

# ZEE ENTERTAINMENT ENTERPRISES LIMITED (ZEEL)

Partnership With Prashanthi Bala Mandira Trust (PBT)



IMPACT  
REPORT



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION

5

- Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL)
- Partnership with Prashanthi Balamandir Trust (PBT)
- Purpose and Scope of Evaluation
- Design and Methodology

## FINDINGS AND RESULTS

9

- **Relevance:** To what extent does PBT meet girls' educational needs?
- **Coherence:** To what extent is PBT's programme aligned with other educational programmes in Karnataka?
- **Efficiency:** How efficient was PBT in constructing the Gadag campus?
- **Effectiveness:** How successful has PBT been in providing quality infrastructure and holistic education for girls?
- **Impact:** What positive changes are occurring in the lives of girls due to PBT's efforts and ZEEL's contribution?
- **Sustainability:** How sustainable are PBT's educational activities and their outcomes in the long term?

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

26

## LIST OF ANNEXES

30

## LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: ZEEL Focus CSR Themes
- Figure 2: PBT Focus Themes
- Figure 3: Key Outcomes of ZEEL's partnership with PBT
- Figure 4: Sampled Schools
- Figure 5: Sample Overview

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2020, ZEEL partnered with Prashanthi Balamandira Trust (PBT), a public charitable trust, established in Chikkaballapur, Karnataka in 1981. PBT annually educates over 3,500 students through 21 residential campuses. ZEEL extended monetary support of INR 3.32 crores towards infrastructural expansion at the Gadag campus and sponsored the education of 340 girls for one academic year.

ZEEL partnered with Give India as the monitoring partner for this initiative, and commissioned 4th Wheel Social Impact to undertake an evaluation of the PBT programme. The overarching objective of the study was to qualitatively assess the effect of PBT's programmes on girls' educational outcomes.

63 respondents participated in the study consisting of donor and implementation teams, staff at the institutes, girls and their parents. Two campuses were visited, i.e.: 1) Sri Sathya Sai Vaniniketanam campus in Gadag, which was the main site of intervention for ZEEL (expansion of infrastructure) along with girls' sponsorships, and 2) Pre-University College, where approximately 55% of girls who had initially been supported by ZEEL in 2020-2021 were now studying.

Evaluation evidence was assessed using the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

### 1.

#### **Relevance: To what extent does PBT meet girls' educational needs?**

PBT residential schools are relevant for girls due to several key reasons. Firstly, they eliminate transportation barriers, ensuring consistent attendance and minimising safety risks associated with long commutes, particularly in rural and remote areas. PBT schools boast state-of-the-art infrastructure, addressing the shortcomings present in many traditional schools. They offer a conducive environment for studying, free from the challenges of difficult home environments. The structured and supportive environment fosters academic focus, discipline, and consistent study habits, enhancing learning outcomes. Importantly, residential schools offer a safe and nurturing community where girls receive healthcare support and develop a sense of belonging, contributing to their overall well-being and empowerment.

### 2.

#### **Coherence: To what extent is PBT's work aligned with other educational programmes in Karnataka?**

PBT's program complements existing educational initiatives in Karnataka, aligning with regional residential schools and scholarship opportunities. By addressing the strict eligibility criteria and disbursement issues that limit inclusivity and accessibility in these programs, PBT aims to significantly enhance educational opportunities and impact.

### 3.

#### **Efficiency: How efficient was PBT in constructing the Gadag campus?**

Constructing PBT's Gadag campus faced minor delays, extending by only 1.5 months. With support from ZEEL, four classrooms were completed, but the toilet block remained unfinished during the study. Challenges like labour and material procurement persisted, affecting progress. However, transparent communication and cooperation in reporting helped manage the project effectively. Despite setbacks, fund disbursement was smooth, ensuring work continued. Collaborative efforts helped overcome delays due to COVID-19, demonstrating adaptability in achieving project goals.



4.

#### **Effectiveness: How successful has PBT been in providing quality infrastructure and holistic education for girls?**

PBT has effectively provided quality infrastructure, creating a conducive learning environment according to stakeholder feedback and observations. Stakeholders expressed satisfaction with facilities, including WASH amenities, crucial for adolescent girls' well-being. Security measures were also praised by parents. Girls appreciated hostel facilities, likening the campus to a dream school, citing the serene environment and engaging outdoor learning experiences. PBT's holistic curriculum, combining academics, spirituality, and extracurriculars, garnered appreciation from all stakeholders. Adopting the NIOS curriculum facilitates spiritual education alongside academics, fostering values like patience and respect. The school ensures individualised support through small teacher-student ratios, bridge classes, and extra coaching sessions, enhancing learning outcomes.

