

IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

OF MY DREAM SCHOOL PROJECT

APRIL 2026



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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

AFCT	Aram Foundation Charitable Trust
CIPP	Context, Input, Process, Product
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GHS	Government Higher Secondary School
HM	Headmaster/ Headmistress
HPV	Human Papillomavirus
IDI	In-Depth Interview
KII	Key Informant Interview
KVB	Karur Vysya Bank
NEP	National Education Policy
NSS	National Service Scheme
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMC	School Management Committee
TLM	Teaching-Learning Material
TSA	Tribal School Area
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About Project

Karur Vysya Bank (KVB) CSR supported the implementation of the My Dream School initiative across fifteen government higher secondary schools in Coimbatore district, Tamil Nadu. The project, implemented by the Aram Foundation Charitable Trust, spanned the financial years 2022–23 to 2023–24 and contributed toward a comprehensive program encompassing non-formal education, vocational and life skills training, health interventions, recreational activities, teacher capacity building, and community strengthening through School Management Committees.

Methodology

The impact assessment employed a cross-sectional qualitative design utilising the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation framework and Outcome Mapping principles. Data collection encompassed student focus group discussions across 10 schools, in-depth interviews with five teachers and nine HMs, and document analysis of program progress reports and project records. Thematic coding was employed to assess intervention effectiveness, with findings triangulated across stakeholder groups to ensure analytical rigour and contextual grounding.

Key Findings

Educational Engagement and Learning Outcomes

- The introduction of Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs) produced a demonstrable shift in classroom dynamics, moving students from passive recipients of oral instruction to active, engaged learners across core subjects, including Tamil, English, and Science.
- Students identified as slow learners demonstrated notable academic recovery following participation in structured bridge courses.
- TLM kits provided during the program remained in active use at one school two years after formal program closure, indicating a degree of pedagogical sustainability beyond the intervention period.

2. Psychosocial and Skill-Based Development

- Students across multiple schools demonstrated measurable growth in confidence, creative expression, and peer collaboration through craft-based and life skills activities.
- Six core life skills — self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creativity, decision-making, and communication — were developed through structured, hands-on training sessions, addressing a competency gap that had previously gone unaddressed in these schools.
- The Student Parliament developed civic literacy, public speaking ability, and democratic participation skills among students who had no prior exposure to structured governance learning.

3. Health and Physical Well-Being

- Students demonstrated improved awareness and changed behaviours around nutrition, menstrual hygiene, and safe disposal practices following health intervention sessions.
- Material health inputs — including corrective eyewear, iron tablets, deworming medication, and nutritional supplementation — addressed physiological barriers to learning that had previously gone unmet.
- Child safety awareness delivered through Pink Patrol police visits and helpline number distribution equipped students with protective knowledge within environments where safety risks were proximate.

4. Teacher Capacity and Institutional Strengthening

- Teachers reported sustained shifts in pedagogical practice following TLM training, with activity-based and student-led learning approaches replacing repetitive, didactic instruction in multiple schools.
- An innovative psychiatrist-led professional well-being session for teaching staff addressed occupational stress as a structural barrier to effective classroom delivery — a dimension not previously captured in the program's formal design.
- Community awareness generated by the program catalysed infrastructure improvements at one school, including the conversion of a classroom into a smart classroom, funded by community donors mobilised through the program's visibility.

5. Parent and Community Involvement

- Parents who had previously been structurally absent from school governance — due to daily wage labour constraints — began proactively requesting meetings and suggesting holiday scheduling to enable their participation.

- School Management Committees were activated as functioning governance bodies, with consistent core memberships and, in at least one school, active involvement of the local panchayat president.
- The Eco-Club, sustained over two years through tree planting and environmental stewardship activities, demonstrated that community-oriented habits formed through the program achieved institutional longevity beyond the formal intervention timeline.

Recommendations

- Strengthen school infrastructure support through structured CSR-led partnerships, including provisioning of science laboratory equipment and conducive learning environments, developed in collaboration with school management committees.
- Institutionalise the menstrual health and adolescent wellness component as a recurring, school-embedded intervention across all program schools, moving beyond one-time delivery toward sustained annual engagement.
- Introduce a structured skill discovery and talent nurturing pathway, using student portfolios to track aptitudes and channel students toward relevant vocational and mentorship opportunities across program cycles.
- Embed the Student Parliament as a core module across all program schools, supported by an annual inter-school event to reinforce civic leadership and peer learning.

Conclusion

The KVB CSR investment in the My Dream School initiative, implemented across fifteen government schools in Coimbatore district, delivered meaningful, student-centred outcomes across all five evaluation domains – strengthening educational engagement, psychosocial development, health and well-being, teacher capacity, and community participation. Operating within a context of entrenched socioeconomic disadvantage and structural educational deficit, the initiative demonstrated clear, well-evidenced value as a transformative contribution to holistic, child-centric education for over 10,000 underprivileged rural and tribal students. The program's impact extended beyond individual student development, catalysing institutional shifts in pedagogical practice, community engagement, and school governance that persisted beyond the formal intervention period – affirming the initiative's alignment with the broader vision of inclusive, equitable quality education.

1.1. BACKGROUND

Across the world, access to quality education has remained one of the most persistent and complex development challenges, particularly for children living in conditions of socioeconomic vulnerability. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has consistently identified equity in education as central to global progress, noting that millions of school-aged children — disproportionately from rural, indigenous, and economically marginalised communities — continued to be excluded from meaningful learning opportunities even as enrolment rates improved (UNESCO, 2020).

Within India, these global fault lines found sharp local expression. Despite significant gains under the Right to Education Act (2009) and successive education missions, structural inequities in learning quality, teacher availability, and infrastructure persisted across rural and tribal schooling contexts (Govinda & Bandyopadhyay, 2011). The National Education Policy 2020 acknowledged these enduring gaps, explicitly calling for holistic, experiential, and child-centric approaches to schooling that extend beyond academic attainment to encompass health, life skills, and community participation (Ministry of Education, 2020).

In Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu, these national challenges manifested acutely. Students enrolled across 15 Government Higher Secondary Schools served by the program predominantly came from rural and tribal backgrounds and had limited access to pedagogical resources, role models, or structured guidance. The pandemic compounded pre-existing vulnerabilities: school dropout rates rose, maladaptive behaviour and substance-related problems increased among adolescents, and financial distress within households rendered many students susceptible to child labour.

It was within this context that the My Dream School project was initiated by the Aram Foundation Charitable Trust (AFCT) in partnership with the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Cell of Karur Vysya Bank. Designed as a holistic, child-centric intervention, the project sought to reimagine government schooling by integrating modern and non-formal education, activity-based learning, skill development, health interventions, recreational activities, and structured community engagement. During its implementation, the initiative reached 10,307 underprivileged rural and tribal students, along with over 100 teachers and parents, across 15 schools in the Coimbatore District.

About the Program

The My Dream School initiative was conceived and implemented by the Aram Foundation Charitable Trust (AFCT) – in partnership with the Corporate Social Responsibility Cell of Karur Vysya Bank. The project operated across 15 Government Higher Secondary Schools in Coimbatore District. It targeted over 10,000 students and 100 teachers and sought to address the multi-dimensional barriers to education faced by children from underprivileged rural and tribal households.

The program was structured around five interconnected intervention domains. The first domain encompassed **non-formal and modern education**, wherein students participated in Activity-Based Learning (ABL) in Science and Mathematics, inter-school competitions, science exhibitions, and study trips designed to strengthen experiential and practical learning. The second domain addressed **skill development**, with targeted bridge courses to improve students' reading, writing, and communication skills, alongside training in six core life skills—self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creativity, decision-making, and communication and self-defence workshops. The third domain comprised **health interventions**, including general health check-ups, provision of corrective eyeglasses, nutritional awareness programs, menstrual hygiene education, general counselling, and career guidance, with particular attention to the needs of female students. The fourth domain focused on **recreation and extracurricular engagement** through student parliament elections, herbal garden initiatives, paper craft and art workshops, and vocational training in soft toy production. The fifth and final domain prioritised **institutional and community strengthening**, encompassing orientation and capacity-building workshops for HMs and teachers, regular parent-teacher meetings, and the activation of School Management Committees (SMCs) to foster sustained community ownership of school improvement.



Figure 01: Key Elements of the My Dream School Project

1.2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This comprehensive impact assessment of Karur Vysya Bank's CSR investment in the My Dream School initiative is warranted for several compelling reasons, aligned with both organisational accountability imperatives and the broader imperatives of evidence-based development practice.

- **Accountability and Transparency:** Karur Vysya Bank's CSR Cell committed a total budget of ₹59,88,320 toward the holistic educational development of underprivileged students across 15 government higher secondary schools in Coimbatore District. This substantial, sustained investment demanded systematic evaluation to demonstrate the value generated for the primary beneficiaries — over 10,307 students from rural and tribal communities — as well as to the teachers, families, and institutions that formed the program's broader ecosystem (AFCT, 2023). Evaluation, therefore, provided a credible basis for accountability not only to internal stakeholders but also to the communities the initiative was designed to serve.
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making:** Systematic assessment generated actionable insights that informed both ongoing program delivery and future strategic decisions by KVB and the implementing agency, AFCT. By examining what components produced measurable change and identifying areas requiring adaptation, the evaluation enabled both the funder and implementer to allocate resources more effectively and refine program design in subsequent cycles.
- **Model Validation and Institutional Learning:** The My Dream School model — integrating non-formal education, life skills training, health interventions, recreational activities, teacher capacity-building, and community engagement within a single, school-based framework — represented a distinctive and holistic approach to CSR-supported educational development. Evaluation findings contributed to the growing knowledge base on multi-component school improvement interventions in rural and tribal settings.
- **Student-Centred Assessment:** Most fundamentally, the evaluation centred on students' voices and lived experiences, examining whether and how the program's diverse interventions improved their academic engagement, psychosocial well-being, skill development, and health. This beneficiary-focused orientation ensured accountability to those for whom the investment was ultimately designed, generating a holistic, participatory, evidence-based, meaningful understanding of change.

1.3. ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

To assess the extent to which the program's modern and non-formal education interventions – including Activity-Based Learning, science and mathematics exhibitions, and study trips – enhanced students' academic engagement, practical knowledge, and motivation to learn across the 15 government higher secondary schools in Coimbatore District.

To evaluate the degree to which skill development components of the initiative, encompassing life skills training, communicative and literacy development, vocational training, and self-defence workshops, contributed to measurable improvements in students' personal agency, functional abilities, and psychosocial well-being.

To examine the reach and effectiveness of health-related interventions – including general health check-ups, corrective eye care, nutritional awareness, menstrual hygiene education, and counselling – in improving students' physical well-being and health-seeking behaviours, with particular attention to the experiences of female students from rural and tribal backgrounds.

To assess the extent to which teacher orientation, capacity-building workshops, and institutional support mechanisms translated into demonstrable shifts in classroom pedagogy, teacher confidence, and the quality of student-teacher interaction within the intervention schools.

To evaluate the role of community strengthening components – including parent-teacher meetings, School Management Committee activation, and recreational and civic engagement activities such as student parliament elections – in fostering sustained parental involvement, community ownership, and a more enabling school environment for underprivileged learners.

