure 116: Use of savings from biogas unit (n=272)



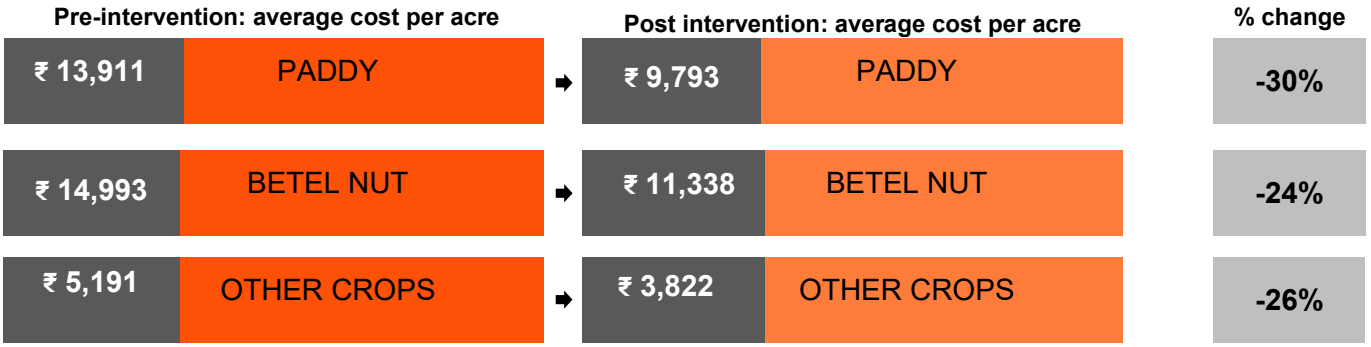
Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- **31% (n=268) also engaged in new non-farm income activities** enabled by the biogas intervention. Among those who undertook such activities**, selling of slurry was the most common, reported by 93%, while 13% engaged in fuel-pellet production (n=84)**. These activities created additional livelihood avenues and contributed to strengthening household income sources.

After biogas installation, households reported an **average annual farm-income increase of ₹ 22,000** (n=179). A few respondents noted that although income did not increase, there were **significant improvements in soil fertility**.

- Among households practising slurry-based cultivation, **75% reported a clear decline in cost of cultivation** after utilising biogas slurry (n=268). Figure below highlights the change in cost of cultivation of major crops (n=202).

Figure 117: Change in the average cultivation cost/ acre for major crops before and after the intervention (n=202)



- Qualitative interactions further indicated that cattle ownership itself contributed to sustained household income, **complementing the economic benefits generated through biogas use.** Most beneficiary households owned an average of **three cattle, supported by well-maintained cowsheds, a prerequisite for consistent dung availability for biogas generation.**

Figure 118: Household cattle used for dung and dairy production

- The same cattle were also integral to household dairy-based income, with families selling milk both within the village and to organised dairy networks such as Nandini. On average, households sold **5 litres of milk per day at ₹ 40 per litre, providing a steady supplementary income stream.** In Dakshina Kannada, field teams recorded villages **collectively supplying over 1,000 litres of milk per day, demonstrating that the biogas intervention operated within a broader cattle-based rural economy where dairy income and biogas production reinforced one another.**

- Additionally, beneficiaries reported that with the increase in household income and cost savings, many households invested in **constructing cemented slurry pits and slurry storage structures** near the digester. These structures enabled better slurry management.

- **99% of respondents stated that they now feel more financially secure**, indicating that the intervention has had a positive impact on household economic stability (n=272).

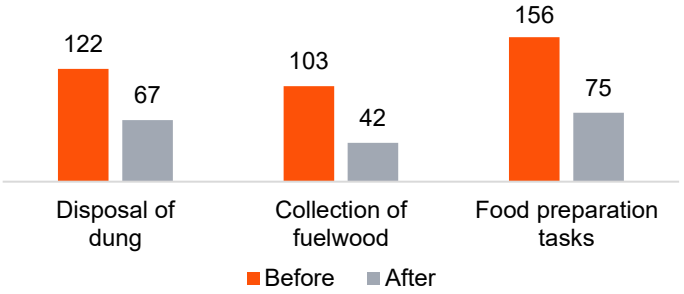
- Additionally, the intervention also contributed to local employment generation. **Approximately 200 youth were trained and deployed across 20 talukas** to support installation, routine servicing, and troubleshooting of biogas units. As shared during discussions with the SKP team, each technician received around **₹ 1,500 per installation.**

> “ I have set up a kitchen garden beside our house, and the slurry from the biogas unit is channelled directly into it through a small pipe. Because of the nutrient-rich slurry, our leafy vegetables, beans, and gourds **grow much faster** than before. Earlier, the soil was hard and needed chemical fertiliser, but now it stays **moist and fertile throughout the year**. We hardly purchase vegetables from the market anymore, which **saves money** and ensures **we eat fresh, home-grown produce** every day.
>
> **As narrated by a beneficiary from Salkana village**

6. Reduced household drudgery and greater women's empowerment

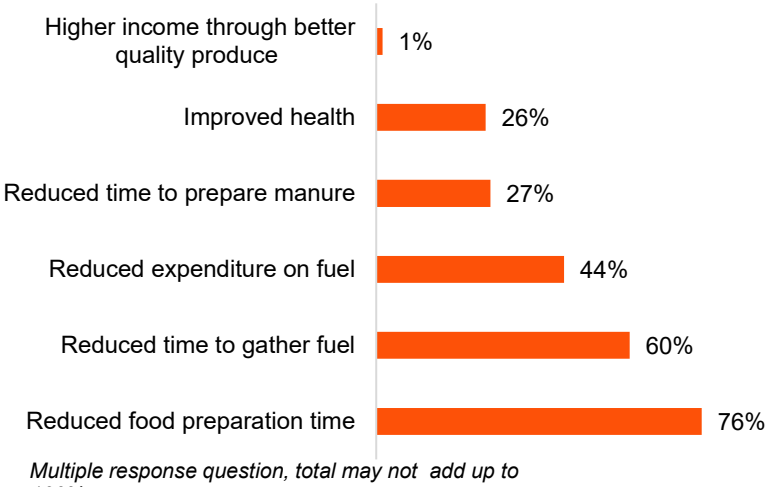
- Data indicates a substantial reduction in women's daily drudgery after the adoption of biogas. Time spent on labour-intensive household tasks declined sharply from **122 to 67 minutes** per day for dung disposal, **103 to 42 minutes for fuelwood collection,** and **156 to 75 minutes for food preparation**. These reductions reflect the project's direct contribution toward easing daily workloads for women.

Figure 119: Time spent per day (in minutes) on domestic chores (n=272)



- In terms of project impact, 76% of respondents reported reduced food preparation time, 60% observed reduced time spent gathering fuel, and 27% noted reduced time required for preparing manure (n=272). These combined reductions lowered the physical effort traditionally borne by women in rural households.

Figure 120: Impact of the project (n=272)



Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- 100% of the respondents reported reduced need for fuelwood and among them, **94% reported a significant reduction in fuelwood requirements** (n=272). This aligned with field interactions where women beneficiaries particularly from Udupi, Dakshina Kannada and Uttara Kannada, described relying heavily on forest areas for wood collection prior to the project. As these are highly forested and heavy rainfall districts, women **traditionally spent 1-2 months each year** during the summer collecting and storing large quantities of fuelwood to last through the monsoon.

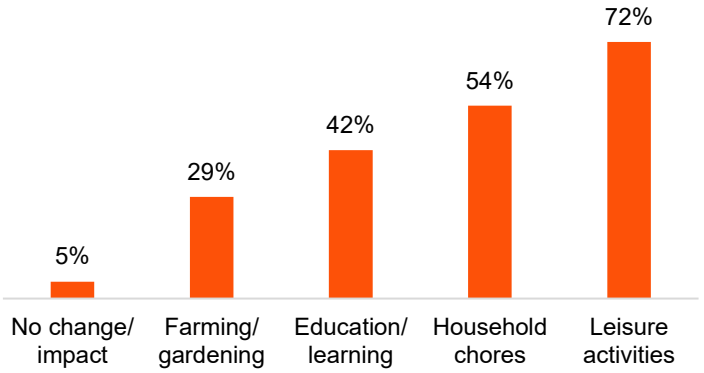
- **Entering forest boundaries involved risk** due to restrictions enforced by the forest department, **leading to a constant sense of insecurity**. With biogas meeting almost all energy needs, several respondents stated that they now either do not go to the forest at all or go only 8–10 days a year to collect firewood, as much less wood is required. This represents **a near-elimination of this labour burden**.

- Kitchen cleanliness and hygiene have improved. Women explained that traditional cookstoves led to soot accumulation on walls, ceilings, and utensils, **resulting in frequent cleaning.** With biogas, **these additional cleaning tasks reduced markedly**, freeing up time for other household responsibilities.

- Women beneficiaries also reported a **reduction in cattle-related workload**. Prior to the project, dung had to be shaped into cakes or carried to compost pits; after biogas installation, households simply mixed dung with water and **fed it directly into the digester**, **simplifying** what was previously a time-consuming routine.

- The time saved **enabled women to reallocate their efforts toward other meaningful activities**. Adjacent Figure reveals that **72%** used the additional time for **leisure** and **54%** for **household chores** (n=272). These shifts reflected greater autonomy over time use and enhanced participation in personal, household, and agricultural activities.

Figure 121: Use of time saved post-biogas unit installation (n=272)



Multiple response question, total may not add up to 100%

- Field teams additionally noted **increased participation by women in local gatherings, SHG meetings, and community events** following biogas adoption.
- According to the SKP team, the combined effects of reduced daily drudgery, decreased dependence on forest fuelwood, improved kitchen hygiene, simplified cattle-management routines and increased opportunities for personal and community engagement collectively indicate that the biogas project contributed meaningfully to strengthening women's empowerment.

7. Improved system reliability and long-term sustainability

- 99% of the respondents reported being highly satisfied with the biogas system and service delivery and 99% reported the project had benefitted the community (n=272). Reflecting the perceived value of the intervention, 100% expressed willingness to recommend biogas to other community members (n=272). These findings signal a high degree of trust in the technology and its implementing systems.
- Qualitative interactions also highlighted growing peer influence within communities. Early adopters encouraged neighbours to participate in the clean-energy transition by adopting biogas, shared demonstrations and showcased kitchen gardens grown with slurry. In several villages, **beneficiaries mentioned that biogas had become a "visible example" of clean energy adoption, prompting interest from households beyond the project's coverage.**
- Field operators described the biogas technology as **"easy to use" and "long-lasting with minimal care."** Although the digestor has a formal **10-year warranty**, they believed units could function effectively for **15-20 years** if routine care was followed, such as maintaining the correct dung-to-water ratio, preventing water from entering pipelines, and ensuring timely cleaning of the H_2S filter.
- **Common technical issues observed during the project included temporary pipeline blockages, H_2S filter saturation, stove-related problems, and slurry outlets getting clogged, particularly after heavy rains or when fibrous dung was fed into the unit.** Field staff typically resolved these concerns through **simple corrective steps** such as vacuum-clearing slurry outlets, flushing pipelines, and replacing stove burners sourced from local shops. Respondents shared high levels of **confidence in the maintenance system**, noting that most issues were minor and generally resolved within a single visit.
- Likewise, households frequently experienced stove-related challenges due to the non-standard knobs and burner fittings used in biogas stoves, which differed from regular LPG stoves and therefore required more frequent adjustments or part replacements**.** In many cases, field teams proactively replaced faulty parts on the spot, while households were also able to resolve minor issues on their own. As a result, beneficiaries reported timely support from field staff and highlighted the responsiveness of the service mechanism.
- The **project's toll-free helpline**, combined with unit-specific identification numbers (digester ID), further supported **long-term serviceability**. Households could report problems remotely, and technicians were dispatched accordingly, strengthening efficiency and reliability in the system.

- The combination of installation support, effective troubleshooting systems, trained local technicians, accessible repair pathways, and the long operational lifespan of the units collectively contributed to the **biogas project's long-term sustainability.** During discussions with the SKP team, it was indicated that these elements ensured not only **high adoption** but also enabled beneficiaries **to operate and maintain the units confidently over extended periods.**

- SKP team also noted that community enthusiasm grew steadily over the project period, with beneficiaries increasingly taking ownership of biogas use, **troubleshooting minor issues independently, and promoting the technology within their villages.**

- Following the conclusion of the project, SKP team observed **continued interest from non-beneficiary households, indicating that the community-driven momentum around clean energy adoption is likely to sustain beyond the project's lifecycle.**

> "We began by teaching households how to mix dung and water properly for feeding the biogas unit. But as the project progressed, we realised that we were learning far more from them their patience with the daily routine, the discipline with which they maintained the units, and the trust they placed in us throughout the process. Their commitment became the real strength of this project."
>
> As narrated by a field operator in the project

11.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the Impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project till FY 26. The overall impact is calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight refers to the portion of benefits that would have occurred even without the project. For the purpose of this analysis, deadweight factor of 20% has been assumed to account for the possibility that a share of the outcomes could have occurred independently of the intervention, given the availability and coverage of parallel initiatives, including schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, in the project geography.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution denotes the estimated share of the total impact attributable to the efforts of external stakeholders. In this analysis, attribution (by others) has been assumed at 25% and 75% to account for the contributions of key stakeholders, including government interventions and beneficiaries' autonomous decisions, such as providing space

and labour for the installation of biogas units. This approach acknowledges that a significant share of the observed impact may be influenced by existing government programmes and the independent agency exercised by beneficiaries.

Drop-off

Drop-off represents the decrement in realized benefits or impact over time, attributable to factors such as degradation of performance or external environmental influences. While initial assessment and monitoring phases indicated negligible drop-off, a conservative annual drop-off rate of 3% has been assumed for the SROI estimation. This rate corresponds to the proportion of beneficiaries reporting malfunction or subdued operational capacity of their biogas plants annually, thereby enabling a more accurate and longitudinal estimation of sustained project outcomes.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been arrived at based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)

Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 20,50,36,160 across a period from FY 20 to FY 26.

Table 41: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Beneficiary Households (Women and Families)	• Installation of Biogas units in individual households • Training on operation & maintenance of biogas units. • Community mobilization and awareness programs on clean cooking benefits.	• 11,644 biogas units installed. • 11,644 households shifting from traditional to environment friendly, cost-effective cooking solutions. • 11,644 biogas units being utilised.	• Reduction in firewood usage. • Reduction in firewood collection, cooking and cleaning time. • Improved cooking environment (less smoke, soot, carbon residue) and reduction in respiratory/eye-related illnesses.	• Reduction in fuelwood/ LPG costs. • Improved household health and reduced healthcare costs due to less indoor air pollution.

Table 42: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Total value created in FY 20	Total value created in FY 21	Total value created in FY 22	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Households	Annual average savings on healthcare costs due to fewer	₹ 76,427	₹ 13,37,313	₹ 69,16,668	₹ 73,39,154	₹ 72,21,116	₹ 70,40,588	₹ 3,67,95,839

Stakeholder	Benefits	Total value created in FY 20	Total value created in FY 21	Total value created in FY 22	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Cumulative value created till FY 26
	respiratory/eye ailments							
	Average annual household savings on fuelwood	₹ 45,786	₹ 8,01,193	₹ 41,44,138	₹ 43,96,994	₹ 43,26,123	₹ 42,17,970	₹ 2,20,44,724
	Average annual household savings on LPG Cylinder	₹ 2,96,036	₹ 75,77,664	₹ 2,79,40,142	₹ 2,85,56,211	₹ 2,79,68,569	₹ 2,72,69,355	₹ 14,61,95,596
Total Impact Created		**₹ 4,18,249**	**₹ 97,16,170**	**₹ 3,90,00,947**	**₹ 4,02,92,358**	**₹ 3,95,15,808**	**₹ 3,85,27,912**	**₹ 20,50,36,160**

Table 43: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Financial Proxy Explanation	Source(s)
Households	Annual average **savings on healthcare costs** due to fewer respiratory/eye ailments	The proxy is the average estimated annual saving on healthcare costs per household. **This is calculated from survey data identifying the difference between the average monthly expenditure on health that could be attributed to the effects of using traditional cookstove (chulha) fuelled by fuelwood and average monthly expenditure on health when using biogas**. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Average annual household **savings on fuelwood**	The proxy is the average **estimated annual savings households experienced due to the reduced need for fuelwood as a result of using biogas**. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Average annual household **savings on LPG Cylinder**	The proxy is the average **estimated annual savings households experienced due to the reduced need for LPG cylinders as a result of using biogas**. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings

b. SROI Calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.

Total Impact Value = ₹ 20,50,36,160

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 3,19,97,896[58]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is taken into account while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India FY 23 is considered[59].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact		NPV of Utilisation
₹ 13,03,92,369		₹ 2,49,76,707[60]

	SROI Ratio
Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project is estimated to be 5.22:1.	**5.22:1**

The SROI value similarly is 5.22. This means that for every ₹ 1 being invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 5.22 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.

- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.

- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.

- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

[58] As per the MoU
[59] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette
[60] Project Investment was shared by Infosys Limited team and NPV of the investment was calculated by applying the inflation rate 5.7 - https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?end=2024&locations=IN&start=2022

11.5 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 44: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project was inclusive, targeting low-income rural households, with **100% BPL coverage** and 87% of the beneficiaries owning **less than 2 acres** of land (n=272). • Inclusion criteria such as cattle ownership (average **three cattle per household**) and low LPG use ensured that support reached households most dependent on fuelwood (n=272). • The project remained accessible to low-literacy groups, as **94% had completed secondary school or lower** (n=272). • Village-level meetings were the primary source of information for **93%** of respondents, highlighting a **community-driven** and inclusive approach (n=272).
Relevance	• The project was highly relevant in the selected high-rainfall, forest-dependent districts, where **87% of households relied on fuelwood** and **99% used traditional chulhas** prior to the intervention—conditions associated with indoor smoke, constrained ventilation, long fuelwood collection hours, and health risks (n=272). • The intervention also addressed agricultural constraints, with **99% of respondents adopting slurry use** for farming and kitchen gardening. This aligned with local practices of organic cultivation and addressed the issues pertaining to fertiliser affordability. • The project directly responded to **environmental concerns including unmanaged dung disposal, methane release, and forest degradation** linked to fuelwood dependence.
Effectiveness	• The project demonstrated strong effectiveness, with **100% of respondents using the biogas unit** and **99% identifying biogas as their primary cooking fuel**, signalling complete adoption among beneficiaries (n=272). • Substantial improvements were reported across key outcomes: **76% experienced reduced food preparation time**, **60% reduced time gathering fuel**, **79% reported reduced eye irritation**, **73% fewer respiratory issues**, and **78% fewer headaches**, alongside fewer burn incidents and cleaner kitchen environments (n=272). • Agricultural effectiveness was evident through high slurry utilisation: **99% used slurry**, **96% observed improved soil fertility**, **41% reported better water retention**, and **83% experienced increased yields**, supported by measurable improvements in crop output (n=272). • The project also reduced expenditure through a **68% reduction in LPG usage** and significant fertiliser savings (average **₹ 16,921** per year among those reporting reductions), contributing to household economic stability (n=272). • High satisfaction levels confirmed effectiveness, with **99% very satisfied** with biogas systems and **100% willing to recommend** it to others (n=272). • The project effectively improved agricultural productivity and reduced costs, with **75%** reporting decline in the cost of cultivation, particularly across crops like paddy: **₹ 13,911 to 9,793** (n=202). • Farm income strengthened, with households reporting an **average annual increase in income of ₹ 22,000** (n=179) alongside improvements in paddy yield (**12.5 to 15.3 quintals/ acre)**, tobacco yield (**7.2 to 9.5 quintals/ acre)** (n=222). • The intervention substantially reduced women's drudgery, with daily time spent on key tasks decreasing sharply for dung disposal (**122 to 67 min**), fuelwood collection (**103 to 42 min**), and food preparation (**156 to 75 min**) (n=272).

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Convergence	• The project demonstrated convergence across technical, agricultural, and community-level systems. Biogas installation, slurry-based farming practices, field-level mobilisation, and technician support together created a coordinated implementation model. • Synergies with **ongoing agricultural practices** particularly cattle rearing and organic cultivation strengthened integration of biogas within existing rural livelihoods. • **No major government schemes** were formally integrated
Sustainability	• The system demonstrated strong operational sustainability, with **100% confirming operator visits to their households, 84% receiving training, and 98% rating service quality as excellent** (n=272). • Technical sustainability was supported by trained youth technicians, quick repair turnaround, and a toll-free helpline, enabling reliable long-term functioning of units with minimal downtime. • Environmental sustainability was ensured through sustained reductions in smoke emissions, avoided methane release, cleaner cattle sheds, and reduced need for fuelwood, as also recognised by **86% of respondents linking biogas to less indoor smoke and 75% to improved soil fertility** (n=272).