5.

#### **Impact: What positive changes are occurring in the lives of girls due to PBT's efforts and ZEEL's contribution?**

- **Girls are financially supported to continue their education.**

PBT's provision of sponsorships addresses financial barriers, enabling girls from marginalised backgrounds to access residential education. Profiles of enrolled girls illustrate diverse challenges, including single-parent households and poverty. PBT prioritises girls from disadvantaged backgrounds, including first-generation graduates and from families below the poverty line. Recruitment strategies involve open admissions and direct recruitment through household surveys, ensuring inclusivity. Financial support covers tuition, uniforms, textbooks, and personal expenses, relieving families of financial burdens. Stakeholders affirm that girls receive comprehensive support, fostering a safe learning environment conducive to their academic and personal growth.

- **Over half of the girls supported by ZEEL have successfully progressed two grade-levels, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.**

Approximately 55% of ZEEL-sponsored girls in 2020-2021 have advanced two grades in the current academic year (2022-2023), as per PBT data. Notably, 54% of 12th graders are in their second year of undergraduate studies, placing them among the 1% of rural Indian women with tertiary degrees. Enrolment rates decline at higher stages of education, particularly in Gadag, where early marriage prevalence and low-value perceptions of girls' education persist. Financial constraints compound this issue. PBT teachers conduct counselling sessions and home visits to counteract drop-out rates among girls, at higher education levels.

- **Improved academic and personal development of girls.**

Since joining PBT schools, girls reported notable improvements across various domains. Academically, they noted minimal learning challenges and appreciated the freedom to choose subjects like Botany, Zoology, Carnatic Music, Literature, and Vedic Studies. Moreover, they adopted healthy eating habits and received nutritious meals, along with regular health check-ups and telephonic consultations with doctors, which positively affected their physical health. In terms of personal development, girls experienced reduced anger and heightened responsibility, coupled with improvements in discipline, punctuality, and respect for elders. They also engaged in diverse extra-curricular activities such as music, dance, drawing, drama, computer classes, child development classes, karate, sports, and games, enriching their skill sets. Additionally, active participation in extracurricular events like youth conferences, global cultural meets, and the cross-campus Annual Sports and Cultural Meet expanded their exposure and experiences, contributing to their holistic growth.



### ● Positive impacts within communities

A shift in community attitudes toward education, potentially spurred by increased awareness of PBT's work, is evident. Community-level activities like Gram Seva and parents' involvement in service requirements have exposed them to PBT's mission, fostering a higher demand for education at PBT institutions. Furthermore, the accomplishments of PBT graduates, such as being the first post-graduate in their village, have garnered respect and admiration, influencing others to enrol their children. The establishment of PBT campuses has also benefited nearby villages by improving accessibility, providing essential amenities like electricity and water, and creating employment opportunities for locals during construction and operation phases.

## 6.

### **Sustainability: How sustainable are PBT's educational activities and their outcomes in the long term?**

Continuous monitoring and maintenance protocols ensure the longevity of infrastructure across all campuses, supported by a dedicated department overseeing repair works and prompt responses to issues. However, sustaining financial scholarships necessitates shifting donor perceptions to recognize the enduring impact of long-term educational investments, beyond superficial assessments of infrastructure. PBT advocates for ongoing operational support from donors, emphasising the significance of sustained investments in girls' education to break the cycle of poverty effectively. Concerns persist regarding PBT's financial sustainability due to heavy reliance on external funding and potential donor preferences for tangible outcomes over operating expenses. Nonetheless, confidence prevails in continued support from aligned benefactors, augmented by the cultivation of a virtuous cycle where beneficiaries become benefactors. Alumni engagement and employment within the institution further fortify sustainability efforts, ensuring a dedicated workforce familiar with the organization's ethos and mission.