1.4. ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Framework Component	Description	Application in Evaluation
CIPP (Context)	Examines the situational needs, problems, and conditions that the program was designed to address, including socio-economic, policy, and community factors.	How did the post-pandemic rise in school dropout rates, increased maladaptive behaviours, substance-related issues among youth, and financial vulnerabilities in target families shape the design of the My Dream School initiative? What structural barriers defined the need for a holistic child-centric intervention across the 15 government schools?
CIPP (Input)	Evaluates the resources, strategies, and implementation plans used to achieve program objectives, including human capacity, funding, and design quality.	Were the program's components appropriate and sufficient to address identified needs? How were field staff, implementing partners, and community facilitators deployed across 15 schools, and were the financial and human resources adequate for the scope of activities planned?
CIPP (Process)	Monitors the actual delivery of the program – whether activities were implemented as designed, barriers encountered, and adaptations made during execution.	Were planned activities such as study trips, health check-ups, craft workshops, self-defence training, and parent-teacher meetings relevant to needs of students? What implementation challenges were encountered and managed?
CIPP (Product)	Assesses the outcomes and results of the program – both intended and unintended – and evaluates whether the program should be continued, modified, or scaled.	What measurable and observed changes have occurred in student learning outcomes, skill acquisition, health behaviours, and psychosocial well-being? Have teacher engagement and pedagogical practices improved as a result of capacity building? What evidence exists of stronger school-parent-community relationships, and does the holistic model demonstrate sufficient outcomes to warrant scale-up or replication in similar contexts?

Table 01: Assessment Indicators

1.5. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

The study followed a qualitative research design integrating structured student assessments with qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) to balance breadth of measurement with explanatory depth. Evaluation criteria and analysis were anchored in an integrated framework combining CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) dimensions with the Outcome mapping evaluation model.

Universe of the study

KVB's CSR contribution funded the My Dream School initiative, implemented by AFCT across 15 Government Higher Secondary Schools in Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu. These schools collectively serve 10,307 underprivileged rural and tribal students and form the primary universe of this assessment. The intervention universe spans schools across locations. Key institutional stakeholders – including school HMs and teachers – also formed part of the assessment universe.

List of Schools Covered in the Program	
Government Higher Secondary School, Ganapathy	Gandhiji Government Higher Secondary School, Sökkampalayam
Government Higher Secondary School, Pannimadai	Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Thondamuthur
Government Higher Secondary School, Chinnampalayam	Government Higher Secondary School, Irugur
Government Higher Secondary School, Kalapatti	Government Boys Higher Secondary School, Ondipudur
Government Higher Secondary School, Kembanaickenpalayam;	Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ondipudur
TSA Government Higher Secondary School, Kattampatty	Government Higher Secondary School, Narasipuram
Government Higher Secondary School, Vagarayanpalayam	Government Higher Secondary School, Theetipalayam
Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Thondamuthur	

Table 02: Universe of Study

Rationale for Proxy Sample

Primary data were collected through in-person FGDs and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) conducted across a purposively selected sub-set of intervention schools during the data collection period. Given the multi-location spread of the program, schools were selected to ensure geographic and institutional representativeness. Qualitative interactions were conducted with informed consent, audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised to protect participant identities and ensure analytic rigour. Additionally, virtual IDIs were conducted with six headmasters to capture school leadership perspectives across the broader program footprint.

Sampling

Purposive sampling guided the selection of qualitative participants, ensuring representation across student grades, gender, and school locations relevant to the program's implementation footprint. Qualitative interactions – including FGDs and KIIs – were audio-recorded with informed consent, transcribed verbatim, and anonymised to protect participant identities and ensure analytic rigour.

Sample Size

Sl.	Methodology	Stakeholder	Research tool	Total sample size
1	Qualitative samples	Students	FGD	9 FGD
2		Teacher	IDI	6 IDIs
3		Headmasters	IDI	8 IDIs (6 virtual + 2 in person data collection)

Table 03: Sample Plan

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were analysed primarily through thematic analysis. Transcripts were independently coded by the research team using an inductive-deductive approach, drawing on both a priori evaluation framework categories (CIPP dimensions) and themes emerging directly from participant accounts. Codes were reviewed and consolidated into overarching thematic clusters through iterative discussion among the research team. The qualitative sample was purposively designed to capture variation across student grades, gender, teacher experience, and school locations, with data collected across nine student FGDs and fourteen KIIs spanning headmasters and teachers across the intervention schools.

Findings are presented as illustrative and contextually grounded, with thematic patterns cross-validated across multiple school locations to strengthen credibility. Illustrative quotes were systematically integrated into the reporting to give voice to primary stakeholders, and qualitative findings were triangulated against program monitoring data and secondary sources to strengthen interpretive rigour.

Data Management

A trained field team conducted qualitative data collection. Qualitative data, including KIIs, FGDs, and in-depth interviews with students, teachers, HMs, and field staff, were audio-recorded with informed consent, transcribed, and analysed. Transcripts and field notes were stored securely and were accessible only to the core research team. Daily debriefs and back-checks were undertaken to ensure data quality, while field supervisors monitored progress and flagged anomalies through live dashboards. All data were anonymised, cleaned, and stored in compliance with ethical research standards. Before final reporting, validation sessions were held with the Karur Vysya Bank CSR Cell and the Aram Foundation Charitable Trust to verify the findings and strengthen the interpretation.

Ethical Consideration

Principle	Pattern followed
Informed Consent	Verbal or written consent obtained; assent from minors with parental consent where applicable
Privacy and Confidentiality	Unique IDs used; data stored securely and accessible only to authorized research team members
Voluntary Participation	Participants could decline or withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences
Data Security	Role-based access control, password protection, and device-level encryption enabled
Non-Maleficence	Sensitive topics were handled carefully; distress protocols followed if needed
Cultural Sensitivity	Use of local investigators, translation into regional languages, gender-matched facilitation where relevant
Beneficiary Respect	Participatory facilitation techniques, equitable representation in FGDs/interviews

Table 04: Ethical Consideration

Limitation

The findings of this assessment must be interpreted within the context of several methodological and contextual constraints.

Inherent Study Design Constraints

- **Cross-sectional design:** The assessment captured stakeholder perceptions and experiences at a single point in time. As a qualitative, cross-sectional inquiry, it does not track how individual narratives, attitudes, or lived experiences shifted across program years. This is a recognised feature of the research design rather than a limitation of the findings, which remain grounded in rich, multi-source evidence.