11.6 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project is well aligned with the CSR priorities of **Infosys Limited**, which emphasise support for initiatives that promote **environmental sustainability, rural development and livelihood enhancement**. The biogas project directly contributes to these thematic areas by enabling clean energy access, reducing greenhouse-gas emissions, improving women's health, and supporting eco-friendly agricultural practices among small and marginal farmers.

The project is also aligned with the following **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)[61].**

SDG 1 – No poverty: By reducing household expenditure on LPG, fuelwood, and chemical fertilisers, and by enabling additional income through dairy, kitchen gardening, and slurry-related enterprises, the project strengthens household economic resilience and contributes to poverty reduction among rural families.

SDG 3 – Good health and well-being: By replacing traditional biomass cookstoves with clean biogas, the project reduces household exposure to smoke and indoor air pollution, leading to better respiratory health outcomes for women and children.

SDG 5 – Gender equality: The project reduces the drudgery associated with fuelwood collection, freeing up significant time for women to engage in productive, educational, or income-generating activities, thereby enhancing their participation in household and community decision-making.

SDG 7 – Affordable and clean energy: The biogas units provide households with a reliable, renewable, and smoke-free source of energy for food preparation, reducing dependence on fuelwood and LPG.

SDG 8 – Decent work and economic growth: The project supports rural employment through the creation of technician roles, improves farm productivity, and enables micro-enterprise opportunities such as slurry sales and dairy enhancement contributing to sustained rural economic growth.

SDG 13 – Climate action: By reducing methane emissions from cattle dung and the use of non-renewable biomass, the project contributes to measurable greenhouse-gas mitigation in accordance with Gold Standard methodologies.

[61] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

SDG 15 – Life on land: Reduced dependence on fuelwood eases pressure on forests, helping conserve biodiversity and protect ecologically sensitive landscapes in the forest-fringe regions of Karnataka.

SDG 17 – Partnerships for the goals: The project exemplifies strong cross-sector collaboration between Infosys Limited, SKP and rural communities. This partnership-driven model enabled large-scale adoption, effective maintenance systems, and long-term sustainability of the intervention.

11.7 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

11.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: From conventional farming to success with organic farming

Ramesh (name changed), a small paddy farmer from a forest-fringe village in Karnataka, cultivates about two acres of land. For years, his family depended on fuelwood for food preparation, and his wife spent long hours collecting wood from nearby forests. Their kitchen was often filled with smoke, causing discomfort and frequent coughing among household members. On his farm, Ramesh followed partially conventional practices, applying chemical fertilisers when affordable. His paddy yield hovered around 10 quintals, and he sold his produce at the regular market rate of ₹ 2,000–2,500 per quintal, earning just enough to meet household needs. Cattle dung from his shed was mostly left unused in open heaps behind the house.

The situation changed when Ramesh received a household biogas unit under the Infosys project. The installation provided his family with a clean, smokeless source of cooking fuel. For the first time in years, his wife no longer had to travel daily to collect fuelwood, and their kitchen environment improved significantly. The biogas unit also produced nutrient-rich slurry, which Ramesh began applying to his paddy fields after guidance from SKP field staff.

Over the following months, he observed the soil becoming softer and more fertile. His next harvest showed a clear improvement, with his paddy yield rising from 10 to nearly 12 quintals, an increase of around 20 percent. Encouraged by this change, Ramesh shifted completely to organic farming and began selling his produce as organic paddy. Local buyers and traders offered ₹ 4,000–4,500 per quintal, almost double the earlier price. His income grew both from the higher yield and the premium price, giving him greater confidence in organic methods.

Today, Ramesh feels the biogas unit has transformed both his home and his farm. His family cooks in a clean, smoke-free kitchen, and the time saved from fuelwood collection is invested in farm care and household work. The slurry has eliminated his dependence on chemical fertilisers, lowering input costs and improving soil health. He is now an advocate of organic farming in his village and encourages other farmers to adopt similar practices.

“The soil has improved, and our home has improved. This one unit helped us change everything,” he shared during the field visit.

Case Story 2: A kitchen garden that sparked confidence and boosted income

Lakshmi* (name changed), a woman farmer from a small village in Karnataka, lives with her family near a forested area. Before the project, she spent several hours each week collecting fuelwood for food preparation. Her traditional mud chulha filled the kitchen with thick smoke, causing constant irritation to her eyes and making breathing difficult for her and her children. With much of her day consumed by household chores and fuelwood collection, she found it difficult to maintain a kitchen garden, even though she had a small patch of land behind her home.

After receiving a household biogas unit through the Infosys project, Lakshmi's daily routine changed significantly. The smokeless biogas stove made food preparation easier and healthier, and the time saved from fuelwood collection allowed her to focus on productive activities. An additional benefit came from the slurry outlet, which carried nutrient-rich slurry directly from the digester to her small farm patch behind the house.

Lakshmi began using this slurry as the primary fertiliser for a narrow bed where she planted okra (ladyfinger). To improve soil texture even further, she mixed in dry compost made from fallen leaves, grass, and plant residue, creating a rich, organic growing medium. With minimal effort, her plants grew quickly and remained healthy without the use of chemical fertilisers.

Within weeks, Lakshmi was able to harvest 4–5 kilograms of okra per week. The fresh vegetables supported her family's diet, while the surplus was sold locally, giving her a small but steady weekly income. She used this for her children's school supplies and minor household needs.

The change also improved her confidence. Neighbours visited her garden to see the results, and she encouraged other women to try using biogas slurry and simple composting to start their own vegetable patches. Her kitchen is now smoke-free, and the health of her family has improved due to reduced exposure to fuelwood smoke.

Lakshmi feels proud of the transformation in her home and garden. The biogas unit not only reduced her workload but also enabled her to earn an income from a small piece of land she could not previously manage.

"Earlier all my time went into collecting wood. Now the slurry feeds my plants, and I earn from what I grow," she shared with satisfaction.

12. Project 9: Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Maharashtra

12.1 About the Project

According to the Census 2011, 68.8% of India's population lives in rural areas.[62] The majority of rural households depend on traditional cookstoves fuelled by wood and biomass for food preparation. The combustion of these fuels generates **indoor air pollution, causing numerous health problems**, especially respiratory illnesses that disproportionately affect women and children.[63] Despite the launch of various schemes such as **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY),** to promote cleaner fuels like Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG), many rural households continue to depend on conventional food preparation practices. This is due to various factors such as the **lack of awareness, cultural preferences, unaffordability of refill cylinders and limited local availability**.

As part of its **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative**, Infosys Limited, in collaboration with Yuva Rural Association (YRA), launched **"Bringing circularity through Biogas installation in Maharashtra"**, a biogas project aimed at **promoting clean cooking solutions.** By replacing traditional cookstoves with biogas units fuelled by animal dung, **the project focused on reducing emissions, and bringing about social, economic and environmental benefits**. In Phase 1 of the project, the goal was to install **Sistema Biogas Units** for rural households in Maharashtra.[64]

Figure 122: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics[65]

Under this project, the following key activities were undertaken:[66]

1. **Beneficiary selection:** Beneficiaries were selected based on several criteria, including having an annual household income of less than ₹ 2 lakh and possessing less than 5 acres of agricultural land. This indicates that the selection criteria aimed to identify economically vulnerable and socially marginalized households with limited land and resources, who rely on traditional and less sustainable fuel and waste disposal methods.

2. **Appointment of Field Operators and installation of units:** Field Operators, who were local youth, were appointed by YRA to support with beneficiary mobilisation and data collection, installation of kits, conducting training sessions, performing repairs and maintenance, and monitoring biogas usage. Biogas units (including digesters producing 2m³ of biogas per day), gas pipelines and cookstoves were installed with their support.

3. **Awareness and training:** Beneficiaries received training on the proper use, maintenance and repair of the biogas units.

[62] Source: Census of India website
[63] Source: World Health Organisation Fact Sheet on Household Air Pollution
[64] Source: Memorandum of Understanding between Infosys Limited and Yuva Rural Association (YRA) signed on 28 February 2025 and beneficiary lists shared by YRA
[65] Source: Project information shared by Infosys Limited during kick-off call
[66] Source: Project details shared by Yuva Rural Association during the field visit
* Under this project, the biogas units were installed during the period of FY 22 - FY 23 with maintenance continuing until FY 25.

4. **Development and distribution of educational materials:** Materials were prepared and distributed to raise awareness about the project, including flyers detailing the usage guidelines of biogas units and dos and don'ts for proper biogas unit management, and wall paintings highlighting the advantages of biogas technology.

5. **Monthly meetings and annual gatherings:** Regular monthly meetings and annual gatherings were held to provide information on biogas unit maintenance, slurry usage, organic farming methods, kitchen garden practices, and the sustainability of biogas units.

12.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment study employed a **comprehensive approach** to evaluate the project's social impact. The process commenced with a **kick-off meeting** with the Infosys Limited team, followed by a briefing call with the YRA team. This step helped in obtaining insights into the specific support provided under this project. Following this, PWCALLP received the following project documents for desk review:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed between Infosys Limited and Yuva Rural Association, outlining the key activities and other operational modalities
- **Database of project beneficiaries** to prepare the field and sampling plan
- **Project background and progress reports** highlighting key achievements and challenges

Accordingly, the team conducted a desk review of the above documents, incorporating insights gathered from the kick-off meeting. This process aided in developing **the assessment framework** and determining the key stakeholders for engagement. This research study employed a **structured approach to assess the project's impact** using IRECS framework and SROI (Social Return on Investment) method. IRECS focuses on gauging the impact of development programmes on parameters of **Inclusiveness, Relevance, Effectiveness (and efficiency), Convergence, and Sustainability** giving an overall assessment of the project in terms of producing the intended project outcomes. It also helps in gaining a qualitative understanding of the impact created, stakeholder perception, and the extent of collaboration with other partners. Additionally, the **SROI method helps to measure and account for value created** quantifying the social, environmental, and economic value generated by the project and helps in assessing the costs and benefits.

The impact assessment study employed **a mixed method approach**, combining **both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies**. **A quantitative survey** was conducted with beneficiaries who have received biogas unit to gather insights on the project's impact. Alongside, **qualitative interactions – including In-depth Interviews (IDIs), Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) –** were carried out with key project stakeholders. This approach enabled the exploration of personal experiences and offered a deeper understanding of stakeholders' perspectives.

Key stakeholders were identified and tailored tools were prepared for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection.

Figure 123: Research Design for the Study

- **Quantitative survey** with **279** beneficiaries who have received biogas units
- **Eight Focused Group Discussion (FGD) each** with Beneficiaries
- **Eight In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Field Operators
- **Three Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)** with Panchayat representatives
- **One Key Informant Interview (KII)** with Forest Official
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with YRA representative
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Limited team

Out of 10,289 beneficiaries, a **sample size of 272** was calculated based on **90% confidence level and 5% margin of error**. During the field data collection, **279 beneficiaries were surveyed (in total) due to increased mobilisation**. This sample was proportionately distributed across the blocks according to the total number of beneficiaries in each block. The details are shared in Table below.

Table 45: Distribution of quantitative sample across blocks

District	Block	Sample size
Bhandara	Lakhni	6
	Mohadi	52
	Tumsar	103
Nagpur	Mouda	28
	Parseoni	35
	Ramtek	30
	Saoner	25
Total		**279**

12.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key stakeholders.

a. Challenges Prior to the Project

The beneficiaries and implementing partner highlighted the following challenges prior to the project:

- **Considerable time spent by households due to dependence on traditional fuels:** Before the project, households relied almost entirely on fuelwood as their primary cooking fuel, forcing them to spend significant amount of time (almost 60 days per year) collecting fuelwood. The collection and disposal of cattle dung in pits also involved physical labour for households. These efforts limited opportunities, especially for women, to engage in productive activities, thereby perpetuating economic vulnerability. It also left them with minimal time for other activities like participation in SHGs and community development.
- **Poor health due to inefficient food preparation methods:** Managing smoky environments with traditional stoves that required frequent relighting led to widespread health problems in the community, including eye irritation, asthma, and other respiratory diseases, impacting the quality of life for both women and children.
- **Higher expenditure for households:** Purchasing fuelwood and LPG cylinders placed an added economic burden of households of up to ₹ 10,000 annually. Additionally, there was a heavy dependence on chemical fertilisers on farms, as organic alternatives were not widely available or accessible. The declining soil fertility from use of chemical fertilizers reduced crop yield and lowered prices for the produce in markets.
- **Environmental degradation**: Disposal of cattle dung in pits and open spaces generated methane emissions, contributed to pollution and negatively impacting cleanliness. Collection of fuelwood contributed to deforestation, environmental degradation, and a loss of local biodiversity.
- **Human-animal conflict:** Prior to the project, community members spent extensive time in the forest collecting fuelwood, which led to **frequent human-animal conflicts**. There were several reported cases of people being attacked and killed by wild animals in these villages.
- **Limited awareness and access to clean food preparation technologies:** There was limited knowledge about **cleaner** alternatives like biogas and communities faced challenges in accessing these technologies. Furthermore, inadequate infrastructure and lack of sustained community-level support hindered the adoption and long-term maintenance of clean solutions, limiting their overall impact and reach.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

1. Beneficiary profile

Out of the respondents surveyed (n=279):

70% were female and 30% were male

19% had a **Below Poverty Line (BPL) card**, while 81% did not.

100% reported rearing cattle, with **an average of 4 cattle per household**.

94% relied primarily on farming their own land for their livelihood, while **6% depended on agricultural labour activities**.

The average **household size was 5 members** and **84% had only a single earning member**.

- As seen in Figure below, **67% were over 40 years** and 62% had **completed secondary education** (n=279).

Figure 124: Age group of respondents (n=279)

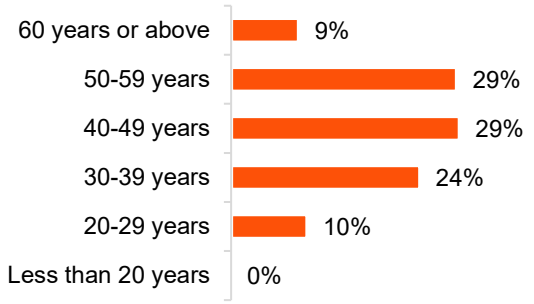
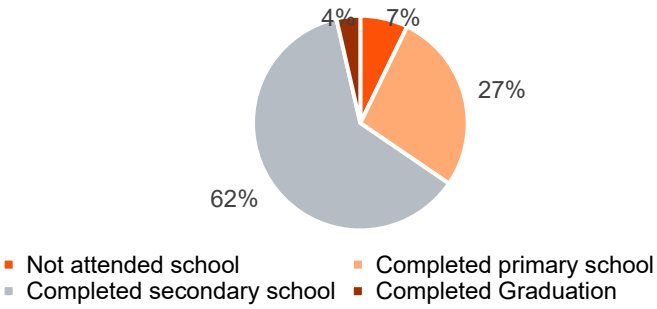


Figure 125: Highest education level of respondents (n=279)



- Figure 163 highlights that **48% of respondents own 1-2 acres of agricultural land**, while 42% own between 2-5 acres (n=279), indicating that majority of the beneficiaries were small and marginal farmers.[67] **35% of respondents** (n=279) reported an annual household income between **₹ 25,000 and ₹ 49,999**, followed by **34% with an income between ₹ 50,000 and ₹ 74,999**.

Figure 126: Landholding pattern of respondents (n=279)

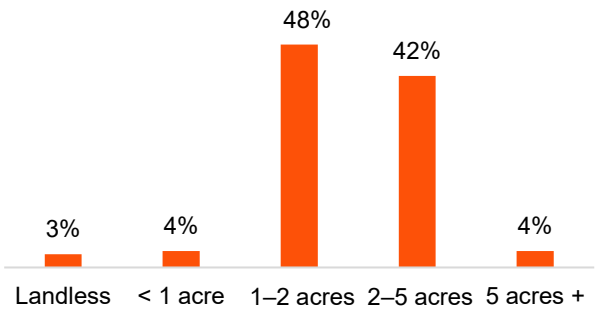
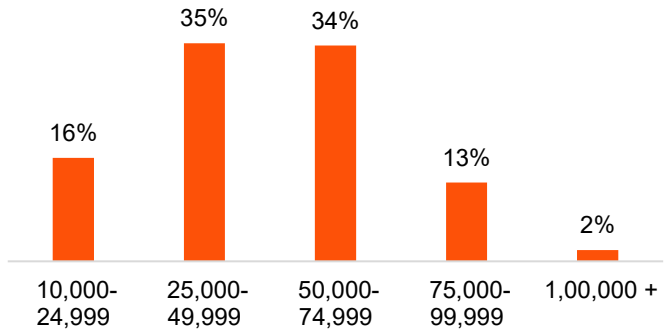


Figure 127: Respondents' annual household income (n=279)



[67] Although the beneficiary selection criteria specified that recipient households must own 5 acres of land or less, a few households who owned slightly larger plots were included in the project.

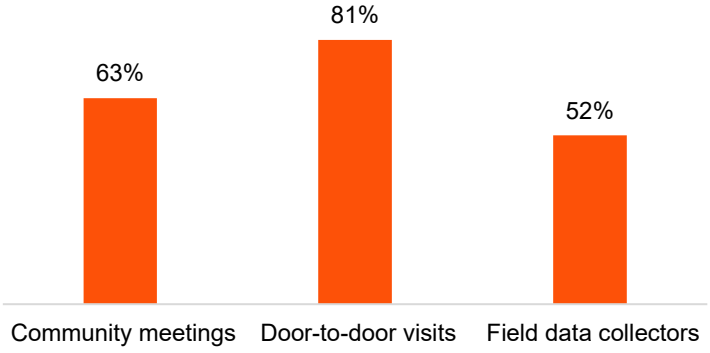
2. Heightened Community Involvement and Support in Project Implementation

- As per the YRA team, key stakeholders such as **Gram Panchayat members, forest officials (where applicable), and beneficiaries** were involved throughout the project implementation. Following an introductory meeting with villagers, YRA team conducted **home visits to collect relevant data**. Beneficiaries were then selected based on criteria predefined by Infosys Limited and the YRA team (shared earlier). This inclusive approach ensured **transparency and fostered community involvement** throughout the project, enabling shared sustainability in the long run.

Figure 128: IEC materials used for beneficiary mobilisation

- During installation of the biogas unit, beneficiaries were required to **dig a pit measuring 7x7x3 feet, arrange iron angles, and fill it with 450 kg of dung and 900 litres of water.** According to YRA team, active involvement from an early stage **strengthened beneficiaries' ownership** of the project, which was crucial for ensuring the long-term sustainability of the biogas units. **89%** of respondents were **aware that Infosys Limited supported** the biogas project (n=279).

Figure 129: Sources of information about the project



Multiple responses given, total may not add up to 100%

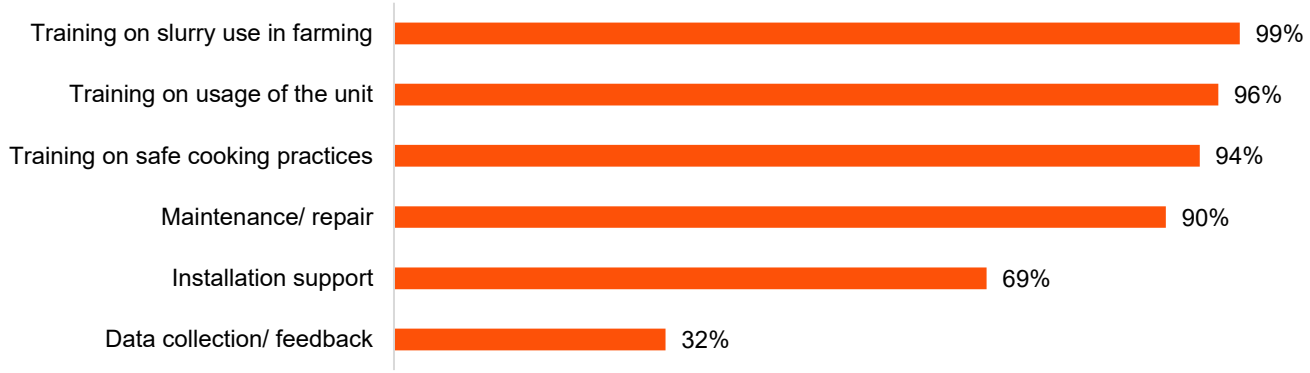
- When asked how they learned about the project, **81% indicated it was through door-to-door visits** by the implementing partner, while 63% cited community meetings organised in their villages (Figure 166).

- All beneficiaries reported that Field Operators hired by YRA visited their villages, with **71% indicating these visits were frequent (at least once a month)** (n=279).