### Summary of Recommendations

**To further enhance the relevance and coherence of PBT's educational programs, it is recommended to incorporate comprehensive community assessments during household surveys.** This will address concerns about residential institutions and evaluate the cultural appropriateness of the spiritual curriculum, fostering trust and support within the community. Fostering open communication with community members will contribute to a supportive and inclusive educational environment for girls from marginalised backgrounds.

**To optimise the educational environment at PBT schools, prioritise infrastructural enhancements.** This includes installing disposal facilities and inclusive toilets for hygiene and accessibility. Enhance classroom environments by displaying student work and providing storage spaces. Improve space utility by allocating dedicated dining areas and separate rooms for teachers and storage to maximize classroom space.

**To accelerate infrastructural improvements, PBT can leverage diverse financing methods.** This includes actively pursuing grants from government agencies, foundations, and international bodies, which offer crucial financial support without repayment obligations. Additionally, launching crowdfunding campaigns can engage a wider audience and secure donations for specific projects. Prioritizing and phasing projects based on urgency and impact can ensure efficient allocation of resources. Exploring alternative financing models like public-private partnerships can further diversify funding sources and expedite infrastructure development.

**Develop a comprehensive strategy to highlight success stories of girls who have achieved academic and professional milestones after graduating from PBT schools.** Utilise various communication channels such as social media, newsletters, community events, and local media outlets to share these success stories effectively. Organise alumni events where successful graduates can share their experiences and inspire current students and community members.

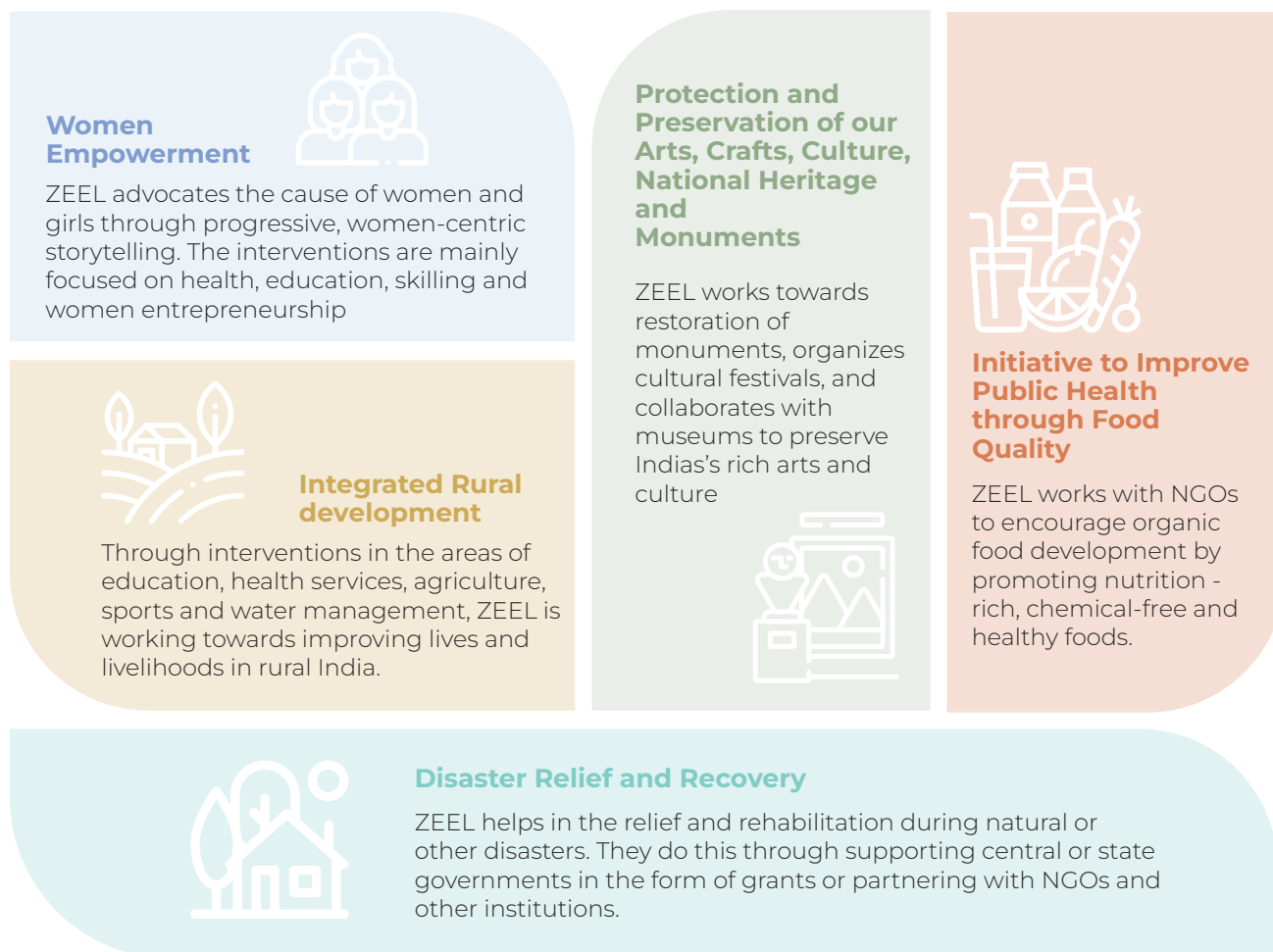
**Promote Government and Private scholarship programs for higher education to support PBT graduates in pursuing further studies.** Build a robust alumni network by organising alumni reunions, workshops, and networking events to foster connections among graduates and provide support and mentorship opportunities.