- **Field engagement considerations:** The data collection process navigated permission and scheduling processes across multiple schools, and despite these challenges, the team was able to engage meaningfully with a broad cross-section of stakeholders. Every effort was made to maximise the depth and quality of interactions during FGDs and KIs, ensuring the findings reflect a comprehensive and representative body of evidence.

Contextual Attribution Challenges

Multi-factor influences on outcome: Student outcomes — including academic engagement, life skills development, and behavioural change — are shaped by a range of contextual factors alongside the My Dream School intervention, including family environment and broader school functioning. The assessment accounts for this complexity by triangulating evidence across multiple stakeholder groups, thereby strengthening the robustness of its interpretations.

Qualitative Scope Constraints

- **Purposive sampling boundaries:** As the qualitative sample was purposively selected to ensure representativeness across locations, grades, and gender, the findings reflect the experiences of participants most meaningfully engaged with the program. Perspectives are drawn from across the program's accessible footprint and are intended to be read as indicative of the initiative's broad patterns of impact rather than exhaustive of every individual experience within it.

CHAPTER 3– FINDINGS

1. Socio-demographic profile of respondents:

The qualitative data collection covered stakeholders across ten Government Higher Secondary Schools in Coimbatore District, engaging students, teachers, and HMs as primary respondents. The student participants were drawn from higher secondary grades. At the same time, the remaining FGDs covered higher secondary cohorts across the intervention schools.

Gender representation was ensured by including both boys' and girls' schools in the sample – notably, separate FGDs were conducted at the Government Boys Higher Secondary School and the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Ondipudur – to match the gender criteria within the project.

The respondent pool spanned a range of institutional roles, capturing the perspectives of frontline beneficiaries and program enablers. As one headmaster noted during a virtual interaction, "the program has brought a visible shift in how students engage with learning and with each other." HMs were engaged both virtually and in-person, while teachers participated through individual in-depth interviews, ensuring that school-level implementation experiences were documented alongside student voices. Collectively, the sample offered a contextually grounded and institutionally diverse basis for assessing program outcomes.

SECTION 1– CONTEXT OF EDUCATION WITHIN THE COMMUNITIES

1.1 Socioeconomic Vulnerability of Student Populations

The student population served by the project was predominantly drawn from economically marginalised households. Families were largely engaged in daily wage labour – a livelihood profile that introduced chronic financial instability into household life and structurally constrained their ability to support children's educational participation. HMs across multiple schools corroborated this, noting that most parents were daily wage labourers who could not afford to miss work, even to attend school meetings. The economic precarity extended directly into the classroom: students reported that families

were frequently unable to afford basic educational supplies, including geometry boxes, uniforms, and project materials. The student mentioned that providing basic supplies, such as geometry boxes and slippers, to underprivileged students who cannot afford them would be a real necessity, as families cannot afford them. Children from single-parent households were identified as facing compounded disadvantage, with peers explicitly calling for additional institutional support for this subgroup. These experiences have shown that there is a material equity gap in which household economic conditions significantly shape a student's capacity to participate fully in schooling, and those unable to meet even modest material requirements risk exclusion from educational activities.

1.2 Infrastructural Condition of the School

The physical environment of the intervention schools reflected the resource realities common to rural and tribal educational settings in the region. HMs noted contextual factors such as the need for dedicated library spaces, opportunities to upgrade classroom technology, and site-specific considerations—including, in one rural school, an open campus boundary that occasionally required additional upkeep of program outputs, such as herbal gardens. Safety hazards in the immediate school vicinity, including proximity to railway tracks in at least one location, further shaped the context in which students learned.

SECTION 2- INPUTS FROM MY DREAM SCHOOL INITIATIVE

The My Dream School initiative, implemented by the Karur Vysya Bank CSR, delivered a multi-component program. The design of program inputs reflected a deliberate, child-centric philosophy that extended well beyond conventional academic instruction, addressing the holistic development needs of students drawn from socioeconomically marginalised backgrounds. Inputs were delivered through a combination of resident facilitators, periodic specialist visits, and material provisioning, with delivery models varying across schools depending on institutional context and program duration.

2.1 Pedagogical and Material Inputs: Teaching-Learning Materials

Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs) constituted the major program input across student, teacher, and headmaster accounts, functioning as the foundational resource through which the program's activity-based learning model was operationalised. Teachers described how TLMs enabled a decisive shift away from abstract, text-bound instruction towards experiential and practical learning. Teachers captured this shift precisely, noting that after the provision of TLM (Teacher Learning Material), teaching grammar and the English language has become significantly easier. Teachers have also utilised a range of hands-on materials and activities to enhance the teaching process.

Students similarly received painting kits, drawing materials, and craft supplies as structured program resources, with student accounts from Narasipuram GHS noting the provision of complete painting kits alongside introductory instruction in astronomy and robotics. Notably, the durability of these inputs extended beyond the formal program period – with teachers from the program reporting that the materials provided by the program were still in use by students two years after the formal program ended, signalling a meaningful degree of input sustainability.

2.2 Vocational, Creative, and Cultural Skills Inputs

The program delivered a broad, culturally rooted portfolio of vocational and creative skills across the intervention schools. These encompassed traditional and indigenous art forms – including Silambam, glass painting, pot painting, basket weaving, and Thirukkural recitation – alongside more contemporary art forms craft activities such as doll-making, soft toy construction, Lipon painting,

and the creation of seven varieties of paper caps. Headmaster accounts confirmed the depth of this provision; Headmasters described receiving specialist training in named craft forms. Doll and soft toy making emerged as a particularly significant livelihood-adjacent input, with students from Irugur GHS articulating an explicit entrepreneurial intent — "The doll-making was particularly useful. We are even planning to make and sell some of the dolls ourselves using the skills we learned."