- As seen in Figure below, the purpose of these visits was largely to **provide training** on the use of slurry in farms (99%), proper use of the biogas unit (96%), and safe food preparation practices (94%) (n=279). Beneficiaries received **training to ensure long-term sustainability** on various topics, including:

  - The **correct ratio** of dung to water, with water being twice the quantity of dung
  - **Precautions** to be taken while adding dung to the system
  - **Proper handling** of the inlet and outlet mechanisms
  - The **importance** of adding water to the Pressure Relief Valve (PRV)
  - **Frequency of replacing** the iron mesh in the H2S filter
  - The **significance** of placing the centre weight on the biogas system and the appropriate weight to use
  - The **process** for removing water from the gas pipe
  - **Maintenance** of the cookstove button

Figure 130: Purpose of visits by Field Operators (n=279)



Multiple responses given, total may not add to 100%

- Almost all respondents (99%) received biogas units in FY 22. The comprehensive training **empowered beneficiaries to effectively operate and maintain their biogas units**, contributing to the project's sustainability and impact. **100% reported they were using the biogas unit** at the time of the survey (n=279).

Figure 131: IEC materials distributed to the beneficiaries during the training

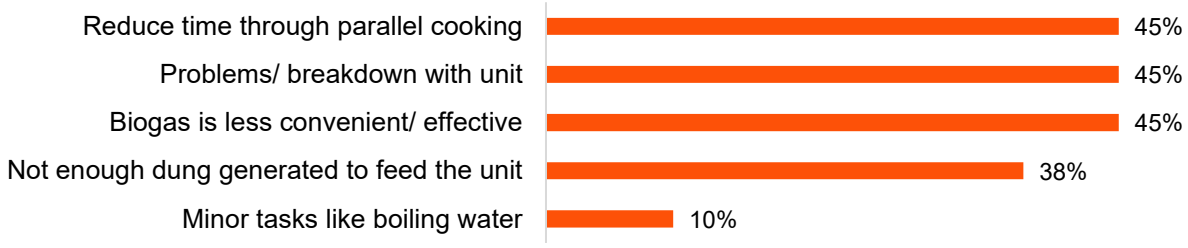
- Beneficiaries shared that they were able to **handle minor issues themselves, such as removing water from the gas pipeline**. For major problems like **chokes, punctures in the digester, or damage to the cookstove button**, they contacted the YRA team through **a helpline and receive timely support.**

- According to a Field Operator, YRA established a **WhatsApp group** connecting biogas unit beneficiaries, **enabling them to promptly report issues by sharing descriptions and photographs**. This platform **improved communication** and allowed field operators to respond quickly and **resolve problems efficiently**. Among respondents, **22% (n=279) experienced issues with their biogas units** and contacted field operators for support. Of those (n=60), **17% had their issues resolved within 1-2 days**, while 83% reported resolution within a week.

3. Reduce time spent in domestic labour and increased efficiency

- Among respondents, 99% used traditional chulhas (open-fire stoves), and 59% used LPG stoves during fuelwood shortages prior to the project (n=279). After biogas was introduced, **99% of households reported using biogas** as their primary cooking fuel.

Figure 132: Reasons for continuing to use other cooking fuels (n=40)



Multiple responses given, total may not add up to 100%

- 14% stated that they **still used alternate cooking fuels** in addition to biogas (n=279). These users (n=40) cited multiple reasons such as **saving time through parallel cooking (45%)**, **problems or breakdowns** with the biogas unit (45%) and inconvenience with using the biogas unit (45%) (Figure 169).

Figure 133: Digester of the biogas unit

- Prior to the project, **96% of respondents used to collect cattle dung in pits near farms** to be applied as fertiliser during the agricultural season (n=279). Following the project's implementation, **100% of respondents reported utilising their cattle dung for biogas production**, indicating a complete shift towards more efficient and sustainable dung management practices (n=279).

- Women spent significant time of **112 minutes per day on average** carrying cattle dung to pits near the farm or road. With the installation of biogas units close to home, time spent **reduced to an average of 42 minutes per day**, which also resulted in reduced physical effort in daily household labour (Refer Table below).

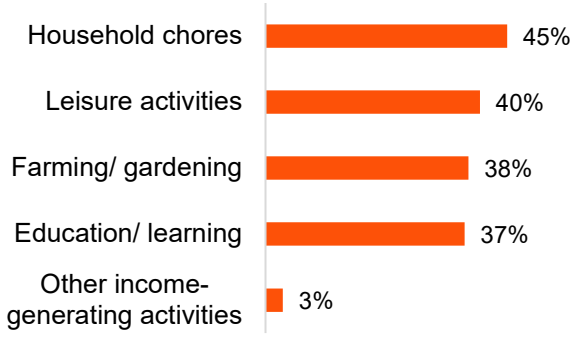
- **93% of respondents** reported that biogas units **reduced time spent gathering fuelwood, from 119 minutes to 24 minutes per day** (n=279). Women beneficiaries shared that before the project, they spent **2-3 months** a year during the summer **collecting fuelwood from the forest**. After installation, the units provide sufficient cooking fuel, saving considerable time.

- **97% of respondents reported a reduction in food preparation time** due to the use of biogas (n=279). Prior to the project, they spent **143 minutes on food preparation** (depending on their family size) due to the frequent need to refuel traditional stoves. This demanding process limited their ability to carry out other household tasks during food preparation. Following the installation of biogas units, **the time spent was reduced to 72 minutes per day**. As a result, women reported having **more flexibility to carry out additional household chores** while preparing food, such as cleaning and fetching water from the handpump.

Table 46: Time spent on various tasks (minutes per day) (n=279)

Icon	Task	Time spent per day (Before and after intervention)	Time saved per day
	Disposal of dung	112 → 42 minutes	70 minutes
	Collection of fuelwood	119 → 24 minutes	95 minutes
	Food preparation tasks	143 → 72 minutes	71 minutes

Figure 134: Utilisation of time saved after using



Multiple response question, total may not add to 100%.

- **45% of respondents reported using the time saved from adopting biogas units for household chores**, 40% dedicated more time to leisure activities**,** and 38% invested additional time in farming and gardening (n=279). This reflects the project's role in **enhancing time efficiency and enabling beneficiaries to engage in a broader range of productive and leisure activities**.

- **3% of respondents have initiated income-generating activities** such as expanding animal husbandry or dairy businesses by increasing their livestock (n=279).

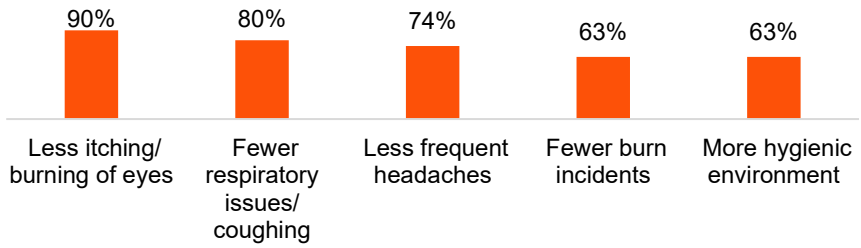
> "We feel fortunate to have the biogas unit, which has benefited us in many ways. It has significantly reduced the drudgery and time spent collecting fuelwood from the forest. Additionally, it has shortened our food preparation time. Previously, we spent several hours and couldn't attend to other tasks, but now the biogas unit allows us to complete food preparation quickly and manage other household work."
>
> **Narrated by women during interactions**

4. Improved health outcomes and reduced health expenditure

Figure 135: Cookstove of biogas unit

- During qualitative discussions, women reported that combustion of fuelwood generated heavy smoke, **causing various health issues during food preparation, including respiratory problems, itching and burning eyes, headaches, and occasional burn injuries**. The installation of biogas units provided clean cooking solutions, and by eliminating dependence on fuelwood, reducing these health challenges. **77% reported improved health conditions** due to the clean cooking solution provided by the unit (n=279).

Figure 136: Health improvements experienced after installation of biogas unit (n=279)



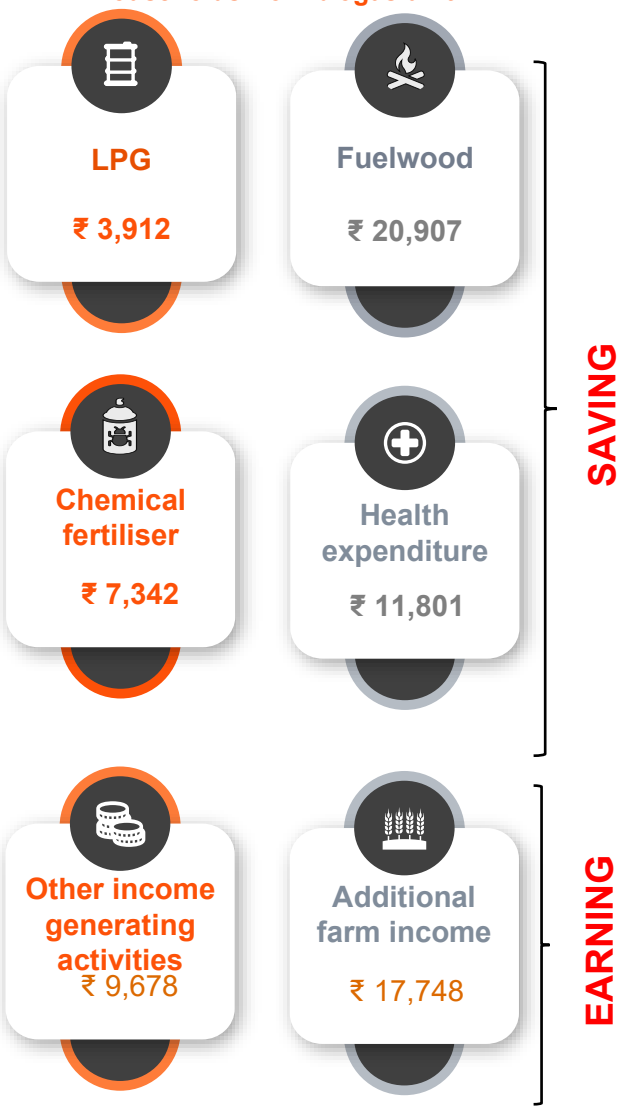
Multiple response question, total may not add to 100%.

- **90% of respondents noted a reduction in eye irritation, 80% experienced fewer respiratory issues and coughing**, and 74% reported a decrease in headaches due to using biogas for cooking (n=279).

> "We noticed that burning firewood produced a lot of smoke, which worsened health problems for asthma patients, causing coughing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness. Since the installation of biogas units, our use of firewood has greatly decreased, leading to less smoke and an improvement in the respiratory health of those affected by asthma in our community."
>
> **Narrated by community members during our interactions**

5. Increased savings and greater financial well-being

Figure 137: Annual financial benefits for households from biogas unit



- According to a **forest department official**, communities in the project area were **heavily dependent on forest resources for fuelwood**, contributing significantly to deforestation. Despite ongoing efforts by the forest department to reduce this pressure, villagers continued to collect fuelwood from the forest. Since the introduction of the biogas project, which provided a sustainable cooking fuel alternative, the **community has largely stopped relying on forest fuelwood collection**.

- Survey data revealed that fuelwood collected per household **dropped from 240 kg prior to the project to 27 kg monthly** after its implementation (n=279). Beneficiaries explained that fuelwood is now primarily sourced from their own farms and used for boiling water or in situations when biogas production decreases, such as on rainy days.

- **97%** of respondents reported a **reduction in cooking fuel expenditure**, achieving **annual savings of ₹ 20,907/- on fuelwood expenses** (n=270).

- Additionally, the project led to a decline in LPG cylinder use. **Households averaged 4 cylinders per year before the project**, which reduced to **1 cylinder annually post-implementation** (n=279). During qualitative discussions, beneficiaries shared that they no longer need to purchase cylinders regularly and only keep them as a backup for unforeseen issues with the biogas units. The **reduction in LPG usage has enabled beneficiaries to save a n average of ₹ 3,912 annually** (n=237).

- Community members reported that frequent health problems caused by smoke from traditional food preparation methods **resulted in substantial healthcare expenses at household level**. According to the surveyed respondents, the **average annual health expenditure before the biogas project was ₹ 21,314** and the reported average annual **savings on health-related costs post installation was ₹ 11,801** (n=277).

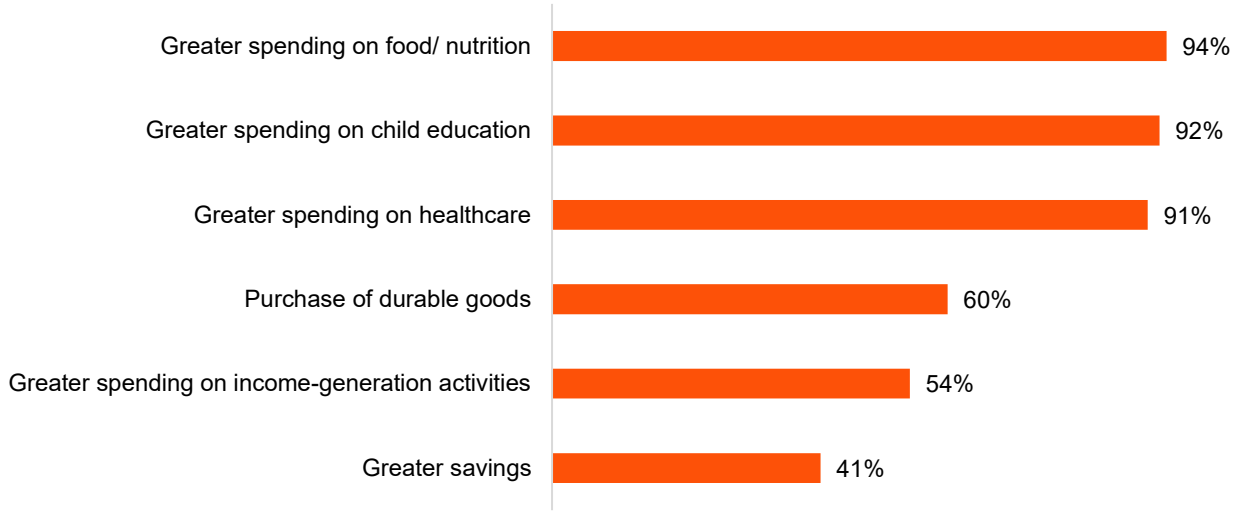
- Farmers reported that through the project, they received **training on the importance and benefits of slurry**, which is the nu**trient-rich, semi-liquid byproduct of biogas production used as an organic fertiliser and soil conditioner**. Initial hesitation to use slurry due to concerns about potential crop damage was overcome as farmers observed multiple benefits after adopting it, including**:**

    - increase in earthworm population
    - improved soil water retention
    - enhanced soil fertility
    - higher crop yields

- Farmers now regularly use slurry, reducing their reliance on chemical fertilisers, and leading to an **average cost savings of ₹ 7,342 (n=276) on their purchase**.

- On average, **overall farm income increased by ₹ 17,748 annually** following the installation of the biogas unit. Additionally, time saved allowed women to engage in income-generating activities, which led to an additional **average annual income of ₹ 9,678 for the 9 households**.

Figure 138: Utilisation of expenditure saved on fuelwood and LPG



Multiple response question, total may not add to 100%.

- Savings from reduced fuelwood and LPG expenses have enabled beneficiaries to **allocate more resources toward essential needs**. As seen in above Figure, **94% of the respondents reported increased spending on food and nutrition**, **92% increased investment in child education**, and **91% enhanced expenditure on better healthcare**, reflecting improved household well-being and prioritisation of critical areas (n=279).

- The project has also created valuable employment opportunities for youth who might otherwise have faced unemployment. **145 local youth were engaged as Field Operators in FY 21 and 99 in FY 22**, earning approximately **₹ 1,200 per biogas unit installed** and completing an average of **30 installations per month**. The income from this job exceeds other opportunities available in the area and has enabled them to support their households. Some Field Operators have invested in **new livelihood ventures such as improved-breed poultry farming, goat rearing, and leasing of farm equipment**.

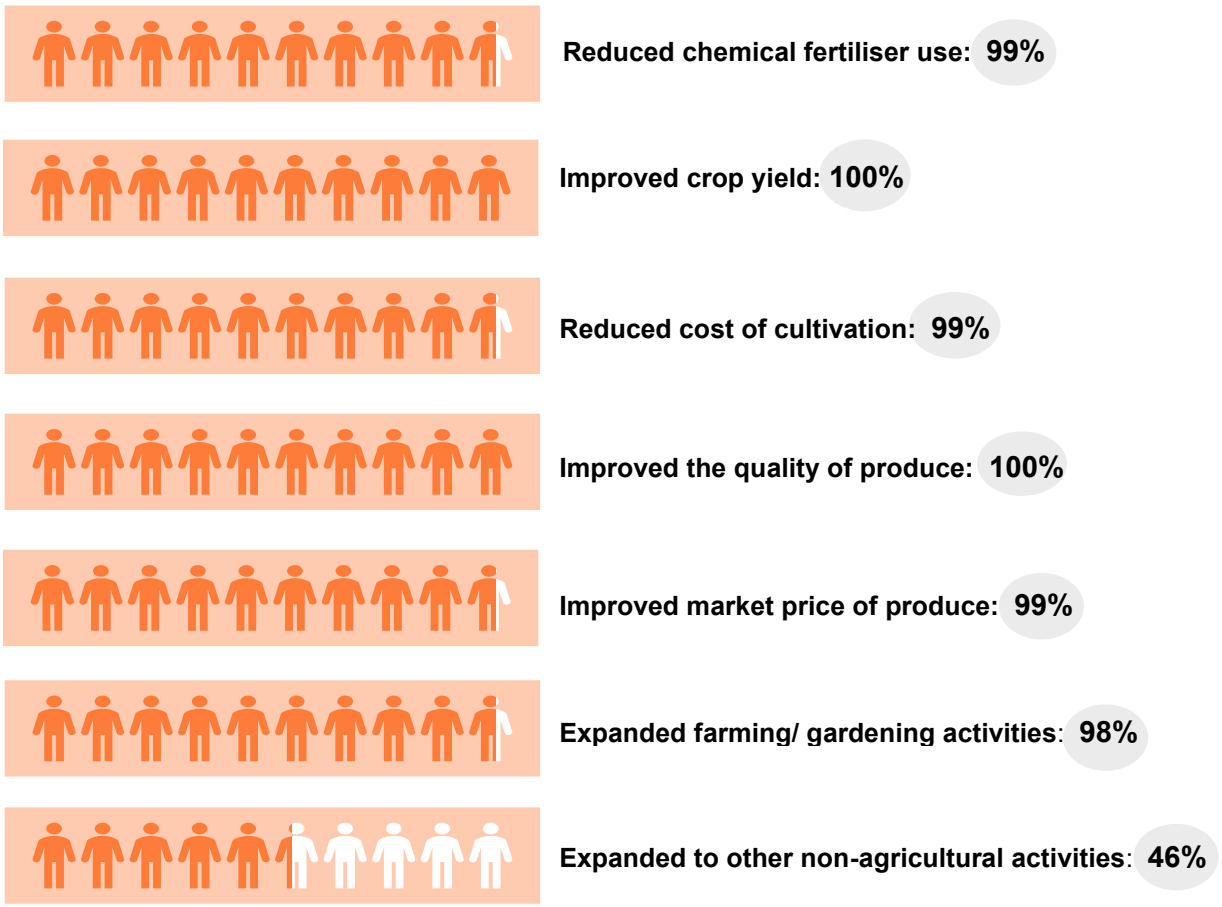
6. Strengthened sustainable farming practices and improved environmental conditions

- Respondents reported that biogas units produce an average of **37 kg of slurry per day**, ranging from 30 to 50 kg (n=279). Farmers, having gained awareness of slurry benefits through the project, **consistently use 94% of the slurry in their farms and kitchen gardens** (n=279).

- There has been a shift toward organic farming, **with 29% of their land now under organic cultivation** (n=279). During discussions, beneficiaries shared that they **grow vegetables in kitchen gardens using slurry**, and some have converted paddy fields to adopt organic farming methods.

- Regarding slurry application methods, **82% of respondents apply slurry directly to the fields**, 47% mix it with irrigation water for better utilisation, and 45% use it as compost combined with farm waste (n=279). **Slurry application has yielded notable benefits**: 98% of respondents reported **improved soil fertility**, 94% observed **enhanced water retention in the soil**, and 95% experienced a **reduction in pest attacks on their crops** (n=279).

Figure 139: Impact of slurry availability and usage as reported by beneficiaries (n=279)



- Above figure reveals the impact of the project, where **100%** of the beneficiaries reported **improved crop yield** and **quality of produce**, **99%** reported **reduced chemical fertiliser use** and **cost of cultivation** and **98%** reported that they **expanded their farming and gardening activities**.

- Farmers reported that **paddy, cotton, and Toor dal** are the major crops grown in the project area. They highlighted that reliance on **chemical fertilisers had increased their cultivation costs while negatively affecting crop yields**. Since the introduction of the biogas project, beneficiaries have been using slurry as **organic manure, which has both increased crop yields and reduced cultivation costs**.