## INTRODUCTION

### Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL)

Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL) is a global entertainment powerhouse reaching 1.3 billion viewers across 173 countries. The company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) vision is to conduct business in a responsible and sustainable manner. CSR areas of focus include women empowerment, disaster relief, rural development, organic food development, and preservation of culture and arts.

Figure 1: ZEEL Focus CSR Themes

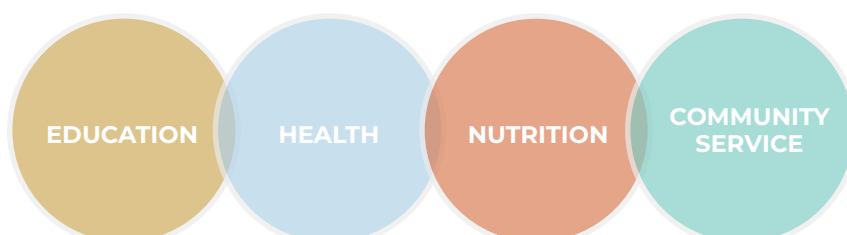


### Partnership with Prashanthi Balamandira Trust (PBT)

In 2020, ZEEL extended monetary support of INR 3.32 crores to Prashanthi Balamandira Trust (PBT) for infrastructure development and financial sponsorship, benefiting 340 girls for one academic year.

Prashanthi Balamandira Trust (PBT) is a public charitable trust, established in Chikkaballapur, Karnataka in 1981. The Trust is guided by the principles of Sri Sathya Sai Baba and works across four domains of development.

Figure 2: PBT Focus Themes



**PBT annually educates over 3,500 students through 21 residential campuses.** PBT offers comprehensive education, encompassing secondary education (Grade 6-12) and tertiary education through Sri Sathya Sai University for Human Excellence. Ensuring inclusivity, PBT provides all students with free education, covering boarding, clothing, and regular meals, thus contributing to their holistic development and fostering a brighter future. Approximately 70% of PBT's student population hails from Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, while around 50% originate from rural areas.



**PBT's ethos is to support children's holistic development and aims to achieve this by balancing 'academic, moral and spiritual education'.**

- PBT's activities include opportunities for students to pursue yoga, sports/ athletics and creative outlets (arts, music, dance).
- With respect to children's academic outcomes, the Trust adopted a new curriculum in 2021, which has been developed by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). NIOS allows girls to tailor their education to their needs and interests, while the emphasis on open exchange and consideration of physical, psychological, social, and cultural aspects fosters a supportive and enriching environment.
- Within the classrooms, the Trust encourages pedagogical approaches such as group discussion, student-led presentations and interactive learning.

## Purpose and Scope of Evaluation

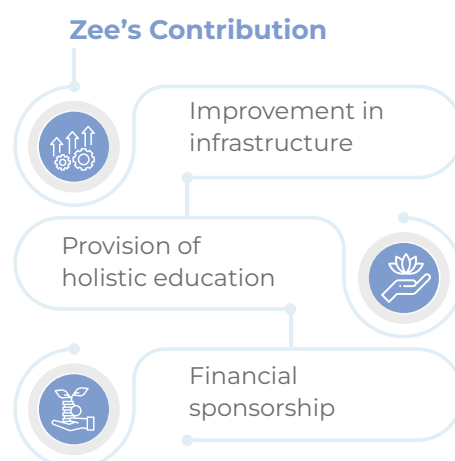
In 2020, ZEEL supported PBT towards infrastructural expansion at the Gadag campus as well as supporting girls for one year of education. Although the initial grant was to sponsor 300 girls' education, PBT was able to support an additional 40 girls - hence, totalling to 340 girls supported by ZEEL.