Student Parliament was established as a civic education initiative, enabling students to conduct elections, assume the roles of Members of Parliament and Speakers, and develop a practical understanding of democratic governance. Headmaster 9 described its impact on the student Parliament, which directly demonstrates the functions of government and shows students how Members of Parliament and proceedings are conducted. Structured educational outings, annual exhibitions of student-created work, and competitive sports events — including sponsorship of Sports Day — further constituted the program's recreational portfolio. Intensive 10-to-15-day vacation camps provided dedicated environments for arts, handicrafts, and skill development outside the regular academic term, and were corroborated across multiple schools as a deliberate program design feature.

“

The initiative began with a bridge course specifically designed for newly joined students in grades six, seven, and eight. We identified students facing academic challenges and provided targeted remedial sessions focused on reading and writing skills.

~ HM, KII 6

The project introduced a 'Student Parliament' where students learned about the roles of Speakers and Members of Parliament (MPs). This provided them with a detailed understanding of selection processes and political structures, which was very beneficial for their civic awareness

-Teacher, KII 4

2.3 Health, Well-being, and Psychosocial Inputs

The program incorporated a multidimensional health input stream that extended well beyond awareness and education to direct material provisioning. Students received nutritional supplements, including nuts, fruits, and protein-rich snacks, as well as deworming and iron tablets, alongside structured health check-up camps that provided corrective eyeglasses and administered vaccinations, including the HPV vaccine. Menstrual hygiene education and sanitary provisioning were specifically delivered to female students across multiple schools.

At Irugur GHS, external agency linkages further strengthened the program's safety input: Pink Patrol police units visited the school and provided contact details to support girl-child safety. Students received the Child Helpline number as a structured protective resource. Psychosocial inputs were also notable: a psychiatrist was engaged at Narasipuram GHS to provide specialised mental health support for students, while a separate psychiatrist-led occupational stress management session was delivered for teaching staff at Theetipalayam GHS — an innovative dual-level well-being input not commonly found in school-based program designs.

2.4 Inputs for Teachers and Strengthening Student Communities

Teacher capacity building was a formal input strand, with training delivered across areas such as TLM creation, student behaviour management, and instruction in arts and handicrafts. At one school, a psychiatrist-led professional well-being session was conducted for teaching staff—an innovative intervention addressing occupational stress. Where formal training was not delivered directly, peer-based knowledge transfer among teachers served as an informal substitute, though this was recognised as a program fidelity gap requiring attention.

“One particularly beneficial aspect was a professional session conducted by a psychiatrist for the teaching staff. The session focused on identifying the sources of occupational pressure and provided us with practical strategies to manage and reduce that stress. This was extremely helpful for our professional well-being

~ Teacher, KII 4

SECTION 3- PROGRAM PROCESSES OF THE MY DREAM SCHOOL INITIATIVE

3.1 Pedagogical Delivery: From Passive Reception to Active Learning

The most transformative process shift documented across stakeholder accounts was the movement from oral, teacher-centred instruction towards an activity-based, participatory learning model. Teaching-Learning Materials served as the primary vehicle for operationalising this shift in classrooms. Teachers described integrating TLMs across all core subjects – students drew historical figures in Tamil lessons, constructed plant diagrams in Science, and manipulated cut-outs to grasp grammatical concepts in English. Headmasters have mentioned that previously, teachers created the TLMs themselves and presented them to students. Now, the students are actively involved in practising and creating these materials themselves. They often suggest what specific TLMs are needed for a particular subject. This shift from teacher-created to student-suggested TLMs represented a qualitative advancement in learner ownership that extended well beyond standard activity-based learning delivery. Teachers at Narasipuram GHS further described how the hands-on approach transformed student attentiveness – students who had previously been difficult to engage became enthusiastic participants once they understood the practical application of lessons.

“Whenever we introduce a new topic, we utilise Teaching Learning Materials (TLM) and conduct activity-based lessons. The program has provided specific TLMs for all subjects, including Mathematics, which has been very helpful.

~ Teacher, KII 3

Previously, teachers created the TLMs themselves and presented them to students. Now, the students are actively involved in practising and creating these materials themselves. They often suggest what specific TLMs are needed for a particular subject.

-Teacher, KII 1

3.2 Perception and Attitudinal Changes over Time Period

The implementation process was not without friction. Both teacher and student resistance surfaced in the early stages of program delivery, and the headmaster's accounts documented a deliberate process for managing these initial hesitations. Teachers at multiple schools initially expressed professional concern about the displacement of core curriculum time, questioning whether the program was suited to their student demographics. Students similarly reported initial discomfort when familiar lesson routines were replaced with unfamiliar activity formats.

However, headmasters consistently reported that this resistance dissolved as the impact on students became undeniable. At Theetipalayam GHS, facilitators employed a play-way method — built around frequent question-and-answer exchanges and interactive games — that progressively drew students into full engagement. The buy-in arc, from initial reluctance to sustained enthusiasm, was a common process pattern across intervention schools.

3.3 Recognition, Motivation, and Competitive Engagement

A structured recognition system functioned as a central motivational process throughout program delivery. Competitions in Thirukkural recitation, art and craft, essay writing, drawing, and Silambam were organised across schools, with prizes, certificates, medals, trophies, and cash awards distributed to both students and teachers. Student accounts revealed that these recognition mechanisms generated significant affective outcomes — pride, confidence, and sustained engagement.

One student from Theetipalayam GHS recalled winning first prize in a district-level drawing competition, noting that the cash award helped meet personal needs. At the same time, another described receiving books and pencils for academic achievement and attendance as deeply motivating. HMs described how classroom exhibitions of student-produced craftwork served as peer-inspiration mechanisms, with the display of dolls, paintings, and models encouraging other students to aspire to similar accomplishments.