Figure 140: Crop yield (quintals per acre) before and after installation of biogas unit

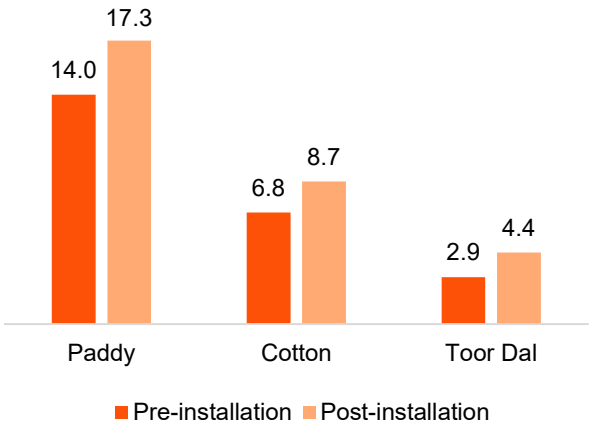
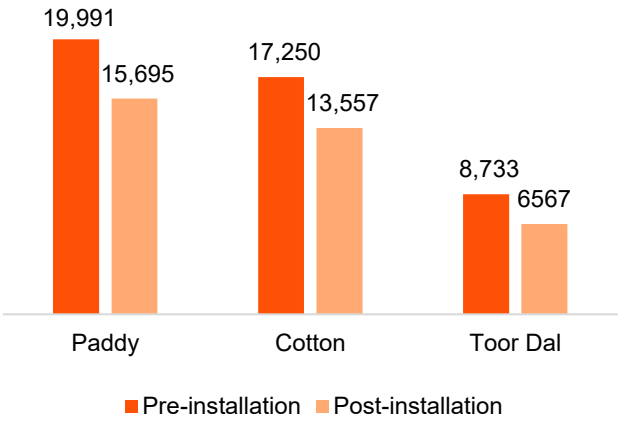


Figure 141: Cost of cultivation (₹ per acre) before and after installation of biogas unit



- All respondents reported improved crop yields due to slurry application (n=279). As illustrated in above figure, **paddy yields increased from 14 to 17.3 quintals per acre (24% increase)**, cotton yields rose from 6.8 to 8.7

quintals per acre (28% increase), and Toor yields improved from 2.9 to 4.4 quintals per acre (52% increase) following the adoption of slurry.

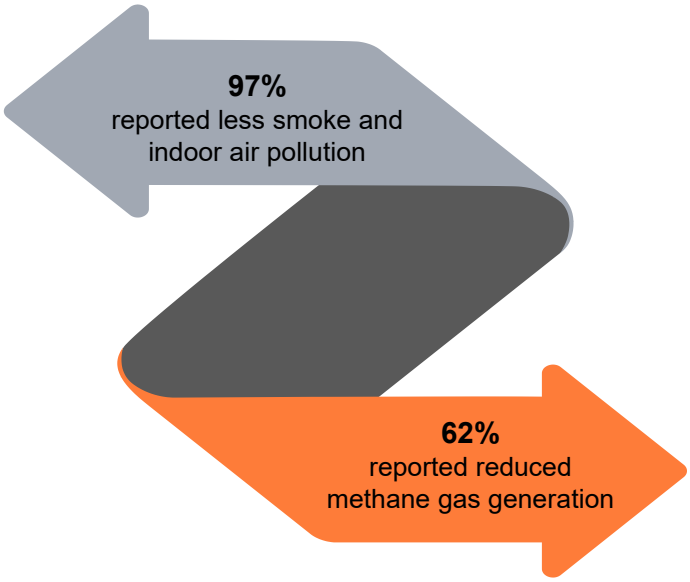
- As reported, the average cost of **cultivating paddy decreased from ₹ 19,991 per acre** before adopting slurry to **₹ 15,695 per acre** after its adoption, **reflecting a 21% reduction**. Similarly, the cost of **cotton cultivation reduced from ₹ 17,250 to ₹ 13,557 per acre**, also a 21% decrease. For **Toor dal**, the average cultivation cost fell from **₹ 8,733 to ₹ 6,567 per acre**, marking a 25% reduction (Figure 179). These cost savings highlight the economic benefits of integrating organic slurry into farming practices.

- All respondents **(100%, n=279) reported an improvement in the quality of their agricultural produce** due to the use of slurry on their farms, enabling them to secure higher market prices. Additionally, 62% of respondents experienced increased income because of the improved produce quality.

- As shared by a Forest Department official, the **effective use of biogas units** and reduced dependence on the forest for fuelwood collection led to a significant **reduction in deforestation**, **improved forest conditions**, and a **decrease in human-animal conflicts in the area**. Gram Panchayat members also observed **increased greenery in the forest**, which has contributed to a rise in the number of animals, birds, and honeybees, reflecting **overall biodiversity improvement** in the area.

- Community members reported **environmental improvements** within the village as well. Previously, **heavy smoke was common during morning and evening periods** due to widespread fuelwood use during food preparation. Since the adoption of biogas units, smoke and indoor air pollution have been substantially reduced, with 97% of respondents confirming this change (Figure 180) (n=279).

Figure 142: Awareness of environmental benefits of biogas utilisation (n=279)



- Additionally, before the project, most households **disposed of cattle dung in pits near farms or roadsides**, which **contributed to waste accumulation and increased methane gas emissions**, a factor linked to local temperature rise. Following biogas installation, approximately **90% of cattle dung is utilised in biogas production for cooking fuel** as reported during qualitative interaction. This shift has not only provided a clean cooking solution but also helped reduce environmental pollution. Notably, 62% of respondents reported that the biogas units contributed to lowering methane emissions (Figure 180) (n=279).

> “The biogas project has been instrumental in preventing villagers from going to the forest to collect fuelwood. Prior to this project, we provided villagers with LPG cylinders and supported refills for a period to encourage LPG adoption. However, once the refilling support ended, they reverted to collecting wood from the forest. This project offered an opportunity to align our conservation goals with community needs. We mobilised villagers by demonstrating biogas units at pilot sites, after which they agreed to install units in their homes. As a result, villagers do not rely on forest fuelwood, leading to improved forest conditions and a reduction in human-animal conflicts in the area.”
>
> **Narrated by a forest department official during interactions**

7. **Overall beneficiary perception and sustainability of the project**

- **94% of respondents were highly satisfied with the project**. **97%** reported that the project has provided substantial benefits to the community, and **100% would recommend** the use of biogas units to others in their community (n=279). Beneficiaries highlighted multiple advantages, **most notably the significant reduction in time, effort, and costs associated with fuelwood and LPG**. **100% of respondents indicated that the project has enhanced household safety and improved financial security** by reducing prior fuelwood expenses (n=279).

- Field Operators noted that those **who did not installed biogas units at the time of implementation now regret not doing so**, as they continue to incur **annual LPG costs of ₹ 10,000–12,000**. Witnessing the benefits enjoyed by biogas users, non-beneficiaries have increasingly expressed interest in adopting the technology.

- **88% of respondents rated the Field Operators' support as excellent**, and 12% rated it as good, reflecting high satisfaction with the assistance provided (n=279). Beneficiaries reported that though they received **comprehensive training on managing daily operations and minor issues of the biogas units**, they **still rely on field operators/ YRA team to resolve major problems**. During qualitative discussions, it was observed that **a centalised strategy to ensure local support for advanced troubleshooting** or to **establish a local supply chain for spare parts in all villages was absent**.

- The **most frequent issue faced in the project was the frequent breakage of the cookstove button**, for which spares were not available locally. When this occurred, beneficiaries had to **wait for YRA to order the replacement button from the vendor and the Field Operator to install it.** This took between 2-7 days.

- As reported by the YRA team, **Urja GUTS[68] have been formed in a few villages to promote community cooperation and ensure long-term sustainability of the biogas units.** Members contribute ₹ **100 each to a collective fund**. In case of maintenance issues, beneficiaries can borrow money from the fund to cover repair costs, thereby supporting the continued functioning and longevity of their biogas systems. However, **this system, which would be beneficial if expanded to all project areas, is not in place**.

12.4 SROI Estimation

This study also aimed at estimating the Social Return on Investment (SROI) value for the project. The SROI estimation helps in understanding the broader impact and value generated for the stakeholders and the society by going beyond the traditional financial metrics.

a. Establishing the Impact

The foremost step for calculating the SROI value was to prepare the impact map. The impact map was prepared after careful analysis of the project documents and discussions with project stakeholders. Post this, the specific benefits (from the project) for each beneficiary stakeholder of the project were identified. The benefits were then assigned the appropriate financial proxies, which were arrived at using the survey results or the secondary research, for calculating the overall impact of the project from FY 22 to till FY 26. The overall impact is calculated after adjusting the deadweight, displacement, attribution (by others), and drop-off factors from the year-wise benefits.

Deadweight

Deadweight refers to the portion of benefits that would have occurred even without the project. For the purpose of this analysis, deadweight factor of 20% has been assumed to account for the possibility that a share of the outcomes

[68] Urja Gut (energy group) is a Self-Help Group formed at the village level to manage and sustain the use of renewable energy solutions like biogas units (https://guts.org.in/about/).

could have occurred independently of the intervention, given the availability and coverage of parallel initiatives, including schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, in the project geography.

Displacement

Displacement is the component which informs the assessor on how much one outcome of the project may influence any other outcome. During the assessment and research for this project, there was no evidence of any displacement noted or reported. Hence, the displacement factor is assumed to be 0% for the calculations.

Attribution (by others)

Attribution denotes the estimated share of the total impact attributable to the efforts of external stakeholders. In this analysis, attribution (by others) has been assumed at 25% and 75% to account for the contributions of key stakeholders, including government interventions and beneficiaries' autonomous decisions, such as providing space and labour for the installation of biogas units. This approach acknowledges that a significant share of the observed impact may be influenced by existing government programmes and the independent agency exercised by beneficiaries.

Drop-off

Drop-off represents the decrement in realized benefits or impact over time, attributable to factors such as degradation of performance or external environmental influences. While initial assessment and monitoring phases indicated negligible drop-off, a conservative annual drop-off rate of 2.5% has been assumed for the SROI estimation. This rate corresponds to the proportion of beneficiaries reporting malfunction or subdued operational capacity of their biogas plants annually, thereby enabling a more accurate and longitudinal estimation of sustained project outcomes.

SROI Formula

The impact of the project has been arrived at based on the following calculations:

Impact value for first year	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution)

Impact value for subsequent years	Quantity of change or Number of unique beneficiaries or Number of unique benefit units x Financial Proxy value x (1 – deadweight) x (1 – displacement) x (1 – attribution) + [impact of previous year] x (1 – drop-off)]

Based on the above calculations, the project is estimated to have generated a cumulative benefit or impact of ₹ 39,99,39,189 across a period from FY 23 to FY 26.

Table 47: Impact Map

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
Beneficiary Households (Women and Families)	• Installation of Biogas units in individual households • Training on operation & maintenance of biogas units. • Community mobilization and awareness programs on clean cooking benefits.	• 17,000 biogas units installed. • 17,000 households shifting from traditional to environment friendly, cost-effective cooking solutions. • 17,000 biogas units being utilised.	• Reduction in firewood usage. • Reduction in firewood collection, cooking and cleaning time. • Improved cooking environment (less smoke, soot, carbon residue) and reduction in	• Reduction in fuelwood/ LPG costs. • Time saved redirected to productive/income-generating activities. • Improved household health

Stakeholder	Inputs/Activities	Output	Expected Outcome	Envisioned Impact
			respiratory/eye-related illnesses.	and reduced healthcare costs due to less indoor air pollution.

Table 48: Impact Values

Stakeholder	Benefits	Total value created in FY 22	Total value created in FY 23	Total value created in FY 24	Total value created in FY 25	Total value created in FY 26	Cumulative value created till FY 26
Households	Annual average savings on healthcare costs due to fewer respiratory/eye ailments	₹ 9,96,385	₹ 1,72,37,419	₹ 2,60,35,960	₹ 3,20,22,373	₹ 3,12,21,814	**₹ 10,75,13,950**
	Average annual household savings on fuelwood	₹ 19,91,238	₹ 2,98,82,798	₹ 4,51,35,075	₹ 5,55,12,733	₹ 5,41,24,914	**₹ 18,66,46,758**
	Average annual household savings on LPG Cylinder	₹ 9,81,394	₹ 1,65,15,493	₹ 2,51,53,288	₹ 2,73,59,996	₹ 2,66,75,996	**₹ 9,66,86,167**
	Additional annual income from time freed up due to biogas	₹ 92,374	₹ 15,53,678	₹ 23,65,083	₹ 25,72,748	₹ 25,08,430	**₹ 90,92,314**
Total Impact Created		**₹ 40,61,391**	**₹ 6,51,89,387**	**₹ 9,86,89,406**	**₹ 11,74,67,850**	**₹ 11,45,31,154**	**₹ 39,99,39,189**

Table 49: Financial Proxy Logic

Stakeholder	Benefits	Financial Proxy Explanation	Source(s)
Households	Annual average **savings on healthcare costs** due to fewer respiratory/eye ailments	The proxy is the average estimated annual saving on healthcare costs per household. **This is calculated from survey data identifying the difference between the average monthly expenditure on health that could be attributed to the effects of using traditional cookstove (chulha) fuelled by fuelwood and average monthly expenditure on health when using biogas**. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Average annual household **savings on fuelwood**	The proxy is the average estimated **annual savings households experienced due to the reduced need for fuelwood as a result of using biogas**. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings
	Average annual household	The proxy is the average estimated **annual savings households experienced due to the reduced need for LPG cylinders as a**	Beneficiary survey findings

Stakeholder	Benefits	Financial Proxy Explanation	Source(s)
	savings on LPG Cylinder	**result of using biogas**. This is calculated from survey data. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	
	Additional annual income **from time freed up** due to biogas	The proxy represents estimated income generated by households that used **saved time to undertake income-generating activities (e.g., dairy work, petty trade, livestock care)**. Annual self-reported income increases are used and proportionately extrapolated across relevant respondents. These numbers have been proportionately estimated for the beneficiary universe based on the sample population and calculated in a year-wise basis for the beneficiaries for each year. For the list of beneficiaries where the date of installation of the biogas was missing or not in a standard form, taking the conservative estimation approach, the last date of distribution has been considered for them.	Beneficiary survey findings

b. SROI Calculation

The SROI value is expressed as a ratio of the return and is calculated by dividing the value of the net present value (NPV) of the total benefits or the impact by the NPV of the total investment or funds utilized.

Total Impact Value = ₹ 39,99,39,189

Total Utilisation (till FY 26) = ₹ 3,41,99,159[69]

SROI = NPV of Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ NPV of the utilisation

The net present value (NPV) of the impact values and the utilisation is taken into account while making the calculations. To calculate the NPV values, a discount rate of 5.76% per annum, based on average inflation in India FY 23 is considered[70].

NPV can be calculated using the formula below:

NPV of Impact value = Impact value (or cumulative benefits)/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

NPV of utilisation = Utilisation/ (1+discount rate) ^{time}

Following are the values of the NPV of Impact values and Utilisation for the project:

NPV of Impact		NPV of Utilisation
₹ 32,33,41,233		₹ 30,680,224[71]

	SROI Ratio
Dividing the NPV of Impact with the NPV of utilisation, the SROI ratio of the project is estimated to be 10.54:1.	**10.54:1**

The SROI value similarly is 10.54. This means that for every ₹ 1 being invested in the project, a social value of ₹ 10.54 for the stakeholders or beneficiaries has been created.

Assumptions and Limitations pertaining to SROI estimation

[69] As per the MoU
[70] India Inflation rates - https://www.worlddata.info/asia/india/inflation-rates.php#google_vignette
[71] Project Investment was shared by Infosys Limited team and NPV of the investment was calculated by applying the inflation rate 5.7 - https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/FP.CPI.TOTL.ZG?end=2024&locations=IN&start=2022

- The calculations to estimate the SROI value of the project have made use of either the extrapolation of the quantitative survey results on the total population or the data on the project reach or benefits provided by implementing partner. The exact number of beneficiaries or the entire quantum of benefits has not been validated or verified independently on ground.

- The proxy values (as given in table above) for the calculations have been referred to from websites/ sources that are generally acceptable as standard sources. PWCALLP does not claim responsibility for the correctness of data on such websites or documents.

- The utilization till the end of FY 26 as per the MoU for the project has been considered for the estimation of SROI. The project utilization figures have been taken from the project documents, and no validation has been done of the same as part of the study.

- Any deviation of the utilisation from the MoU may result in a change in the calculated SROI.

12.5 IRECS Analysis

Table 50: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The project deliberately targeted small and marginal farmers **owning 2 to 5 cattle and 2.5 to 5 acres of agricultural land**, prioritising economically vulnerable groups. • Women constituted **70% of respondents (n=279), reflecting strong gender inclusiveness and empowerment** through reduced drudgery and enhanced decision-making roles in households. • Nineteen percent of respondents belonged to **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** households, ensuring participation from lower-income groups.
Relevance	• The project addressed critical local needs: prior to intervention, **99% of households depended on fuelwood, posing health risks and environmental degradation**. • Communities experienced significant **health problems (e.g., asthma, eye irritation) due to smoky traditional cooking**; 77% of respondents noted health improvements after adopting biogas. • Previously, women spent **significant time collecting fuelwood** from the forest, leading to increased physical drudgery. This burden has been greatly reduced following the implementation of the biogas project. • Forest officials and Gram Panchayat members **reported reduced human-animal conflicts and deforestation** due to decreased dependency on forest fuelwood. • The biogas units met the socio-economic realities of rural households by **providing a clean, affordable, and locally manageable cooking fuel alternative.**
Effectiveness	• A total of **10,289 biogas units were installed**, with 100% of surveyed beneficiaries (n=279) reporting active use at the time of survey. • Fuelwood collection **dropped from 240 kg to 27 kg** per household monthly; **85% reported over 50% reduction in fuelwood consumption**. • LPG cylinder use decreased from an average of **4 cylinders to 1 annually**, saving beneficiaries approximately **₹ 3,912 per year**. • Cooking time reduced from approximately **2.5 hours to around 1 hour daily**, reported by 97% of respondents. • Time saved was redirected to household chores (45%), leisure (40%), and farming activities (38%), with 3% engaging in **new income-generating opportunities raising annual earnings by ₹ 9,678**. • Agricultural productivity **improved, with crop yields increasing,** paddy by 24%, cotton by 28%, and Toor by 52%, due to the use of organic slurry.

Parameters	Assessment from the study
	• Average household farm **income increased by ₹ 17,748** after biogas adoption. • The project significantly **decreased indoor smoke and pollution**, as reported by 97% of respondents, enhancing long-term health outcomes. • Beneficiary satisfaction was high: **94% highly satisfied**, all respondents recommended biogas, and 88% rated field operator support as excellent. • Approximately **90% of cattle dung is utilised for biogas production**, reducing methane emissions and village pollution; 62% of respondents acknowledged this environmental benefit.
Convergence	• The project effectively coordinated multiple stakeholders including **Gram Panchayats, forest officials, and community members.** • Strong collaboration with **local government bodies** underpinned effective beneficiary mobilisation and training outreach. • While no formal integration with government schemes was reported, the project nonetheless aligns with **key national priorities by promoting clean energy access**, **improving health outcomes** through reduced indoor pollution, **enhancing sustainable agricultural practices** using organic inputs, and **supporting environmental conservation**. Together, these efforts contribute to holistic rural development in line with India's goals of inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, and improved public health.
Sustainability	• Beneficiaries **showed strong ownership by preparing installation sites, participating** in regular maintenance and taking care of minor problems. • As part of ensuring long-term sustainability, YRA has provided **comprehensive training to beneficiaries and established Urja GUTS in some villages** to promote community support. However, beneficiaries remain dependent on Field Operators and the YRA team for **resolving major issues with the biogas units**. Without an established local supply chain for spare parts and local skilled technicians to carry out repairs, beneficiaries may struggle to maintain the units independently once the project concludes.

12.6 Alignment to Infosys Limited's CSR policy and UN SDGs

The project is aligned with the CSR Policy of **Infosys Limited**[72], which identifies **environmental sustainability and ecological balance** as key thematic areas. The project is also aligned with the following **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)**[73]**.**

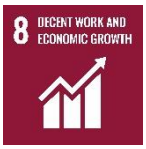
SDG 1: No poverty: The Biogas Project **reduces costs on fuel, health and fertilisers** for poor rural households, especially small farmers. By saving time spent on fuelwood collection, it improves livelihoods and frees time for income-generation activities. Targeting vulnerable groups, including women, it **boosts income through better farm productivity and new livelihoods**, contributing to poverty reduction and improved living standards.