ZEEL partnered with Give India as the monitoring partner for this initiative, and commissioned 4th Wheel Social Impact to undertake an evaluation of the PBT programme.

**The overarching objective of the study was to qualitatively assess the effect of PBT's programmes on girls' educational outcomes.**

The study focused on three key outcomes, which were identified based on the preliminary review of project documentation and initial consultations with ZEEL, Give India and PBT stakeholders.

Figure 3: Key Outcomes of ZEEL partnership with PBT





Based on the study objectives, the evaluation responds to the following questions:

1.

**Relevance:** To what extent does PBT meet girls' educational needs?

2.

**Coherence:** To what extent is PBT's work aligned with other educational programmes in Karnataka?

3.

**Efficiency:** How efficient was PBT in constructing the Gadag campus?

4.

**Effectiveness:** How successful has PBT been in providing quality infrastructure and holistic education for girls?

5.

**Impact:** What positive changes are occurring in the lives of girls due to PBT's efforts and ZEEL's contribution?

6.

**Sustainability:** How sustainable are PBT's educational activities and their outcomes in the long term?

## Design and Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative approach, to provide insights into key stakeholders' perceptions of change - why the outcomes may or may not have been achieved and showcase qualitative examples of project outcomes.

Of the three districts where ZEEL's support was channelled, two were selected, including one school within each district. This included the Sri Sathya Sai Vaniniketanam campus in Gadag, which was the main site of intervention for ZEEL (expansion of infrastructure) along with girls' sponsorships. The second was the Pre-University College, where approximately 55% of girls who had initially been supported by ZEEL in 2020-2021 were now studying. Schools offering education to Grade 6-8 students and a school offering Pre-University and University-level education were intentionally selected, to enable breadth and depth of data across grade-progression.

Figure 4: Sampled Schools

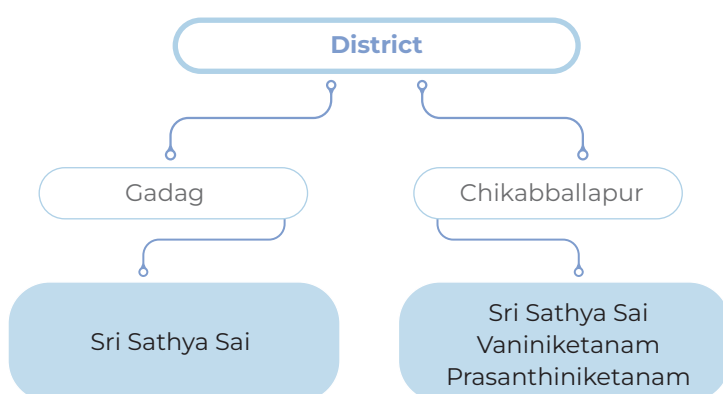
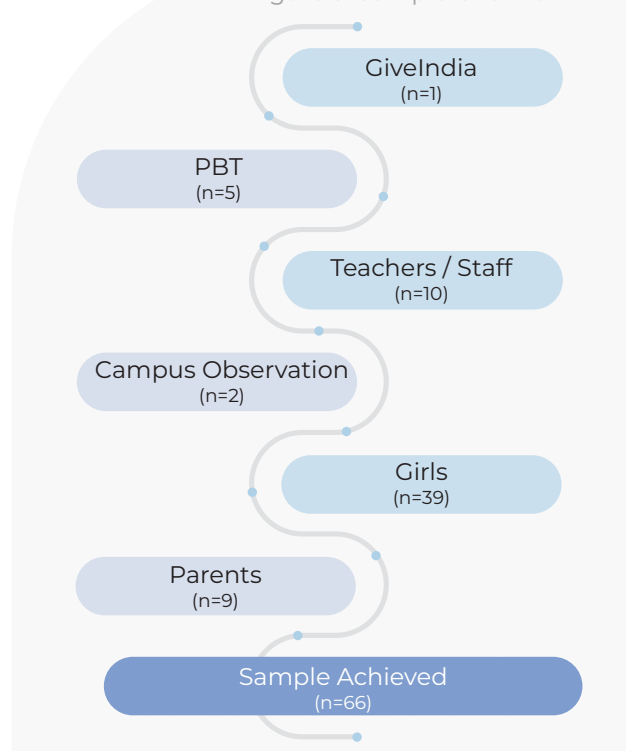


Figure 5: Sample Overview



66

respondents participated in the study.