3.4 Community Mobilisation and Institutional Monitoring

The program embedded community engagement as an active process rather than a peripheral activity. Parent meetings, previously confined to discussions of academic performance, were deliberately expanded to include nutrition, hygiene, and child well-being. One headmaster noted that parents shifted from reluctant attendees to proactive participants – moving from questioning the purpose of meetings to requesting that sessions be scheduled on holidays to accommodate their work constraints. School Management Committees took on substantive monitoring roles, with SMC leaders actively checking on students' learning materials and engaging alongside teachers, parents, and administrators to support program implementation. HMs across multiple schools adopted direct classroom observation as a monitoring practice, personally visiting sessions to observe TLM activities and to encourage both teachers and students. At Narasipuram GHS, school management extended its reach beyond campus boundaries – visiting students' homes when chronic absenteeism was identified – an active community outreach process that reinforced program continuity and reduced dropout risk.

“Students often work in collaborative groups of five or six to complete their projects. An interesting development is that they have begun selling the items they create—such as bracelets, dolls, garlands, and wire baskets—which allows them to earn a small individual income. This entrepreneurial spirit is supported across grades; for instance, seventh-grade students may create items that are then facilitated for sale by older students or teachers.

~ Teacher, KII 2

Initially, teachers expressed professional concern about the potential loss of instructional time in the core curriculum. Similarly, students did not immediately grasp the importance of these sessions and felt a slight discomfort when regular lessons were replaced. However, as the classes became regular, the students realised the program's immense utility.

–HM, KII 2

SECTION 4- PROGRAM PRODUCTS OF THE MY DREAM SCHOOL INITIATIVE

4.1 Academic Engagement and Learning Outcomes

The My Dream School initiative produced a measurable, cross-site-corroborated shift in student academic engagement, moving learners from passive reception of theoretical content to active, self-directed participation in the learning process. Teachers across schools described the introduction of TLMs as the primary mechanism driving this transformation. TLM (Teacher Learning Material) was deemed far more effective than purely oral instruction; when a student builds something himself, his interest in learning increases exponentially. Students reported corresponding improvements in their comprehension, with accounts from Narasipuram GHS noting that teachers were explaining concepts more clearly and that lessons had become substantially easier to understand.

Academic performance indicators reinforced these engagement gains – teachers had observed a noticeable increase in student marks and attendance, and students at Chinniyampalayam GHS described securing first ranks and winning cash prizes in competitive academic examinations. External validation of these learning gains came from block- and district-level competition performance: students who developed drawing and craft skills through the program went on to win prizes at these levels, corroborated by teacher and headmaster accounts across multiple schools.

“ *Previously, students might take days off intermittently. Now, there is a visible desire to attend school specifically to avoid missing the vocational and self-awareness sessions. I have personally observed improved attendance because of these activities*

~ HM, KII 2

There has been a significant improvement. Previously, our attendance rates fluctuated between 60% and 70%. Currently, attendance consistently exceeds 89% to 90%. This is directly attributable to the students' increased interest in the new, adaptive teaching practices

~ HM, KII 9

4.2 Student Confidence, Psychosocial Well-being, and Identity Formation

One of the most consistently evidenced products of the intervention was a significant improvement in student confidence and psychosocial well-being. Teachers described students who had previously been shy and socially withdrawn becoming visibly more confident in their interactions with peers and teachers. Teachers described this transformation as a shift towards a "more integrated, human-centric approach" in which changes in social confidence were clearly observable. Headmasters corroborated this finding, with the representative from Narasipuram GHS attributing the confidence gains specifically to a "change of atmosphere" – the more interactive, trainer-led learning environment that replaced conventional classroom dynamics. This affective transformation extended into students' emotional lives: student accounts from multiple FGDs described a newly developed capacity for emotional openness, with one student even stating that they no longer hid feelings of distress internally but instead shared them with trusted adults – a significant shift from the emotional isolation described in the pre-intervention context. Female students demonstrated particularly notable psychosocial gains: headmaster accounts from Chinniyampalayam GHS described girls who had previously been too shy to discuss menstrual health now approaching program trainers – whom they regarded as elder sisters – with confidence and openness.

“ We have seen a significant positive shift. Students are now much more involved and enthusiastic. This interest has also transferred to their academic studies. We have also seen increased engagement with the school's infrastructure, such as the laboratories, smart classrooms, and the library

~ HM, KII 2

4.3 Health, Hygiene, and Safety Behaviour Change

The program produced tangible, internalised behavioural changes in students' health and hygiene practices. Students across multiple schools described adopting personal hygiene routines – handwashing before and after meals, regular bathing, nail trimming, and maintenance of clean school environments – as direct outcomes of program health education. At Kattampatti TSA GHSS,

The headmaster described how students were developing the self-discipline to wash their hands and clean their tiffin boxes independently, framing this as internalised behaviour rather than externally imposed compliance. Nutritional behaviour also shifted, with approximately 70% of students at one school reported to have adopted improved food habits following health and dietary education sessions. Physical health outcomes included corrected vision through school-based eye check-up camps, administration of the HPV vaccine at Irugur GHS, and provision of nutritional supplements across multiple schools. Child safety awareness emerged as a further product, with students demonstrating knowledge of personal boundary education, child helpline numbers, and protocols for reporting unsafe situations to trusted adults.

4.4 Behavioural Discipline, Leadership, and Civic Identity

The intervention produced school-wide behavioural and institutional outcomes that extended beyond individual student development. HMs reported marked improvements in student punctuality, grooming, and diligence, with one school representative noting that instances of profanity had decreased significantly and that students had developed a mindset that views the school as a sacred space deserving of their respect and care. Student Parliament activities produced a generation of student leaders who actively participated in school governance, coordinated competitions, and fulfilled representative responsibilities — as evidenced by headmaster accounts from Kattampatti TSA GHSS, which noted that every classroom now contained students who had clearly embraced leadership roles. Community engagement in cleanliness drives and National Service Scheme activities extended this civic identity beyond the school boundary.

“Female students who were once shy about discussing menstrual health now approach their trainer with confidence and seek help and menstrual pads when they need. This open communication allows them to more easily seek support for their problems, which is a major change we have witnessed.