SDG 3: Good health and well-being: The project **improves health by reducing indoor air pollution** through the replacement of traditional biomass fuels with clean biogas. This leads to a **significant decrease in respiratory and eye problems**, particularly benefiting women and children, and consequently reduces healthcare expenses.

SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy: By generating renewable biogas from locally available animal dung, the **project provides rural households with an affordable and sustainable cooking fuel**

[72] Source: https://www.infosys.com/investors/corporate-governance/documents/corporate-social-responsibility-policy.pdf
[73] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

alternative. This **reduces their dependence on fuelwood and LPG**, enhancing energy access, affordability, and security in underserved communities.



SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth: The project aligns with SDG 8 by providing **direct employment opportunities to village youth as Field Operators**, enabling them to earn a sustainable income. This income has empowered many to start additional livelihoods such as poultry farming, goat rearing, and tractor rental, demonstrating entrepreneurial growth and supporting inclusive and sustainable economic development in the community.

SDG 13: Climate action: The project contributes to climate action by **lowering deforestation rates and cutting greenhouse gas emissions** from both fuelwood combustion and chemical fertiliser use. Utilising biogas and **organic slurry support sustainable farming practices and environmental conservation**, aiding in global efforts to mitigate climate change.

SDG 15: Life-on-land: By reducing reliance on forest fuelwood and thereby preventing **deforestation and forest degradation**, it promotes sustainable land use. Through effective dung management, lowers methane emissions, and improves soil health, it contributes to **conserving biodiversity, restoring ecosystems, and protecting terrestrial habitats**.

12.7 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

12.8 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Empowered by Clean Energy and Sustainable Farming

Laxmi (name changed), a resident of Chinchala village in the Ramtek block of Nagpur, lives with her husband and child on a 2-acre farm where they cultivate paddy. Before the implementation of the biogas project, the family **relied heavily on fuelwood as their primary cooking fuel**. This dependence brought many challenges: smoke from fuelwood caused Laxmi **eye irritation, headaches, and respiratory problems**. Collecting fuelwood was time-consuming, she spent around 200 hours annually gathering wood from the forest. On occasions when fuelwood was scarce, the family purchased 2-3 LPG cylinders per year, costing approximately ₹ 3,000. Additionally, the family spent about **₹ 10,000 per acre annually on chemical fertilisers** for their farm.

In FY 22, Laxmi was selected to participate in the **biogas project**, **a CSR initiative by Infosys Limited**. Under this project, a **biogas unit was installed at her home, bringing significant positive changes to her family's health, lifestyle, and finances**. The biogas unit eliminated the use of fuelwood, drastically reducing smoke-related health issues and saving considerable time and effort previously spent on wood collection. Since the installation, the **family has completely stopped using LPG cylinders, saving around ₹ 3,000 annually**. Cooking time was also **reduced from about 2 hours to between 30 minutes and 1 hour**, allowing Laxmi to dedicate more time to her child, household work, and **sewing clothes as an economic activity**.

The biogas unit also produces nutrient-rich organic slurry as a byproduct. Laxmi's family began using this slurry as organic manure on their farm, **reducing their chemical fertiliser expenses by ₹ 3,000 to 4,000 per acre**. Moreover, they sold excess slurry equivalent to two tractor loads at ₹ 6,000 each, **earning an additional ₹ 12,000 last year**.

The use of slurry has improved soil fertility and water retention capacity, increased earthworm population, and **boosted paddy crop productivity by 2 quintals per acre**. Laxmi proudly shares that the quality of their paddy has improved significantly compared to previous years due to the use of organic slurry.

Thanks to the biogas project, Laxmi's family now enjoys a healthier, more sustainable lifestyle with reduced cooking costs, improved agricultural productivity, and increased income, making it a true story of transformation and hope.

Case Story 2: Enhanced Well-Being and Widened Possibilities

Amit (name changed), from Chargaon village in Nagpur's Parseoni block, was selected as a Field Operator for the biogas project, a role that has brought significant positive changes to his personal and professional life.

Before joining the project, Amit faced limited employment opportunities in his village, with restricted income sources and challenges in mobility. When the project opened positions for field operators, Amit applied and was selected after an interview process. He received comprehensive training covering the project's objectives, beneficiary identification, installation processes, maintenance guidance, and community engagement techniques.

In his role, Amit has been responsible for conducting village meetings, identifying eligible beneficiaries, supporting the installation of biogas units, and providing crucial training and ongoing technical support to households. He regularly monitors the biogas units, addressing issues such as maintenance challenges and user guidance, ensuring beneficiaries maximise the benefits of the technology. His dedication to these tasks has made him a trusted figure in the community and an essential link between the project implementers and villagers.

The field operator role has transformed Amit's livelihood. The consistent income earned through his involvement in the project far exceeds other local employment options, enabling him to improve his quality of life. He purchased a two-wheeler, easing his commute between villages and increasing his work efficiency. Furthermore, Amit has expanded his skills by engaging in additional sustainable agriculture practices, such as vermicomposting, inspired by the project's environmental focus.

Beyond financial gains, Amit takes pride in contributing to a cleaner, healthier community. Amit's story exemplifies how employment opportunities linked to clean energy projects can empower individuals and create ripple effects of positive change across rural communities.

Though not a biogas unit beneficiary himself, Amit's work as a Field Operator has made him a catalyst for social and environmental progress, highlighting the broader impact such roles can have beyond direct end users.

13. Project 10: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan – Khincha Auditorium Renovation

13.1 About the Project

Inaugurated in 1966, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is a cultural and educational institution in Bengaluru dedicated to protecting and nurturing Indian art, culture, and heritage. With the aim **of promoting music, dance, literature and other fine arts**, this institution has served as hub for performances, workshops, seminars and events[74]. The Khincha Auditorium at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, measuring 2000 square feet, provides a platform to artists, performers and audience members to engage in meaningful artistic experiences. Over the years, **this 59-year-old auditorium faced considerable deterioration as well as limitations** caused by shortage of stage space, poor lighting and acoustics, uneven flooring, misaligned and worn-out seating, leaking roofs and damp carpets, all of which restricted the quality of performances and audience experience.[75]

Infosys Limited has undertaken numerous initiatives through its CSR efforts towards **the protection and preservation of Indian art and culture**. Recognising the need to create a modern, state-of-the-art, and inclusive facility, **Infosys Limited** (through its CSR arm – Infosys Foundation) partnered with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in FY 23 to renovate Khincha Auditorium (phase-1). As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), this CSR project was designed to **benefit around 60,000 people annually** and support a wide range of performances, from classical dance and music to theatrical productions. In the phase-2, Infosys Limited provided additional funding to support Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in ancillary works at the auditorium[76]. A schematic representation of the project specifics is depicted below in Figure:

Figure 143: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics[77]

Under this project, the renovation focused on **structural refurbishment,** including roofing, stage expansion, and improved ceiling height, alongside the installation of **advanced lighting and sound systems and acoustics** suitable for solo, group, and ensemble performances. Improved **seating with raking** (slopes), new carpeting, and a **ramp** inside the auditorium were added to ensure optimal audience visibility and comfort.

Air-conditioned VIP lounges and multiple green rooms were added to support both performers and dignitaries. The project also incorporated the provision of **live broadcasting and streaming** services, enabling wider accessibility and audience reach.

Figure 144: New stage area developed at Khincha Auditorium

[74] Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan website: https://www.bhavans.info/ and https://www.bhavankarnataka.com/
[75] As shared by the Director and Joint Director during the field visit.
[76] As per the initial MoU signed on 3rd November 2022, the project was to be completed by October 2023. An Amendment to the MoU was executed on 28th February 2024, extending the project with an additional grant to support ancillary works.
[77] Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Infosys Foundation and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, November 2022.

Infosys Foundation oversaw the project execution ensuring that all construction, electrical works, and interiors renovation were completed before handover to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. The list of renovation works undertaken as part of this project are included in Table below.

Table 51: Overview of Renovation and Refurbishment Undertaken under this project [78]

#	Activity	Description
1	Roof refurbishment	Redesigned roof with added puff panels to prevent leakage and reduce rain noise.
2	Stage expansion	Expanded stage area by removing columns and strengthening the roof structure for better visibility.
3	Raking (steps) for audience seating	Stepped seating provided to ensure clear sightlines to the stage.
4	Seating refurbishment	Existing chairs refurbished and fixed to improve comfort and appearance.
5	Carpeting, wall panelling, flooring works, and ramp for accessibility	Upgraded interiors with premium finishes and added a ramp for universal accessibility.
6	Acoustics, sound and lighting upgrade	Improved acoustics with modern sound and stage lighting systems.
7	Live broadcasting and streaming provision	Installed infrastructure to support live broadcasting and event streaming.
8	Control room fabrication	Relocated and elevated control room for better sound and lighting management.
9	VIP room provision	Created a dedicated VIP room with attached washroom for comfort and privacy.
10	Green room provision and upgradation	Renovated one green room and added two new, fully equipped performer spaces.

13.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment study utilised an integrated and cohesive approach to evaluate project's social impact. The process began with a kick-off meeting with Infosys Foundation team, followed by a briefing call with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan team. These interactions provided the research team with vital insights into the project's specific support elements.

Following the meeting, PWCALLP team received following **project documents**:

- MoU (including amendment) signed with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, outlining the key activities and other operational modalities
- Detailed list of renovation and upgradation activities undertaken under the project
- Data on bookings and audience footfall from FY 21 – FY 26[79].

Accordingly, PWCALLP team conducted a desk review of the above documents utilising insights gained from the kick-off meeting. This process helped in **designing the assessment framework** and **finalising the key stakeholders** for the interactions.

A **qualitative research methodology** was leveraged to assess the impact owing to the nature of this project. This approach was instrumental in capturing subjective experiences and obtaining in-depth insights from stakeholders, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the project's effectiveness.

Post finalisation of key stakeholders and sampling plan, tailored tools were developed for each stakeholder to ensure

[78] The MoU/ Amendment broadly refer to "auditorium civil works with limited interiors and limited electrical work" and "other ancillary works for holistic completion of the auditorium". List of these activities were shared by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan team during field visit interactions.
[79] Data on bookings and audience footfall from April 2020 to October 2025

comprehensive and insightful data collection. Below Figure depicts the interactions carried out with various stakeholders:

Figure 145: Research Design for the Study

- **15 Rapid surveys** with Audience Members
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Director, Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan
- **One In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Joint Director/ Program Coordinator, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Technician who manages Khincha Auditorium
- **Five In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with performers/Artistic Directors who utilized Khincha Auditorium before & after intervention
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Foundation team

13.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerging from discussions with key stakeholders.

a. Challenges Prior to the Project

Following challenges were faced by the institution prior to the renovation of the Khincha Auditorium:

- **Constrained stage space**: Discussions with staff members of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan highlighted that the stage was narrow and small, restricting performance possibilities. At a time, 10-12 performers could stand together, making it difficult to conduct multiple Arangetrams[80], large dance performances or theatre productions. This limited choreography and stage dynamics.

- **Outdated technical systems**: Interactions with performers revealed that lighting and sound facilities were inadequate for them and additional lighting had to be hired from external sources. This involved an added expenditure of ₹ 2,500 and 5,000 per event. Frequent technical glitches, occasional power cuts and unpredictable generator backup further disrupted events, limiting the consistency and quality of programmes.

- **Inadequate performer support facilities:** Only one poor maintained green room existed, constraining performer preparation, costume changes, and rehearsal management. There were no spaces available for guests/ dignitaries to wait, reducing the professionalism of events.

- **Suboptimal audience experience:** Seating was placed on the same level, without stepped rows, which reduced visibility for audience members seated at the back. The worn-out seating also made longer programmes uncomfortable, especially for elderly attendees. In addition, the earlier absence of a ramp limited access for persons with disabilities, restricting inclusive participation.

- **Structural and safety concerns:** The roof leaked during rains, causing damp carpets and unpleasant odours that negatively impacted both performers and audiences. The overall infrastructure had aged significantly, limiting functional use of the auditorium.

[80] Arangetrams- Debut performance by a student of Bharatanatyam

Although Khincha Auditorium was a long-standing and well-known space for cultural events and performances, the above problems reduced its appeal to performers and audience members alike. The renovation of the auditorium was expected to address these challenges.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

I. Enhanced performance possibilities due to expanded stage size and improved technical facilities

- The technician shared that the increased ceiling height and widened stage area on all sides allow **multiple artists to perform together. From 10-12 artists earlier,** up to **30 participants can now be seated on stage** during workshops, music concerts and speech programmes.

- Earlier, there were limitations on the types of performances that could be staged; however, post-renovation, theatrical activities requiring high-quality acoustics and complex set arrangements are now feasible. Further, **dance productions requiring specialised stage and lighting setups can now be accommodated, enabling more creative, diverse, and large-scale performances.**

Figure 146: Newly Installed Lights

Figure 147: Broad View of Widened Stage

- Improved lighting systems provide complete coverage of multiple performers, **eliminating the need for performers to arrange additional lighting from external sources** for group performances. This reduces their logistic efforts and expenditure of ₹ 2,500-5,000 per event. It also **enhances the quality of photographs** taken by professional camera persons at events.

- **Well-equipped, convenient, air-conditioned green rooms** allow performers to get ready in comfort and reduced their fatigue during long performers. The auditorium now also provides **ample space** along the sides and corridors, allowing performers to **warm up and rehearse** within the venue before getting on the stage, improving their efficiency and event readiness.

Figure 148: Well-Equipped Green Rooms

- The technician shared that integrating the control room at a strategic elevation enables **efficient sound and light management during live shows**, improving operational effectiveness.

- The Joint Director highlighted that compared to other venues, performers felt that **Khincha Auditorium provided everything they needed to produce a smooth and professional performance,** including superior acoustics, sound and lighting requirements.

- Artists supported this view, stating that that the larger stage, high-end lighting and acoustics and well-maintained facilities enhances their performances. They feel **inspired by the new space** and shared that it creates a mood of **"calmness and focus that supports high-quality performances**.

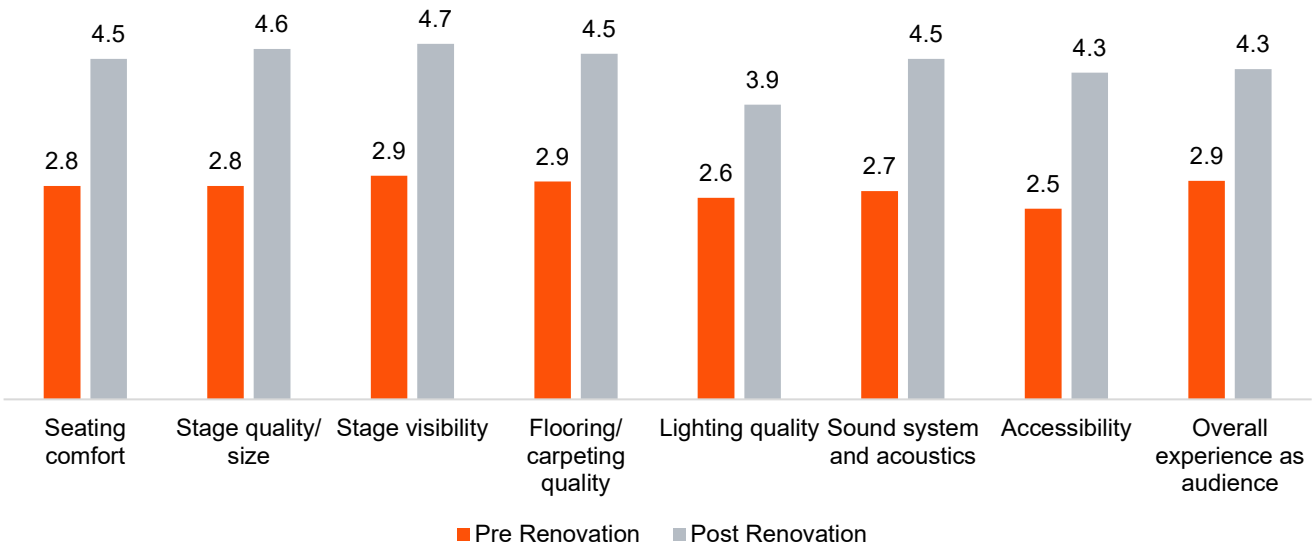
Figure 149: Ample Corridor Space

> "The improvements made to Khincha auditorium fully meet the needs of an artist. The upgraded auditorium now has a premium feel, with a large stage, improved acoustics and lighting, high-quality microphones, and an overall enhanced look. All these factors have enhanced my performance and allowed me to accommodate more dancers on stage. My students are excited and proud to perform and attend programmes here."
>
> **As shared by a performer during our interactions**

II. Optimal audience experience defined by increased visibility, accessibility and comfort

- Compared to other venues, the Director shared that the audience rated Khincha auditorium highly for its **accessibility, ambience, and the quality of performances** it enables. This was supported by responses obtained from a **rapid survey conducted with 15 audience members** post an event held at the auditorium in October 2025. Audience members were asked to rate features of the auditorium both prior to renovation and post renovation, 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. There is a **significant difference in perception of the quality of the auditorium post renovation**, with audience rating features between 2.5 and 2.9 pre-renovation and **between 3.9 and 4.7 post renovation**. Nearly all (14 out of 15) members surveyed shared they were **highly likely to return for future performances** at this venue.

Figure 150: Audience Perception of Features in Khincha Auditorium (n=15)



- **The technician highlighted that modern electrical systems and power backup ensures uninterrupted and seamless performances.** This resolves earlier issues with power cuts, short circuits, and unreliable generator back up, due to which performances were sometimes put on hold. The overlapping roof, levelled flooring and other infrastructure enhancements addressed earlier problems associated with leaks, damp carpets and worn-out walls, **providing a safe and comfortable environment** for audience members.

- Previously, seating was in straight, flat rows, limiting the visibility of attendees seated at the back. Reconfigured **seating with raking (slopes) provides clear sightlines** for all audience members

- An air-conditioned VIP lounge with an attached restroom offers dignitaries (like ministers, guests of honour and chairperson) a **comfortable and convenient private space** to wait before or during events.

- The renovated auditorium has been designed to be **inclusive for different groups**. **Ramp facilities** have made it **accessible to persons with disabilities**, ensuring they can attend and engage comfortably. All performances at the auditorium are free of charge for audience members and open to the public, which **attracts individuals from diverse economic, linguistic, cultural and age backgrounds.**

Figure 151: Slanted Seating, Upgraded Lighting Systems, Relocated Control Room

Figure 152: VIP Lounge Inside Khincha Auditorium

Figure 153: Ramp Constructed to Enhance Accessibility

Figure 154: Ongoing Stage Performance with Live Streaming

- Streaming and live broadcasting facilities allow audiences who are unable to attend in-person to **watch performances in real-time or later** (via Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's YouTube channel). This has **further**

extended the reach of programming to audience across the city, state and even abroad. The Joint Director highlighted that **almost all (99%) of the events at Khincha Auditorium are now streamed live**.

- Multiple stakeholders shared that the enhanced facilities and technical capabilities have made a **positive impression on attendees**. Whereas the limited light and sound options earlier made performances look dull and amateur, the newly renovated auditorium with its enhanced performance possibilities and sophisticated interiors have **led to an increase in the size and diversity of audience for events**.

III. Higher volume and greater diversity in cultural programming

- As Infosys Foundation covered the construction and renovation expenditure, there was reduced financial burden

> "Visitors immediately notice the aesthetics, lighting, and overall grandeur, often responding with a "wow" upon seeing the space! The upgraded design and layout make it feel large and impressive."
>
> **As shared by the Joint Director during our interactions**

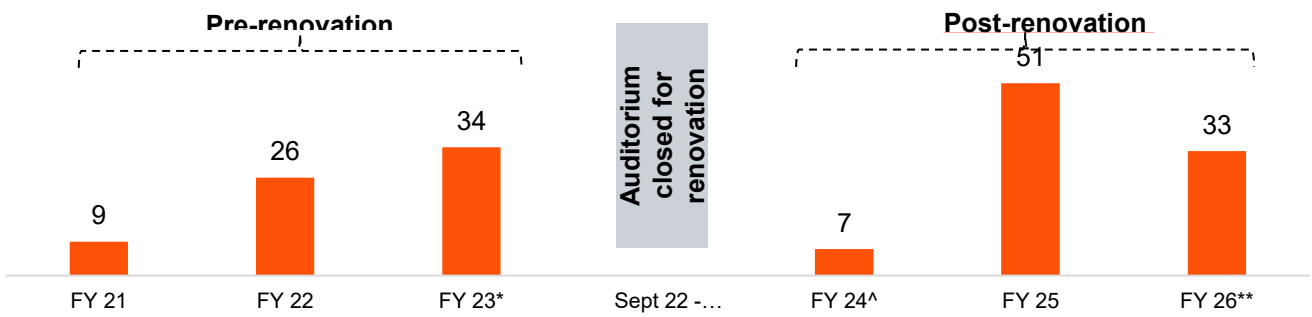
on Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, which allowed them to **focus more on programme planning, cultural activities**, and ensuring high-quality performances rather than worrying about funding and resource allocation.

- The Joint Director reported that the renovation **greatly enhanced the promotion and propagation of Indian values** and culture across literature, music, dance, and other fine arts. The **architectural design incorporates elements of India's heritage**, providing an ambiance that resonates with traditional art forms. Upgraded facilities and reduced operational disruptions allow the institution to focus on **improving its programming, artist support, and audience engagement**.

- Earlier, **programmes held at Khincha Auditorium were limited to one or two per month**. As revealed in next Figure, there has been a **32% increase in the number of programmes** conducted monthly compared to the pre-renovation period.[81] Dance, music and multi-artist theatre performances as well as workshops and seminars events are held regularly on weekends and on some weekdays as well. Booking details are recorded in a **physical diary maintained** by the staff at the auditorium.

- The Director emphasised that professional facilities **encourage participation from both established and emerging artists**, enabling Khincha Auditorium to sustain a wide range of cultural expressions. **Ramp installation has improved access for artists with disabilities**. The institution's motto to encourage all kinds of performers including tribal and regional artists, those from marginalised communities and LGBTQ+ individuals. The upgraded facility has **created a platform for cultural inclusivity, giving them equal opportunity to perform in a professional and well-equipped auditorium.**

Figure 155: Number of Programme Bookings Pre and Post Renovation



*Till August 2022; ^Since January 2024; **Till October 2025

[81] The pre-renovation period coincides with the global pandemic and there were limited bookings made until March 2022. After the lockdown ended, there was an increase in the number of bookings from April to August 2022 until the auditorium was closed for renovation.

- The air-conditioned VIP lounge has made the venue suitable for other events such as trainings, conferences, graduation ceremonies and civic engagements, as dignitaries can be made to wait comfortably.

IV. Greater sustainability and institutional credibility

- The renovation has been executed with a long-term vision of ensuring that the upgraded infrastructure benefits the artistic community for years to come. As shared by the Director, all construction and installation works were completed using **high-quality material and equipment**, supported by a **five-year inbuilt warranty on key sound and light equipment**.

- Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan obtained approvals, permits, and licenses **without delay** as government officials were supportive of this **initiative**. **External engineers were hired by them** to train technicians in operating the sound, light, and broadcast equipment. The overall upkeep is entrusted to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, which also maintains records of bookings and event reports.

- Despite there being several challenges with renovating an existing and aged structure, the project was able to give the auditorium a new look. The Director pointed out that this **adaptive reuse of an existing facility** instead of creating new one **promotes resource efficiency and long-term sustainability**. The structural redesign and waterproofing of the roof were done in a way to require **minimal maintenance** while also preventing future damage from rain.

- The auditorium remains an affordable performance space that effectively meets their needs while providing an excellent audience experience, maintaining competitive pricing compared to similar facilities. According to the Joint Director, the **auditorium now includes high-end lighting and technical facilities, which previously had to be arranged externally** as well as air-conditioning for the auditorium, green rooms and VIP lounge. Unlike other auditoriums in Bengaluru, there are no additional charges imposed for use of generator back up, lighting, podiums, or when performances extended beyond the booking duration.

Figure 156: Auditorium entrance

- Staff at the institution observed that they **receive repeat bookings from multiple performers and event managers** and the **demand for the auditorium had increased significantly post-renovation**, with confirmed bookings being made several months ahead. Infosys Foundation **branding is displayed prominently across all platforms** including at events, in publications, and on the institutions' website. During live broadcasts, they ensure that "Supported by Infosys Foundation" appears on the screen.

- Majority of the audience members felt that **the renovation was extremely important in supporting Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's goals** and promoting cultural and literary events in the city. By strengthening this objective, the renovation of Khincha Auditorium has enhanced the institution's **long-term credibility** and popularity among performers, event organisers and audience members.

> "We wanted to create a space that truly matched the quality of performances happening here. The auditorium is now well maintained and thoughtfully designed, making it a comfortable and focused environment for performers and audience members. They consistently rate this auditorium higher than many other venues in the city due to its technical quality, stage dimensions, and comfortable seating arrangements."
>
> **As shared by the Director during our interactions**

13.4 IRECS Analysis

Table 52: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The renovated auditorium serves as a **vibrant cultural platform** catering to a **diverse range of performances**, including classical dance and music recitals, seminars and folk-art performances, as well as **diverse groups of performers** including tribal and regional artists, LGBTQ+ individuals and upcoming artists. • As all events are free of charge and open to the public, it **attracts audience members from diverse economic, linguistic, cultural and age backgrounds.** • Ramp facilities make the venue and stage accessible to audience members and performers with disabilities. • **Live broadcasting and streaming capabilities** have widened the auditorium's reach, allowing audiences to virtually engage with performances from anywhere, enhancing cultural accessibility.
Relevance	• The intervention addresses **long-standing infrastructural gaps,** such as inadequate lighting, poor sound quality, and space limitations, ensuring that the auditorium meets the evolving demands of modern performances. • Given that power cuts, unreliable generator back up and leaking roofs impact audience comfort and safety, the provision of modern electrical systems, power backup and infrastructural enhancements ensure that **audience members are safe and comfortable** while attending events. • Repeat bookings from performers and event managers, who viewed the increased booking charges post-renovation as reasonable, point to the **long-term credibility** of the institution and the **popularity** of the auditorium.
Effectiveness	• The wider stage area, advanced lighting and technical systems, raked seating arrangements and air-conditioned green rooms and VIP lounge all create an environment that is **conducive towards high-quality performance and audience engagement**. • Upgraded lighting ensuring **professional-grade performance standards and photographs** and eliminates the need for hiring external equipment that costs between ₹ 2,500 and 5,000/-. • The control room integrated at a strategic elevation enables **efficient sound and light management** during live shows, improving operational technical efficiency. • As the cost of renovation was borne by Infosys Foundation, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan could focus effectively on programme planning and cultural activities. There has been steady increase in demand post-renovation of and the **number of events held monthly has increased from 60-80%**.
Convergence	• The project reflects effective collaboration between Infosys Foundation and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, uniting expertise in planning and execution. Due to the nature of the project, **no other partners were involved**.
Sustainability	• All construction and installation works have been completed using **high-quality material and equipment**, supported by a **five-year inbuilt warranty** on key technical equipment. • The structural redesign and waterproofing of the roof ensure minimal maintenance while preventing future damage from rain. • By supporting the revival of an existing cultural infrastructure instead of creating a new one, the project **promotes environmental sustainability** through **adaptive reuse of resources.** • Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the auditorium and utilises the revenue from the programme bookings to sustain its operations.

13.5 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project aligns with CSR Policy of Infosys Limited, which identifies **Art and Culture as one of its key focus areas**. It is also in line with following **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10, 11, 12:**

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: SDG 10 seeks to reduce inequalities within and among countries and specifically, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status. The intervention aligns with SDG 10 by promoting **equal opportunities for diverse performers and audiences**, reducing barriers to cultural participation.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities: SDG 11 focusses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable. By addressing the challenges associated with **preserving and promoting cultural heritage through collaborative partnerships**, the project has played a vital role in strengthening efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.

SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production: SDG 12 is to ensure sustainable production and consumption patterns. The project promotes resource efficiency and sustainability through **adaptive reuse of infrastructure and sustainable design choices**, minimising environmental impact.

13.6 Study Limitation

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

13.7 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: A venue that serves as an extension of the art form

A renowned classical dance teacher always prioritises Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Khincha Auditorium for her performances. She often books the venue well in advance, but even when last-minute scheduling conflicts arise, she prefers to wait for a few days rather than shift to other venues. On rare occasions when she had to conduct programmes elsewhere, she found the experience uncomfortable — the alternative venues were not air-conditioned, making it difficult for her and her students to manage in their heavy costumes and makeup through long performances. The lack of proper ventilation made the performers feel exhausted, affecting their comfort and overall performance.

In contrast, the newly renovated Khincha Auditorium offers a world of difference. The entire facility, including the spacious green rooms, is air-conditioned, allowing artists to prepare comfortably. The upgraded lighting setup has also eliminated the need to bring in external lights for group performances, which was previously a challenge she faced. The stage illumination is now perfectly balanced, and her photographer often remarks that the photos and videos come out much clearer and more vibrant.

Beyond its technical excellence, she deeply appreciates the auditorium's central location and the supportive nature of the staff, who ensure smooth coordination throughout the event. For her, Khincha Auditorium is not just a performance space — it is an extension of her art, offering an ideal environment that enhances both the performers' experience and the audience's enjoyment.

Case Story 2: A space that supports artistic excellence and audience satisfaction

A performer shared that before the renovation of Khincha Auditorium, performing felt like being on the streets. The stage was small, the lighting was insufficient, and the sound system and acoustics were poor, making it challenging to deliver a full-fledged performance. The seating arrangement was flat, with all audience members in the same row, which meant performers could not properly see the audience, and those audience members at the back could

hardly view the performance. This lack of visibility and engagement often left performers feeling disconnected and less motivated during shows.

After the renovation, the performer highlighted dramatic improvement. The stage was expanded and the raked seating ensured every audience member, even in the last row, could clearly see the performance. The upgraded lighting and sound systems now provide professional-grade conditions, eliminating the need for external equipment. The auditorium, with its aesthetic design, air-conditioned environment, and well-planned backstage areas, gave performers a sense of performing in a state-of-the-art venue rather than a makeshift space.

The performer emphasised that these improvements not only enhanced the audience experience but also elevated the performers' confidence. The renovation has transformed Khincha Auditorium into a professional, comfortable, and inspiring space that supports both artistic excellence and audience satisfaction.

14. Project 11: Yakshagana Kalaranga - Construction of Infosys Foundation Yakshagana Development, Training and Research Centre (IYCTRC)

14.1 About the Project

Yakshagana[82], the centuries-old traditional theatre form native to coastal Karnataka, **is an integral part of India's rich cultural tapestry**. Blending dance, music, dialogue, and elaborate costume**,** it embodies the **collective wisdom, devotion, and storytelling heritage of the region**. It has served for generations as **a medium to communicate epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, preserving both artistic and moral values within communities.** However, the art form today faces increasing challenges in **maintaining its authenticity while adapting to contemporary platforms.** The lack of institutional infrastructure, modern training facilities, and systematic research efforts has limited opportunities for young learners, practitioners, and scholars to engage deeply with Yakshagana.[83]

Recognising this need, **Infosys Limited, under its mandate of promoting art and cultural heritage**, collaborated (through its CSR arm – Infosys Foundation) with Yakshagana Kalaranga (a registered society based in Udupi, Karnataka) **to construct Yakshagana Development, Training and Research Centre (IYCTRC).** This CSR project was implemented by Infosys Foundation with an aim to create a dedicated institutional facility for **nurturing Yakshagana artists, supporting research and training, and providing a permanent platform for performances and cultural exchange**. The Centre has become a **cultural landmark for Udupi**, attracting not just artists but families, students, and scholars, thereby strengthening community identity. The project involved the following key components[84]:

- **Construction of IYCTRC** as a modern and fully equipped building complex featuring a **zero-ticket policy and barrier-free design**
- Establishment of an **indoor auditorium** with a seating capacity of **388 people**, designed to host training programmes, cultural performances, and Yakshagana-related conferences
- **Provision of essential infrastructure** to ensure a comfortable and professional-grade performance environment
- Integration of dedicated spaces for **training, archival research, artist development workshops, and administrative offices** to strengthen Yakshagana's cultural ecosystem.
- Creation of a permanent institutional base for Yakshagana Kalaranga (YK)'s flagship initiatives- Yakshanidhi (artist welfare), Vidyaposhak (student scholarships), and Yaksha Shikshana (school-based Yakshagana training).

Below Figure provides an overview of the project specifics:

Figure 157: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics

[82] Yakshagana is a traditional theatre form of coastal Karnataka that blends rhythmic singing (Bhagavathike), expressive dance and acting (Vesha and Abhinaya), and interpretative narration (Arthagaarike), accompanied by instruments such as the Maddale, Chende, and Taala.
[83] Source: as shared by stakeholders during interactions
[84] Source: MoU and Addendum signed between Infosys Foundation and Yakshagana Kalaranga, Udupi, Karnataka

14.2 Method of Impact Assessment

The impact assessment study adopted a structured and comprehensive approach to evaluate the project's outcomes and social impact. It began with an inception meeting with the Infosys Foundation and Yakshagana Kalaranga (YK) team, which helped establish a common understanding of the project's objectives and scope. Insights from these interactions guided the design of the assessment framework and identification of key research indicators.
Subsequently, the Price Waterhouse Chartered Accountants LLP (PWCALLP) team received the following project document for the desk review:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** and two addendums signed with Yakshagana Kalaranga, outlining the project's key activities and other operational modalities
- **List of programmes** held at IYCTRC for FY 25 – FY 26[85]

The review of the MoU and other project documents aided in **shaping the assessment framework and identifying relevant stakeholders** for the study, ensuring alignment with insights gathered during initial discussions with the project team.

A **qualitative research methodology** was leveraged to assess the impact owing to the nature of this project. This approach was instrumental in capturing subjective experiences and obtaining in-depth insights from stakeholders, allowing for a comprehensive evaluation of the project's effectiveness.

Post finalisation of key stakeholders and sampling plan, team developed tailored tools for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection. Below Figure depicts the interactions carried out with various stakeholders:

Figure 158: Research design for the study[86]

- **Feedback survey** with **15** Visitors
- **Four In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Artists
- **Two In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Resource Persons
- **Eight In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Audience
- **Eight In-depth Interviews (IDI)** with Students
- **One Key Informant Interview** (KII) with YK representative
- **One In-depth Interview** (IDI) with Infosys Foundation team

14.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerged from the discussions with the key project stakeholders:

a. Challenges before the Project

The team identified the following challenges that surfaced prior to the implementation of project:

- **Absence of purpose-built cultural infrastructure**: Programmes were held in temple premises and college halls with poor acoustics and frequent disturbances (e.g., drums, processions), leading to compromised performance quality and audience experience.

[85] List of programmes held at IYCTRC for April 2024- April 2025, as shared by the implementing partner
[86] Visitor feedback survey- These surveys were conducted with audience immediately after their visit to the IYCTRC to capture their perspectives and insights on the overall experience of the performance and the facility.

- **Fragmented training environment**: Residential workshops were scattered across borrowed spaces without dormitory facilities or safety provisions for girl students. This hindered continuity in student training and large-scale residential learning.
- **Limited access and opportunities for artists**: Hiring venues were unaffordable with charges varying from ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 25,000, and informal coordination made it difficult for small troupes or rural performers to find regular stage opportunities.
- **Audience inclusive and experience constraints**: Udupi lacked a mid-sized, comfortable hall suited for traditional theatre. Large halls diluted engagement, while outdoor stages were weather-dependent, restricting the audience base.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

1. **Establishment of Modern Cultural Infrastructure**

Figure 159: Entrance to the Auditorium

- As per the YK team, the IYCTRC, a **modern complex comprising** an auditorium, training halls, and residential facilities, had given Udupi its first dedicated home for Yakshagana. The fully **air-conditioned auditorium with a seating capacity of 388** had closed a long-standing infrastructural gap. Clear sightlines, calibrated lighting, professional sound, and ergonomic seating had collectively elevated regional performance standards and provided a modern professional-grade venue for artists and audiences alike.

- According to artists, the Centre had represented a decisive upgrade over earlier temporary venues. **Reliable backstage areas, green rooms, rehearsal zones, and ancillary spaces, including dining facilities,** had improved preparedness and enhanced the overall performer experience.

- Programme footfall had also aligned naturally with the hall's capacity, typically ranging between **300 to 500** attendees for **Yakshagana performances** and **100 to 200** for classical music and dance events, creating an intimate and focused environment that matched the scale of the venue.

- Before this Centre, programmes were held in other local venues and halls which were not designed for cultural use and lacked proper sound quality with the booking charges varying from ₹ 5,000 to ₹ 25,000 depending upon the duration of the program. Artists specifically mentioned that the Centre fills a unique gap as it is not a massive institutional auditorium nor a temporary performance space, but a dedicated cultural hub built specifically for promoting Yakshagana and classical arts in their authentic form.

- As per visitor feedback survey, **95 % (n=15)** of respondents had rated **auditorium acoustics, seating comfort, and stage visibility as either excellent or very good**, while around **90 % (n=15) had reported being highly satisfied overall,** frequently describing the facility as "**world-class" and "comfortable."**

- The team observed, and audience input highlighted, that the **inclusion of lifts, ramps, and a ground-floor auditorium had enabled safe mobility for elderly and differently abled visitors**. One audience member had described the Centre as **"welcoming and effectively barrier-free, from entry to seating."**

> From the very first few months of operation, the demand for the facility has been steady and continuous. Cultural organisations, Yakshagana troupes, dance schools, and music academies from Udupi and neighboring regions have actively approached us to conduct their programmes here.
>
> **- YK member at IYCTRC during our interactions**

2. Strengthening the Artist Ecosystem and Welfare through Inclusive Access

Figure 160: Front Stage

- YK team informed that the Centre remains open to artists of all communities, **without barriers of gender, caste, religion, or background.** Programmes conducted on this stage had been curated to **promote quality cultural expression and uphold the dignity of traditional Indian art forms.** This inclusive approach had enabled participation from rural troupes, emerging artists, and seasoned performers alike, while maintaining a consistent standard of artistic and ethical integrity.
- As per the YK team, the new Centre had consolidated Yakshanidhi welfare operations created to support Yakshagana artists, providing medical checkups, workshops, insurance, and bus passes under one roof, ensuring structured registration, annual conventions, and transparent disbursals.
- Artists reported that **performing in a professional venue had enhanced their visibility and confidence**. For many, it was **their first opportunity to perform at a dedicated auditorium.**
- The **zero-ticket policy,** wherein no charge was levied for booking the venue for performances and no entry fee for the audience, had ensured **inclusiveness,** allowing participation from smaller troupes and economically weaker performers who earlier could not afford rental venues.
- The annual general body meetings and recognition events conducted at the new facility had fostered a renewed sense of pride and belonging among the artist community.

Figure 162: Back stage

Figure 163: Green rooms near stage

> “Here, acoustics are excellent, the environment is dignified. Without this Centre, Yakshagana and allied art practice in Udupi would remain fragmented and inconvenient; with it, our work is coherent, audible, and teachable.
>
> **- Yakshagana Artist at IYCTRC during our interactions** ”

3. Enhancement of Training, Education and Student Development

- According to the resource person, residential career camps of five days for first-year PUC[87] students and periodic one-day workshops for degree and engineering students had been held in the new facility. The **sessions focused on goal setting, employability, and life skills, along with psychometric testing for career guidance.** Students, mostly from Kannada-medium and rural backgrounds, had expressed **increased confidence and clarity regarding academic and career pathways**. The trainer reported that reflection letters submitted post-programme had documented behavioural improvements and improved communication skills.

- Compared with earlier camps held in temporary venues, **the IYCTRC’s training infrastructure, dedicated halls, audio-visual facilities, and safe accommodation had provided a professional learning environment and enhanced student engagement.** The **centralized facility specifically addressed barriers that previously hindered women's participation** with on-campus accommodation, elimination of unsafe travel between scattered venues, structured co-ed safety protocols, and adequate hygiene facilities.

- The resource person had further highlighted that the **integrated format of cultural exposure and career guidance** had produced a distinctive impact on students’ confidence and identity formation. Students had shown **greater willingness to pursue higher education, participate in extracurricular activities, and communicate effectively in public settings.** The combination of cultural rootedness and employability skills had been described as a “balanced and holistic” model for youth development.

Figure 164: Rooms with attached washroom and spacious corridors

[87] Pre-University Course

4. **Expanded Audience Reach, Cultural Appreciation and Community Learning**

Figure 165: Slanted seating with balcony

- As per audience interactions, **the Centre had evolved into a family-oriented learning space where art, education, and community engagement intersected.** Audiences had described programmes as "educational as well as entertaining."
- The building was intentionally designed without shop fronts or commercial spaces to remain purely a cultural institution, not a commercial complex.
- Annual attendance had become habitual, with all respondents **100 % (n=15) visiting more than 5 times a year.** All respondents **100 % (n=15)** had responded that they would **"definitely recommend and revisit**" the Centre.
- Survey data further reinforced the above with **100% (n=15) of respondents reporting that their appreciation for Yakshagana had increased and 93 % (n=15) shared that they had learned something new about local art and culture during their visit**. The majority, **67 % (n=15) expressed a desire to see more traditional Yakshagana performances.**
- The fully functional auditorium and training infrastructure successfully hosted 102 programmes in its first year[88]. According to Artists, **performances such as Talamaddale** (oratory-based Yakshagana) had **improved listeners' comprehension, debate literacy, and appreciation of traditional storytelling.**
- The audience further noted that **the Centre had set a new benchmark for event punctuality, technical precision, and staff professionalism in the region.** Visitors had consistently praised the disciplined scheduling and the smooth coordination of large-scale programmes, which had enhanced their overall cultural experience.