~ HM, KII 2

4.5 Nascent Livelihood Outcomes and Entrepreneurship

The program's vocational craft components generated livelihood-adjacent outcomes that represented an emergent and significant product dimension. Students at Irugur GHS expressed explicit intent to sell program-taught doll-making products, describing the skill as "particularly useful" and articulating concrete plans to generate income from it. Students had moved beyond intent into practice — actively selling bracelets, dolls, garlands, and wire baskets, earning small individual incomes through a cross-grade facilitation model in which older students and teachers supported the sale of items created by younger students. This represents a condition in which the program's vocational inputs could lead to future entrepreneurship and livelihoods that could benefit students.

4.6 Parental Engagement and Community Perception

The program brought about a transformation in the relationships among schools, families, and communities. Parents who had previously attended school meetings reluctantly, questioning the reason for their summons, shifted to proactively requesting meetings be scheduled on holidays to ensure full participation. Teachers described parents preparing their children for program events, inquiring about test results across academic terms, and actively joining School Management Committees. At the community level, headmasters noted that the school's reputation had improved as parents heard their children speak about the diverse skills being developed beyond textbooks. This word-of-mouth legitimisation process generated growing community trust in government school education.

“*There has been a significant increase in parental awareness. Parents now show a much deeper interest in their children's welfare and academic progress. They proactively inquire about test results—whether mid-term, quarterly, or half-yearly—and are very interested in their children's attitudes and overall development*

~ HM, KII 2

Outcome Mapping

5.1 Educational Engagement and Learning Outcomes

The most consistently reported outcome across stakeholder groups was a tangible shift in student engagement with learning. Before the intervention, classrooms were characterised by low comprehension, homework avoidance, and passive participation. Post-intervention, teachers and HMs reported that students were noticeably more attentive, proactive, and independently motivated. Previously, it was sometimes difficult to get students to focus or listen. However, because they now understand the practical application of the lessons, they have become much more interested and attentive to instructions. The introduction of TLMs transformed the pedagogical relationship between content and student. Abstract concepts in Tamil grammar and science were rendered tangible through cut-out manipulatives, physical models, and visual representations. For students identified as slow learners, the bridge course provided structured remedial support that enabled measurable academic recovery; HMs at multiple schools documented cases of students who entered as low performers and achieved strong examination results after receiving targeted support. At schools with an Atal Tinkering Lab, students gained introductory exposure to robotics and astronomy, broadening their academic horizons well beyond the standard curriculum.

5.2 Psychosocial and Skill-Based Development

Beyond academic outcomes, the program generated visible changes in students' psychosocial disposition and practical skill base. Students who had previously been characterised as hesitant or disengaged developed confidence in self-expression, creative production, and peer collaboration. Craft-based activities – including doll making, glass painting, Silambam, and instruction in drawing techniques – served as vehicles through which students experienced competence and pride in their own work. The most significant entrepreneurial signal in the dataset emerged from student accounts at Irugur GHS, where participants articulated a concrete intention to produce and sell soft toys independently using skills acquired through the program. The Student Parliament further contributed to this domain by building civic literacy,

public speaking capability, and democratic participation skills. Mrs Abhinaya of Kattampatti described how the program shifted students away from digital distraction and towards structured engagement: "The increased awareness and engagement have helped them recover from these distractions." Life skills training — covering self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creativity, decision-making, and communication — was delivered through hands-on methods and represented a foundational psychosocial investment in students who had previously had no structured exposure to these competencies.

5.3 Health and Physical Well-Being

Health outcomes were reported across both awareness and behavioural dimensions. Students demonstrated improved understanding of nutrition, menstrual hygiene, and safe disposal practices. Female students gained access to open, supported conversations about health that had previously been culturally constrained. Physical health interventions — including corrective eyewear, deworming tablets, iron supplementation, and health monitoring — addressed immediate physiological barriers to learning that had gone unaddressed in the pre-intervention period. At one school, a psychiatrist was engaged to provide specialised mental health support for students, representing a clinical-level psychosocial input that extended well beyond standard school counselling. Child safety awareness, delivered through Pink Patrol police visits and the distribution of a helpline number, equipped students with protective knowledge and institutional contact points in environments where safety risks were proximate and real.

5.4 Teacher Capacity and Institutional Strengthening

At the institutional level, teacher capacity underwent a documented transformation. Teachers who received TLM creation training reported sustained changes in classroom practice — shifting from didactic, repetition-based instruction to activity-embedded, student-led learning. Drawing kits remained in active use at one school two years after the formal program concluded, suggesting that pedagogical changes had become sufficiently embedded to persist beyond the intervention period. A psychiatrist-led professional well-being session for teachers at one school represented an innovative institutional input, addressing occupational stress as a structural barrier to effective teaching. At the school management level, headmasters reported that community awareness generated by the program catalysed.

infrastructure improvements — including the conversion of one classroom into a smart classroom — funded by community donors mobilised through the program's visibility.

5.5 Community Engagement and Parental Involvement

Community-level outcomes represented the initiative's most durable shift. Across multiple schools, parents who had previously been disengaged — structurally excluded by daily wage labour commitments — began proactively requesting meetings and suggesting scheduling arrangements that would enable their participation. Headmasters described this attitudinal shift precisely, with parents moving from asking "why are we being called to suggesting that meetings be held on holidays so they could attend fully. School Management Committees were activated as functioning governance bodies, with consistent core memberships including, in at least one case, the local panchayat president. The Eco-Club, sustained over two years through tree planting and environmental stewardship, demonstrated that community-oriented habits formed through the program achieved a degree of institutional longevity that extended beyond the formal intervention timeline.