> "For me, IYCTRC is a stage where coastal heritage is preserved, researched, and passed on at scale and with dignity."
>
> **- Audience at IYCTRC during our interactions**

5. **Enhanced Regional Visibility and Collaboration**

- The YK team and audience members shared that **the Centre had raised Udupi's cultural profile, attracting artists, scholars, and student groups from other states, including Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra.**
- **Cross-institutional collaborations** with schools, colleges, and cultural organisations had become routine, and the Centre hosted **visiting troupes and thematic festivals throughout the year.**
- Prior to the construction of the centre, Udupi's cultural landscape was characterised by deteriorating performance conditions. Artists relied on temporary venues (temple courtyards disrupted by noise, college auditoriums with poor acoustics, scattered makeshift arrangements). The **dedicated centre building transformed this into a structured cultural ecosystem with 102 events conducted from FY 25 onwards**, demonstrating the value of purpose-built infrastructure in revitalising the regional cultural scene.
- The resource person had also noted that the **Centre's model of integrating culture, training, and research had generated interest from educational institutions such as MIT Manipal and Dharwad-based colleges**

[88] List of programmes held at IYCTRC for April 2024- April 2025, as shared by the implementing partner

for potential collaboration. The Centre had thus begun to serve as a replicable example of how regional cultural ecosystems could be linked with academic and professional development spaces.

6. **Amplified Institutional Sustainability and Operational Continuity**

- The YK team had sustained the functioning of the Centre through **a strong volunteer-driven model**. The financial model for sustaining the operations of the IYCTRC is entirely based on public donations and community support.

- **43 volunteers supported ongoing activities** including student home visits for selecting Vidyaposhak students, artist welfare coordination, and event management. This collective ownership had ensured that the Centre operated seamlessly without dependence on external administrative agencies.

- Operational maintenance had remained exemplary. **Cleanliness, punctuality, and courteous staff behaviour were consistently appreciated by audiences and students during interaction**, reflecting a culture of care and discipline embedded within the organisation.

- The Centre has also been **maintained as a plastic-free facility. No plastic bottles or disposable items were permitted on stage or within the hall**. For performers and guests, steel water bottles were provided, reinforcing environmental responsibility and cultural decorum.

- The Centre had continued to function as a self-sustaining community institution, **balancing cultural preservation with modern administrative practices.**

- Feedback also demonstrated strong visitor confidence in operational quality with **100% (n=15) respondents rating cleanliness and maintenance and 80% (n=15) respondents rating accessibility (ease of movement) as very good to excellent**. However, 73% (n=15) respondents suggested improvements in parking facilities highlighting the inadequacy of the parking space during large events.

14.4 IRECS Analysis

The project's impact was evaluated using the IRECS framework, drawing on insights from stakeholder interactions and a comprehensive desk review. A summary of this analysis is presented below:

Table 53: IRECS Analysis

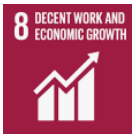
Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The Centre had maintained an open, **zero-ticket policy** that allowed participation from smaller troupes and economically weaker artists who previously could not afford formal venues. • **Barrier-free infrastructure, such as ramps, lifts,** and ground-floor access, had ensured safe mobility for elderly and differently abled visitors. • The Centre had remained open to **artists of all communities, without barriers of caste, religion, or background**.
Relevance	• The project had directly responded to the **long-standing absence of a dedicated cultural space for Yakshagana in Udupi.** • By integrating training, research, and performance, the Centre addressed the **needs of artists, students, and audiences within one institutional framework.** • The focus on scholarships, cultural education, and artist welfare had supported both livelihood and heritage goals, **making the intervention socially and culturally relevant to the region.**

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Effectiveness	• The fully functional auditorium and training infrastructure had successfully hosted **102 programmes** in its first year. • Post- feedback had shown that **95 % (n=15)** of respondents rated acoustics and visibility as excellent, and **90 % (n=15)** expressed high satisfaction with the overall experience. • Student camps and workshops had enhanced confidence, communication, and employability skills, with measurable improvements noted through reflection letters and trainer feedback. • Artists and audience members reported improved professional standards, event punctuality, and overall programme management.
Convergence	• The Centre had facilitated collaboration among cultural organisations, schools, and higher-education institutions including **MIT Manipal** and **Dharwad-based colleges**, linking art, research, and education. • Integration of Vidyaposhak, Yaksha Shikshana, and Yakshanidhi initiatives under a single campus had strengthened convergence between cultural, academic, and welfare dimensions. • Regular participation of visiting troupes, students, and resource persons from other states such as Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra had broadened regional cultural exchange and institutional partnerships.
Sustainability	• The Centre had operated through a community-based volunteer model with 42 volunteers supporting welfare, training, and event activities. • Operational costs had been sustained through public donations. • Cleanliness, punctuality, and disciplined maintenance had been consistently appreciated by stakeholders; **100 % (n=15)** of survey respondents rated facility upkeep as very good to excellent. • The Centre continued to function as a **self-sustaining community institution**, balancing cultural preservation with modern administrative practices and long-term operational continuity.

14.5 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project had been aligned with the Infosys Limited's CSR policy objective of preserving and promoting national heritage, art, and culture while fostering education and community development through inclusive access to traditional art forms. The initiative also aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)[89]:

SDG 4: Quality Education: The project had enhanced educational opportunities by integrating cultural learning with student development. Through the Vidyaposhak and Yaksha Shikshana programmes, the Centre had supported formal and informal learning for students from rural Kannada-medium schools, improving their academic and personal growth.



SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth: The Centre had contributed to the creative economy by strengthening livelihood opportunities for traditional Yakshagana artists through structured welfare initiatives, performances, and capacity-building activities.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities: By creating a purpose-built cultural facility that preserved performing arts and promoted inclusive participation, the project revitalised Udupi's urban cultural space and strengthened community identity positioning it as a regional cultural hub.

14.6 Study Limitation

[89] Source: https://sdgs.un.org/goals

- No material limitations were identified that would affect the interpretation of the study findings; however, results should be read in conjunction with the assumptions and data reliance outlined in this report.

14.7 Case Stories

Following case stories have been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Case Story 1: Journey of a Rural Student towards Confidence and Cultural Pride

Kavya (name changed), a Chartered Accountant (CA) student from a small village near Udupi, had always been a bright learner but struggled with shyness and limited exposure beyond her local surroundings.

For Kavya, stepping into IYCTRC was an entirely new experience. As she describes," The *spacious auditorium, training halls, and organised environment made me feel valued and motivated.*" The session went far beyond career guidance it opened her world to confidence-building, communication skills, and exposure to Yakshagana's art and aesthetics. Under the mentorship of trainers and volunteers, she learned how the traditional art form connected to life skills such as discipline, teamwork, and expression.

Students like her were encouraged to explore Yakshagana costumes and makeup as part of the cultural sessions. Kavya recalled feeling shy at first about wearing the traditional attire, but after understanding its symbolism and history, she began to feel proud of her roots. "We learned not just about careers but about carrying our culture with confidence," she shared.

The residential facilities, food, and accommodation were well managed, creating a homely environment that made students from rural areas feel at ease. Kavya especially appreciated how the organisers took personal care of each participant, arranging nutritious meals and ensuring safety for girl students.

By the end of the programme, her transformation was visible. She confidently addressed the entire group of participants, something she had never imagined herself doing before. Her reflection letter later described how the workshop "changed my thinking about myself and my future." She continued her studies and returned to IYCTRC during holidays to volunteer for cultural events and student orientation programmes. Through this experience, Kavya not only discovered new academic directions but also built a lasting connection with the Yakshagana community that shaped her identity and confidence.

Case Story 2: From Performer to Mentor - A Yakshagana Guru's Perspective

An engineer by profession and a lifelong Yakshagana practitioner, this artist had been associated with the art form since childhood. Over time, she transitioned from performing to teaching under the Yaksha Shikshana programme, training high school students in Udupi.

With the inauguration of the IYCTRC, she found a professional, well-equipped space that honoured the dignity and discipline of Yakshagana. The modern auditorium, acoustics, lighting, and backstage areas created a theatre-quality environment for both teaching and performance.

She expressed that the green rooms, rehearsal halls, and dormitories allowed students to prepare with focus and comfort. The infrastructure supported large workshops, and the sense of organisation motivated her students to approach Yakshagana with seriousness. "Earlier we performed in open stages and school halls; now when my students perform here, it feels like they are part of something professional and respected," she shared.

Her pride lay not in performing herself, but in watching her students take the stage with confidence. She often observed that even the balcony seats would fill up during performances, reflecting the growing audience interest.

For her, the IYCTRC symbolised more than a performance venue it was a learning ecosystem where culture, education, and professionalism came together. The artist continues to guide new batches of students each year, describing IYCTRC as "a place where young minds learn both Yakshagana and life skills."

15. Project 12: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan - Indian Arts Cultural Outreach Programme

15.1 About the Project

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan is a nationally reputed cultural and educational institution dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Indian art, culture, and heritage.[90] Through its network of Kendras[91] across the country, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan has consistently worked to provide platforms for classical, folk, tribal, and contemporary art forms, while nurturing artists and engaging diverse audiences.

Infosys has undertaken numerous initiatives through its CSR efforts towards the protection and preservation of Indian art and culture. Building on this legacy, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, with support of Infosys Limited and EdgeVerve Systems Limited (through their CSR arm – Infosys Foundation), conceptualised and implemented a multi-city cultural outreach programme, aimed at strengthening India's visual and performing arts ecosystem.

The programme was designed as a three-year, multi-city initiative wherein cultural festivals were conducted annually across select Kendras in different regions of India.[92] The core vision of the programme was to promote Indian visual and performing arts through both offline and digital platforms, create inclusive opportunities for economically backward yet talented artists and their communities, and contribute to the preservation and revival of traditional, folk, and classical art forms that are increasingly at risk of decline.[93]

Figure 166: Schematic Representation of Project Specifics[94]

As per the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the programme was designed as a week-long, theme-based cultural festival conducted annually over a three year period, across seven locations, namely Delhi, Bengaluru and/ or Mysuru (Karnataka), Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra), Chandigarh and/ or Mohali (Punjab), and Hyderabad (Telangana).[95] Each festival had a pre-finalised theme and title, approved in advance by Infosys Foundation.

The programme was designed to benefit an estimated 4,650 individuals, including 3,150 certified performing artists (empanelled with All India Radio or Doordarshan) and 1,500 support personnel involved in logistics, production, and festival execution. To enhance accessibility and outreach, the festivals were live-streamed and digitally archived, enabling an estimated 20,000 online viewers to engage with the performances beyond physical venues.

Through this initiative, Infosys Foundation and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan jointly strengthened cultural infrastructure across multiple cities, amplified visibility for lesser-known art forms, and reinforced the mission of cultural dissemination, inclusivity, and preservation of heritage at a national scale.

15.2 Method of Impact Assessment

[90] Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan website: https://www.bhavans.info/
[91] Kendras are local branches of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan. There are 119 Kendras across India according to the Bhavan website
[92] While the cultural outreach programme was conducted over three years, the impact assessment study focuses on the activities undertaken between November 2022 and March 2024.
[93] Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Infosys Foundation and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
[94] Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Infosys Foundation and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
[95] While the MoU specifies these 7 locations, the festivals were held in different cities over the three-year period, only some of which were repeat locations across the project duration.

The impact assessment study utilised an integrated and cohesive approach to evaluate project's social impact. The process began with a kick-off meeting with Infosys Foundation team, followed by a briefing call with the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan team. These interactions provided the research team with vital insights into the project's specific support elements.

Following the meeting, PWCALLP team received following **project documents**:

- MoU signed with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bengaluru, outlining the key activities and other operational modalities
- Coffee table books providing a detailed overview of the cultural outreach programmes organised in FY 23 and FY 24.

Accordingly, PWCALLP team conducted a desk review of the above documents utilising insights gained from the kick-off meeting. This process helped in **designing the assessment framework** and **finalising the key stakeholders** for the interactions.

Considering the project's emphasis on cultural experience, artistic perception, and institutional processes, a predominantly qualitative framework was adopted for impact assessment. This approach enabled the assessment to capture experiential insights, perceptions of cultural value, and the broader impact on artists, audience members, and institutional representatives.

Post finalisation of key stakeholders and sampling plan, tailored tools were developed for each stakeholder to ensure comprehensive and insightful data collection. Figure below depicts the interactions carried out with various stakeholders:

Figure 167:Research Design for the Study

- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Joint Director/ Programme Coordinator, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan
- **Five In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan representatives at other locations
- **Five In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Performing Artists across India
- **Five In-depth Interviews (IDIs)** with Support Staff across India
- **One In-depth Interview (IDI)** with Infosys Foundation representative

15.3 Analysis and Findings

This section provides an overview of key findings emerging from discussions with key stakeholders.

a. Challenges Prior to the Project

As shared by the Kendra directors, artists and support staff, following challenges were experienced prior to the multi-city cultural outreach programme supported by Infosys Foundation:

- **Lack of adequate platforms to support artists:** Many traditional and folk artists highlighted that they struggled to access platforms that could accommodate performances adequately. They had to perform in smaller, inadequately equipped venues, limiting choreography, group formations, or the use of thematic props and stage setups.

- **Financial constraints for artists**: Classical, folk, and experimental artists faced difficulty sustaining themselves financially while pursuing their craft. Unlike commercial performances, opportunities for traditional and classical

arts were scarce, often requiring personal funding to support travel, costumes, and props. This constrained the ability to experiment with creative concepts and larger productions.

- **Lack of recognition and access to institutional support**: Folk and emerging artists recollected that they faced difficulty in gaining visibility and recognition due to fragmented opportunities and lack of access to larger performance platforms. Support staff shared that they did not consistently have access to professional and advanced technology arrangements, making it challenging to execute high-quality performances.

- **Challenges in organising technical requirements**: Technical requirements such as lighting, sound, and stage setup were often shared in an ad hoc manner with support staff. Late instructions and budget constraints limited the scope of stage design and the use of sophisticated technical equipment, impacting the overall presentation of performances.

- **Limited audience reach and promotion**: The Kendra directors shared that performances often reached smaller, localised audiences. Insufficient publicity, marketing, and engagement with dignitaries and wider communities as well as the lack of live telecasting reduced the reach and appreciation of the art form by a wide audience.

b. Summary of the Impact Created

1. **Enhanced visibility and financial stability for economically vulnerable and underrepresented artists**

- Artists were selected through a combination of direct applications to Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kendras and recommendations from government cultural bodies, which shared verified artist lists and profiles. Artist biodata and backgrounds helped **identify performers who had limited exposure and fewer performance opportunities,** particularly those from marginalised backgrounds. Selections were made based on alignment with the festival theme; artistic merit and suitability for specific formats; uniqueness of the art form; and need to promote deserving and underrepresented artists.

- Artists from economically weaker sections and those practicing disappearing or non-mainstream art forms thus gained opportunities to perform on a **reputed, professionally managed stage** associated with Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and Infosys Foundation. Several artists highlighted that performing alongside established practitioners increased their **confidence**, credibility, and long-term **visibility** within cultural networks.

- The cultural outreach programme enabled **meaningful interactions and networking among emerging artists**, allowing them to connect with peers, senior practitioners and cultural institutions. This enabled inter-generational exchange and **mentorship** opportunities and strengthened their **sense of belonging** within the artistic community. Some artists emphasised that there **need be more formal integration** of students, emerging artists and practitioners from economically weaker backgrounds with established performers through curated segments, workshops, or mentorship-based performances to nurture and strengthen the next generation of practitioners.

- Both artists and support staff shared that the cultural outreach programme provided fair remuneration and covered all logistical requirements, reinforcing **dignity of labour within the cultural sector**. Support staff, including sound engineers, lighting teams, and technical vendors, benefited from **sustained work opportunities** and **exposure to large-scale, professionally** organised cultural events with advanced sound and light setups.

- Artist groups received performance-based honorariums ranging approximately from **₹ 30,000-40,000/- up to ₹ 1,00,000/- depending on the scale and nature of the performance**, while technical and support staff were also compensated adequately for their professional services. In addition to remuneration, **all logistical arrangements**, including travel, accommodation, food, local transport, and technical requirements, were fully borne by the respective Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kendras through support from Infosys Foundation. Artists and support staff **did not incur any out-of-pocket expenses**, allowing them to focus entirely on the quality of their performances **without financial or operational concerns**.

> “Many artists were visibly happy backstage, frequently expressing that they had received a good opportunity and fair remuneration. They referred to the event as ‘Infosys Festival,’ appreciating the scale and professional organisation.”
>
> **As shared by a support staff member during our interactions**

2. Revival of traditional and lesser-known art forms and promotion of diverse traditions

- Representatives of the Kendras shared that the thematic curation across cities encouraged performances **rooted in Indian cultural traditions, folk practices, and classical texts**, supporting revival, reinterpretation, and preservation of heritage art forms. Experimental and contemporary formats such as live sand art and large-scale folk productions were integrated alongside classical performances, **broadening the definition of cultural engagement**.

- The multi-city cultural outreach programme adopted a **thematic approach across locations**. A comprehensive list of themes was shared by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan with Infosys Foundation, which then approved the final theme for the cultural outreach programme each year. Under the broad theme of “Carnival of Carnivals” selected for the FY 23 festival and “Rainbow Festival” selected for the FY 24 festival, **each Kendra then defined the specific themes and invite performers and artists that embodied this theme**.

- Figures 69 and 70 below, extracted from the coffee table publications for each festival, present the city-specific themes for each of the 8 locations where the cultural outreach programme was held. As can be observed, under the broad theme of Carnival of Carnivals, **each Kendra had different sub-thematic representations** such as Unity in Diversity in Mumbai and Folk Festival in Mysuru. Similarly, in FY 24, Bhubaneswar adopted Human Values in Fine Arts while Thiruvananthapuram chose Panchabhootha under the broad theme of Rainbow Festival.

Figure 168: City-Specific Themes for Cultural Outreach Programme in FY 23

Sl No.	City Name	Theme	Dates	Venue
1	Mysuru (Karnataka)	Festivals of India (Folk Festival)	4th-10th Nov., 2022	Kalamandira
2	Chandigarh (Punjab)	Contemporary Art Festival	9th-15th Dec., 2022	BVB, Madhya Marg
3	Hyderabad (Telangana)	Festival of Nature (Nisarga Vaibhav)	24th-30th Dec., 2022	BVB, Basheerbagh
4	Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala)	Festival of Dance-Drama	21st-27th Jan., 2023	BVB, Vattiyoorkavu
5	New Delhi (Delhi)	Festival of Indian Classical Music	4th-10th Feb., 2023	BVB, Copernicus Lane
6	Mumbai (Maharashtra)	Unity in Diversity	18th-26th Feb., 2023	BVB, Chowpatty
7	Indore (Madhya Pradesh)	Samskruthi Darshan	27th Feb.-5th Mar., 2023	Ravindra Natya Graha
8	Bengaluru (Karnataka)	Puppet Festival-‘Navarasa’	12th-18th Mar., 2023	BVB, Race Course Road

Figure 170: City-Specific Themes for Cultural Outreach Programme in FY 24

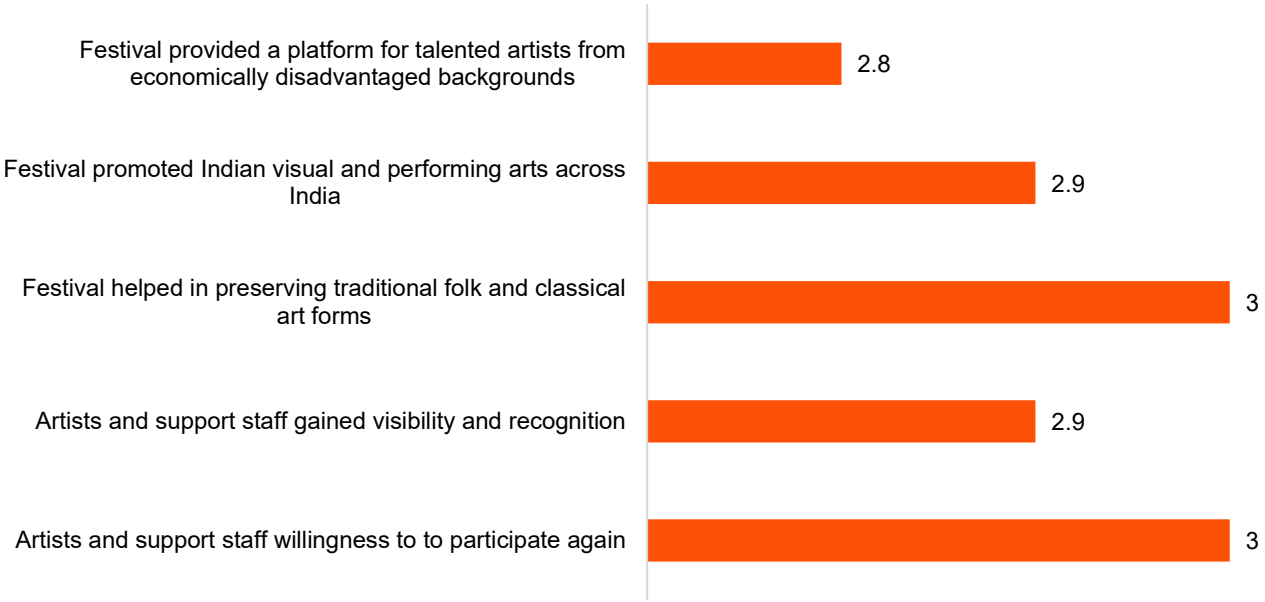
Sl No.	City Name	Theme	Dates	Venue
1	Chandigarh	World is one family	16th -22nd Oct., 2023	BVB, Madhya Marg
2	Bhubaneswar	Human Values in Fine Arts	5th-11th Nov., 2023	Utkal Rangamancha
3	Jaipur	Rhythms of the desert	16th -22nd Nov., 2023	BVB, K.M. Munshi Marg
4	Pune	Festival of Storytelling	27th Nov. -3rd Dec., 2023	BVB, Shivajinagar
5	Kolkata	A festival of Poetry, Dance & Art	9th-15th Dec., 2023	Science City & BVB
6	Nagpur	Indian History Through Arts	23rd -29th Dec., 2023	BVB, Lala Lajpat Rai Marg
7	Thiruvananthapuram	Panchabhootha	5th -11th Jan., 2024	BVB, Manvila
8	Bengaluru	Fusion Music & Dance festival	20th -26th Jan., 2024	BVB, Race Course Road

Figure 169: City-Specific Themes for Cultural Outreach Programme FY 25

Sl No.	City Name	Theme	Dates	Venue
1	Bengaluru	Vasantha (Spring)	May 25th-31st 2024	BVB, Bengaluru
2	Navi Mumbai	Grishma (Summer)	June 07th-13th 2024	BVB, Vashi
3	Coimbatore	Varsha (Monsoon)	Aug. 03rd-09th 2024	R.S puram
4	Kolkata	Sharad (Autumn)	Sept.14th-20th 2024	G D Birla Sabhagar
5	Chennai	Prithvi (In praise of Mother Earth)	Oct. 21st-27th2024	BVB, Mylapore
6	Amritsar	Hemanta (Pre-winter)	Nov. 15th-21st 2024	Bhavans SL Public School
7	Allahabad	Shishirotsava (Winter)	Dec. 14th- 20th2024	Bharwari, Kaushambi
8	Delhi	Rainbow Festival (Mix of each season)	Jan. 15th-21st 2025	BVB, K.G Marg

- By curating diverse art forms on a common platform, the outreach programme facilitated **cultural exchange across regions and generations**, providing exposure on art forms that are **otherwise rarely visible in mainstream cultural programming.** Figure below reflects the perception of artists and support staff on the visibility, recognition, and perceived impact of the festival on the promotion of traditional art forms (n=10).

Figure 171: Perception on the Visibility Received and Support Given to Traditional Art Forms (n=10)



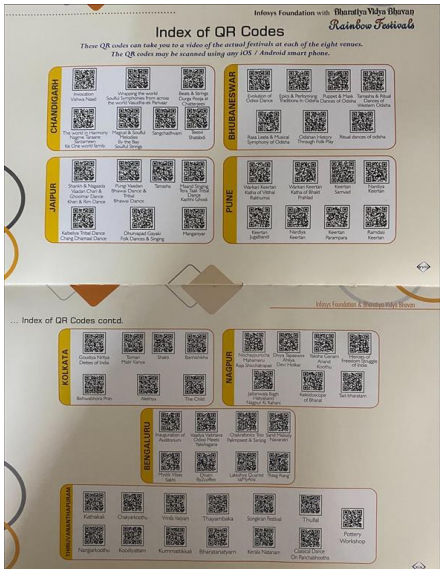
- Artists and support staff were asked to provide a score on the extent to which they agreed with the above statements, where 1 indicates they did not agree and 3 indicates they agreed to a large extent. As seen in the graph (n=10), both artists and support staff reported **high levels of agreement** regarding the extent to which the cultural outreach programme provided a platform for disadvantaged artists (2.8 out of 3), promoted Indian art forms (2.9 out of 3) and bolstered visibility for lesser-known artists (2.9 out of 3). These indicate **strong perceived visibility and recognition outcomes,** as well as positive perceptions of the programme's role in **contributing to the revival of heritage and lesser-known art forms.**

- Some senior artists and curators expressed that while the themes were innovative and broad-based, **allowing artists greater flexibility in conceptualisation, curation, and presentation** could spur greater innovation and creative freedom.

> "One of the most memorable moments was bringing together nearly hundred folk artists from five different states across India. Meeting, interacting and sharing experiences with them was very enriching. A few folk artists were selected to perform in the main performance along with established celebrity artists. The expressions on their faces and the surprise of established artists seeing folk performers share the stage with them was truly magical."
>
> **As shared by an artist during our interactions**

3. Expanded audience reach through physical and digital platforms

Figure 172: QR Codes for Programmes Held in Different

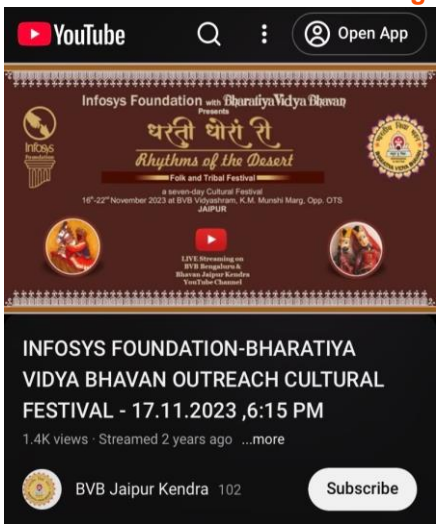


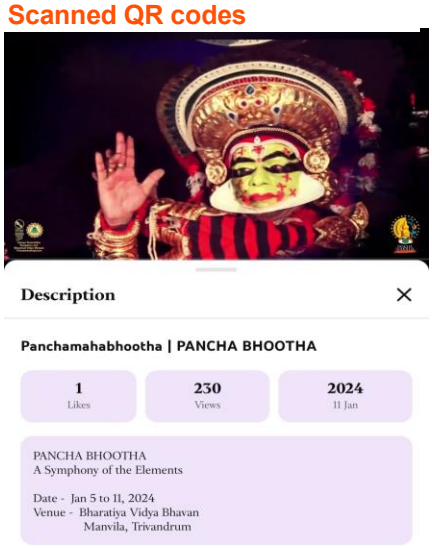
- A key focus of the cultural programme was ensuring wide outreach and accessibility. **By adopting a free-entry, open-access model** for audience members, the programme enabled wider public participation and exposure to diverse cultural traditions, **cutting across age, background, and geography.** The use of **large venues**, compulsory **student participation** in some Kendras, and **coordinated audience mobilisation** enabled strong on-ground attendance across locations.

- All festivals were supported by **live streaming and online broadcasting**, significantly expanding audience reach beyond physical venues. QR codes and programme links were made available on Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's websites, newsletters and other publications, as seen in Figure.

- Digital archiving of performances was also undertaken, to ensure **continued access and long-term visibility** of cultural content beyond the duration of the festival. It created a **reusable cultural resource**, allowing art enthusiasts to **revisit and learn from the content** beyond the festival period. Examples of this archiving exercise are shared in Figure below.

Figure 173: Screenshots of Archived Performances using the Scanned QR codes

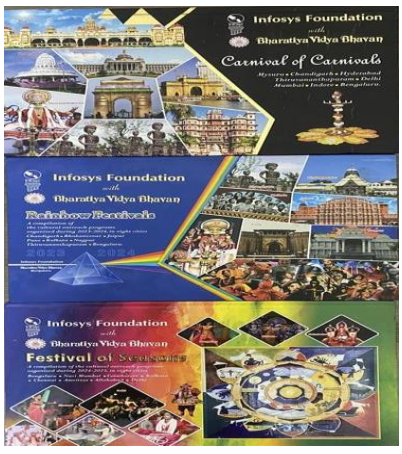




- This hybrid physical-digital outreach **strengthened inclusivity** by engaging audiences who were otherwise limited by geography, mobility, or time constraints. The thematic orientation, which allowed artists to explore creative interpretations within the broader framework provided by Infosys Foundation enhanced **audience appreciation** of diverse cultural traditions.

- In addition to digital and physical reach, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan released two coffee table books that include **detailed documentation** of the cultural outreach programme. These books included pictures of performances, profiles of participating artists, performance themes, and QR codes linking directly to recordings of the performances.

Figure 174: Excerpts from the Coffee Table Book of Each



- As shared by the Joint Director, the coffee table books served multiple purposes: in addition to serving as **permanent documentation** of the festival for current and future audience members worldwide, they also acted as a **professional portfolio for artists**, who were each given a copy of the book. By demonstrating where they

performed, the scale and quality of the festival, and the thematic depth of programmes, it helped increase their **visibility, credibility and opportunities** for future engagements.

4. Professional and coordinated execution across multiple cities

- The multi-city cultural outreach programme created a common, **credible platform across locations** for artists representing classical, folk, experimental, and lesser-known art forms. The initiative directly benefited artists and supporting personnel through **structured participation, logistical support, and formal recognition**.

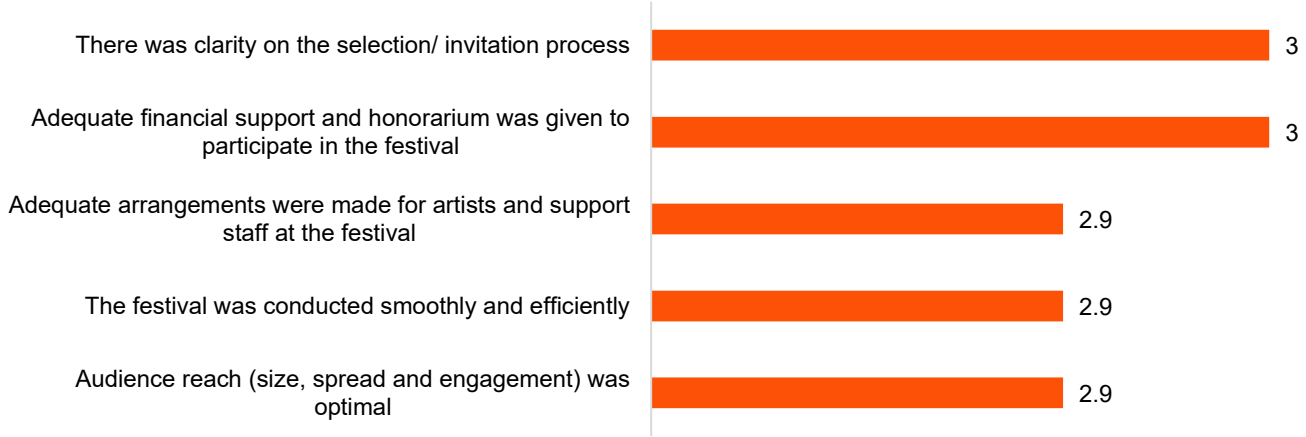
- Centralised coordination by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan-Bengaluru, in collaboration with Kendras in other locations and Infosys Foundation, ensured **consistency in planning and branding, and clear role definition in execution** across cities and years. Administrators from the Kendras noted that Infosys Foundation **branding was prominently displayed across all festival touchpoints**, including banners and backdrops, floating logos during live streaming, and clear references to the Foundation in press releases, invitations and the coffee table publications.

- Where Kendras lacked large in-house auditoriums, suitable government or private venues were hired, often at subsidised rates, to ensure appropriate infrastructure and audience capacity. This comprehensive support structure created a **secure, respectful, and professionally managed environment**, benefiting both artists and technical teams and enabling high-quality cultural presentations across locations.

- In some Kendras where the festival was held only once or twice, administrators felt that recognition and continuity for artists and support staff would have been greater if it had been **held at the location for three consecutive years**.[96] This would have allowed artists to **plan and prepare more ambitiously**, strengthen audience engagement, and build sustained recognition for traditional and lesser-known art forms.

- Artists and support staff reported **smooth logistics, timely communication, and professional management**, contributing to a positive performance environment mentioned below presents their perceptions regarding the arrangements and execution of the cultural outreach programme, where 1 = dissatisfaction with the arrangements and 3 = high satisfaction with the arrangements.

Figure 175: Perception of the Festival Arrangements (n=10)



- As shown in the graph, both artists and support staff reported **high levels of satisfaction across all parameters,** with scores ranging between 2.9 and 3.0 (n=10), indicating **strong operational efficiency** and **effective coordination** in the arrangements made for the cultural outreach programme.

[96] Based on the information given in coffee table books, the locations for the festivals each year were as follows:
2022-23: Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Delhi, Hyderabad, Indore, Mumbai, Mysuru and Thiruvananthapuram
2023-24: Bengaluru, Bhubaneshwar, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Kolkata, Nagpur, Pune and Thiruvananthapuram
2024-25: Allahabad, Amritsar, Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Delhi, Kolkata and Navi Mumbai

- By combining thematic curation, financial support and institutional backing, the outreach programme **strengthened the cultural ecosystem** across the nation and provides a **replicable model for future cultural** initiatives. Stakeholders unanimously shared that such recurrent, theme-based, multi-city festivals were **critical for motivation and long-term engagement of artists and support staff**. The programme highlighted Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's role as a **trusted cultural institution** and reinforced its ability to deliver large-scale, multi-city cultural initiatives efficiently. It also demonstrated how CSR-supported cultural programmes such as these can play a **catalytic role in sustaining artists, promoting inclusivity, and preserving India's diverse artistic heritage at scale**.

15.4 IRECS Analysis

Table 54: IRECS Analysis

Parameters	Assessment from the study
Inclusiveness	• The multi-city cultural outreach programme created an inclusive platform by bringing together artists from **diverse backgrounds**, including classical, folk, experimental, and **lesser-known art forms**, with specific emphasis on **economically weaker** artist and disappearing cultural traditions. • The cultural outreach programme ensured participation of both **established and emerging artists**, enabling inter-generational exchange and **mentorship**, while also involving a wide range of support staff such as light and sound technicians, photographers and stage vendors. • All events were **free and open to the public**, eliminating financial barriers for audience members and ensuring participation from diverse economic and social backgrounds across cities. • In some Kendras, mandatory student participation helped introduce cultural exposure at a young age, strengthening inclusivity among **younger audiences**. • Live streaming and digital uploads expanded **accessibility beyond physical venues**, allowing wider audiences including those unable to attend in person to engage with the performances. Archiving of performances meant that these remain accessible well beyond the duration of the festivals.
Relevance	• The cultural outreach programme addressed key challenges faced by the cultural ecosystem, such as **limited platforms for lesser-known and folk artists, declining audience exposure** to traditional art forms, and the lack of structured, multi-city cultural initiatives. • By adopting a **theme-based, multi-city format**, the cultural outreach programme responded to the need for **cohesive national-level cultural outreach**, rather than isolated city-specific programmes. • The programme was highly relevant for artists who depend primarily on their art for livelihood, as it offered **credible institutional platforms**, professional presentation, and visibility beyond local circuits. • The strong alignment between **Infosys Foundation's CSR objectives** and **Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's cultural mission** ensured that the intervention addressed both cultural preservation and artist support in a meaningful manner.
Effectiveness	• The festival was effectively implemented through **clear role definition and coordination** between Infosys Foundation, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Bengaluru (as the central coordinator), and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Kendras across cities. • Artists and support staff consistently reported **smooth logistics, professional arrangements, and timely coordination**, allowing them to focus on performance quality rather than operational challenges. • The use of **large, well-equipped venues**, professional sound and lighting setups, and experienced technical teams enabled high-quality performances across locations. • Digital dissemination through **live streaming and online archival** significantly enhanced audience outreach and long-term visibility of performances.

Parameters	Assessment from the study
	• The programme strengthened Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's role as a trusted cultural institution and reinforced its ability to deliver **large-scale, multi-city cultural initiatives** efficiently.
Convergence	• The cultural outreach programme demonstrated convergence between **Infosys Foundation and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan**, with the former providing strategic CSR support and the latter offering institutional expertise in cultural programming. Multiple Kendras were involved in the execution of the programme. Due to the nature of the project, **no other partners were involved**.
Sustainability	• The cultural outreach programme contributed to cultural sustainability by **reviving and promoting traditional, folk, and lesser-known art forms**, many of which face declining patronage and limited performance opportunities. • By offering **fair remuneration, professional exposure, and repeat engagement**, the programme supported the financial sustainability of artists and support staff. • The online archival of performances creates a **long-term cultural repository**, extending the impact beyond the festival period. • The strengthened coordination mechanisms and learnings from multi-city execution provides a **replicable model** for future cultural initiatives by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and similar institutions. • Continued CSR-backed collaborations of this nature can ensure **ongoing platforms for artists**, audience development, and preservation of India's diverse cultural heritage.

15.5 Alignment to the Infosys's CSR policy, and UN SDGs

The project aligns with the CSR Policy of Infosys Limited and EdgeVerve Systems Limited, which identifies **promotion of art and culture as one of its key focus areas**. It also aligns with **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9, 10 and 11:**

SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: aims to build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and foster innovation. This intervention aligns with SDG 9 by strengthening cultural infrastructure across multiple cities through professionally managed venues, improved technical systems, and coordinated logistical support. The integration of high-quality performances, digital documentation, and live-streaming mechanisms enhanced the capacity of cultural institutions to deliver large-scale programmes, fostering innovation in the presentation and dissemination of art and culture.

SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities: SDG 10 aims to reduce inequalities within and among countries by promoting the social, economic, and cultural inclusion of individuals irrespective of age, gender, disability, ethnicity, religion, or economic status. This intervention aligns with SDG 10 by creating equitable platforms for artists from diverse backgrounds and ensuring the wider public have access to cultural expressions, thereby reducing barriers to participation in the arts.

SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities: SDG 11 focuses on making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, with a specific emphasis on safeguarding cultural heritage. By supporting the preservation and promotion of traditional and contemporary art forms through collaborative partnerships, the cultural outreach programme has contributed to strengthening efforts to protect and celebrate India's rich cultural and artistic heritage.

15.6 Study Limitation

- **Limited on-ground verification across locations**: As the programme was implemented across multiple cities and had concluded in March 2024, in-person field visits to different Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan locations and face-

to-face interactions with artists were not feasible. Consequently, stakeholder consultations and data collection were conducted primarily through virtual interactions.

15.7 Case Story

Following case story has been gathered based on our interactions with various stakeholders during the field:

Sustaining Classical Legacies: Artistic Dignity and Cultural Continuity through a Multi-City Cultural Platform

A Bharatanatyam practitioner with over two decades of experience, I have long been committed to preserving the depth and discipline of the classical art form. Like many classical artists, sustaining a professional career came with challenges – irregular performance opportunities, financial uncertainty, and limited access to well-curated platforms that value research-based and thematically-rich presentations.

Participation in the Infosys Foundation multi-city cultural outreach programme, facilitated through Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, marked a meaningful milestone for me. Selected based on my artistic credibility and prior work, I was part of a professionally organised festival that offered dignified performance conditions, holistic logistical support, and fair remuneration. This enabled me to focus fully on my creative preparation.

During the festival, I presented a thematically curated Bharatanatyam performance rooted in classical texts and cultural narratives. The response of the audience, including first-time viewers of Bharatanatyam was marked by attentive silence, sustained applause, and post-performance interactions that reflected their deep engagement. Such interactions reinforced the role of classical dance as a living and accessible cultural tradition.

Equally significant were exchanges with fellow artists from diverse regions and disciplines. Informal discussions during rehearsals and performances fostered dialogue on reviving rare compositions, interpreting classical literature for contemporary audiences, and collectively addressing challenges faced by traditional artists. These interactions strengthened our shared sense of responsibility towards cultural preservation.

The festival's outreach through media coverage, social media, and live streaming further amplified impact, extending visibility beyond the immediate audience and reaffirming the relevance of classical arts in contemporary public spaces. Reflecting on the experience, I would say that the cultural outreach programme was a reaffirmation of artistic dignity and purpose. While long-term sustainability in the arts requires continuous engagement, initiatives like this play a crucial role in supporting artists like me and strengthening cultural stewardship.

This platform allowed the art to be experienced in its full depth and intent.