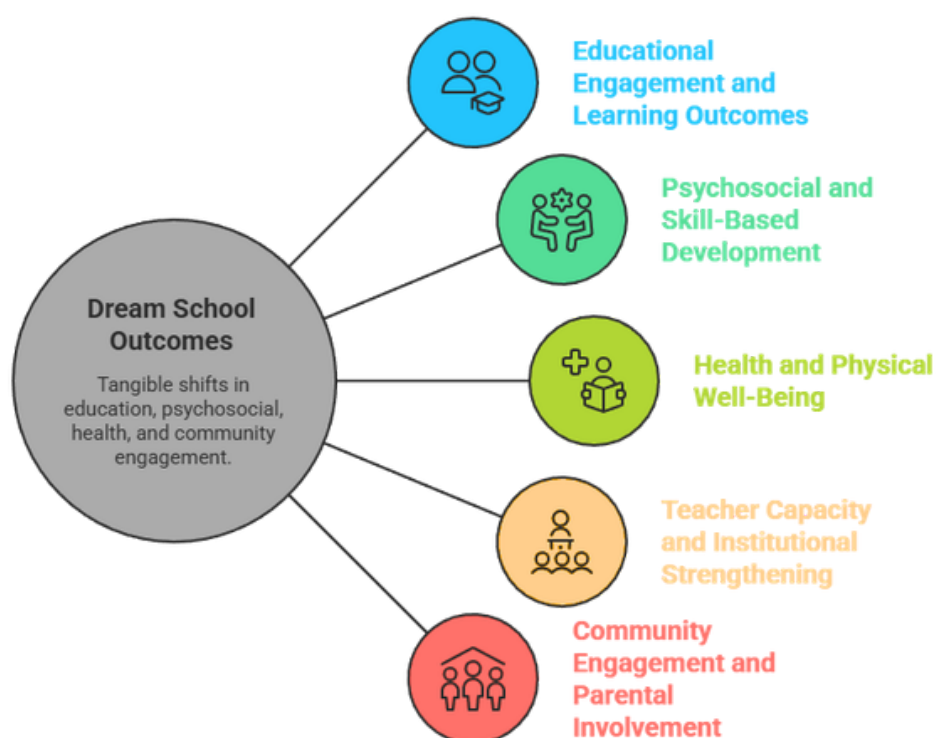


Figure 02: Dream School Outcome Mapping

Recommendation

The following recommendations were derived from the integrated findings of the impact assessment, drawing on qualitative stakeholder accounts from student focus group discussions, teacher in-depth interviews, and headmaster narratives, analysed through the CIPP evaluation framework.

- Strengthen Infrastructure Support Through CSR-Led Partnerships (Priority – High): The My Dream School initiative has demonstrated meaningful impact across schools operating in resource-constrained environments. To deepen and sustain these gains, it is recommended that future program cycles incorporate a structured infrastructure support component, developed in close collaboration with school management committees and the CSR cell. Such investments, planned jointly with school leadership at the outset of each cycle, would significantly enhance the enabling conditions for program delivery.

- Expand the Menstrual Health and Adolescent Wellness Component as a Recurring School-Embedded Intervention (Priority – Medium): The menstrual health sessions delivered through the program have generated measurable improvements in awareness, openness, and hygiene practices among female students. Given the documented impact and the expressed need for continued engagement on this theme from school leaders, it is recommended that this component be institutionalised as a recurring, school-embedded session

-Introduce a Structured Skill Discovery and Talent Nurturing Pathway for Students (Priority – High): One of the most significant contributions of the My Dream School initiative has been its capacity to surface latent talents and interests among students who have had limited exposure to structured opportunities for self-expression and skill exploration. It is recommended that the program build on this foundation by introducing a structured skill-discovery pathway, in which each student's emerging interests and demonstrated aptitudes are tracked across program cycles. This could take the form of a simple student portfolio, progress card, or alums follow-up and training program.

-Scale Student Parliament and Civic Leadership Modules to All Program Schools (Priority – Medium): The Student Parliament initiative has demonstrated strong outcomes in building civic literacy, public speaking ability, and democratic participation among students with no prior exposure to structured governance learning. Given the scalability of this model and its alignment with NEP 2020's emphasis on experiential and values-based education, it is recommended that the Student Parliament component be formally embedded as a core, non-negotiable module across all program schools in future cycles. A structured inter-school student parliament event – bringing together representatives from all 15 schools annually – would further reinforce peer learning, cross-school leadership development, and the program's civic education outcomes' community visibility.

Conclusion

The My Dream School initiative, implemented by the Karur Vysya Bank CSR, represented a substantive, multi-dimensional response to the compounded educational disadvantage faced by students across 15 government schools in Coimbatore district. Operating in a context defined by economic precarity, infrastructural deficit, pedagogical limitation, and the residual disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, the program delivered an integrated package of educational, vocational, health, and community-strengthening inputs designed to address the holistic development needs of over 10,000 underprivileged rural and tribal students.

The evidence gathered through this assessment demonstrated that the initiative produced meaningful and observable outcomes across all five thematic domains of the assessment framework. Students transitioned from passive, disengaged learners to active participants in their own education, acquiring practical skills in craft, civic governance, and life competencies that extended well beyond the classroom. Teachers experienced genuine shifts in pedagogical practice — moving from repetitive, oral-only instruction towards activity-embedded, student-centred approaches — with some of these changes persisting long after the formal program concluded. At the community level, parents who had previously been structurally absent from school governance actively engaged with School Management Committees, and the program's community awareness catalysed infrastructure improvements that outlasted the intervention itself.

Critically, the assessment also points toward clear opportunities to deepen and sustain the program's impact in future cycles. Institutionalising the menstrual health and adolescent wellness component, along with the introduction of a structured skill discovery and talent nurturing pathway. Further embedding the Student Parliament as a core module across all program schools, supported by an annual inter-school event, would further scale the civic leadership and peer learning outcomes. The My Dream School initiative demonstrated that a well-designed, child-centric intervention — attentive to context, responsive to student voice, and grounded in community — can meaningfully transform the educational experience of children whom mainstream education systems have historically underserved.

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