Thematic analysis was undertaken using Dedoose software. While using these findings, the following limitations should be kept in mind:

**1.**

PBT has received funding grants from multiple stakeholders - particularly with respect to the entire construction of the Gadag campus. As such, isolating ZEEL's impact on improvements in infrastructure is challenging.

**3.**

As this is a 'dipstick', qualitative study, establishing causal relationships or attributing results to one particular activity is limited. In addition, there are no baseline values to measure changes over time or impact.

**2.**

ZEEL's funding grant was a lump sum amount that supported girls' enrolment for one academic year. Hence, the study was able to explore the progress of those girls over the one year. Attributing medium-term or long-term progress to ZEEL's support is not possible.

**4.**

Respondents may have skewed their responses to seem more favourable, due to social desirability bias. This was a low-risk limitation as the team is cognisant of such challenges and took measures in the tool design, training and fieldwork to mitigate such risks.

## FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### Relevance: To what extent does PBT meet girls' educational needs?

Adolescent girls' education serves as a crucial pathway to empowerment and societal progress. Despite the transformative potential of education, numerous challenges persist, particularly for girls in rural and remote contexts.

### Factors affecting girls' enrolment, attendance and learning.

In low-income countries, challenges related to transport (including long distances as well as safety/security risks) are a key barrier for over one-third of adolescent girls (UN Women, 2019).

- 40% of girls aged 15-18 in rural areas across India, walk several kilometres daily to reach school, which has implications for their safety, attendance and overall well-being (CBPR, 2018).
- 35% of girls in rural Karnataka reported that transportation difficulties affected their school attendance (Azim Premji University, 2018). These challenges are further exacerbated for girls in hilly and forested districts.

46% of adolescent girls face inadequate water and sanitation (WASH) facilities in schools impede effective menstrual hygiene management, proper handwashing facilities and increase their risks of ill health (UNICEF 2017).

The cost of education affects girls' access to and progression through school, especially in Karnataka. In 2020, 37% of girls aged 15-18 dropped out of school due to financial barriers (Azim Premji Foundation, 2020).

Alongside challenges at schools, girls' overall well-being, including their learning outcomes are affected by household barriers as well.

- Risks such as domestic violence, abuse, or neglect create an unsupportive and unstable learning environment. Nearly half of the girls who dropped out of school in 2019 in India cited unsafe home environments as a primary reason (Save the Children, 2019).
- Lack of, or limited access to electricity or learning materials can compromise girls' well-being and hinder their progress in learning.



**Gendered attitudes about girls having to contribute to household chores prevents girls from studying and their regular attendance at school.** These further hinder academic progress and lead to feelings of demotivation with respect to education.

Box 1:

### **Girls' insights on challenges faced at other schools.**

During discussions with girls, the following areas emerged as issues faced at other schools before joining the PBT institutions:

**Transport and distance-related issues:** As many of the girls lived in rural and remote areas, they faced difficulties including not getting the bus on time, delaying them in getting to school or coming back home. A small number of girls spent nearly 6 hours commuting each day.

**Dissatisfactory infrastructure:** Inadequate sanitation facilities, particularly during menstruation, limited their full attendance at school. They also reported unclean classrooms which made the learning environment unpleasant.

### **Issues related to teachers and teaching:**

- Lack of teachers and irregular attendance: Girls stated that there was a shortage of teachers at their schools, and those who were there would frequently arrive late. This disrupted their learning.
- Lack of individualised support: A recurring concern was that teachers favoured 'high performers', neglecting those struggling academically. Girls also shared personal experiences of receiving less attention and support from teachers if their families struggled to afford school fees. This demotivated students who needed additional support.

### **Classroom management and curriculum:**

- Crowded classrooms: Every class section had approximately 70 students, which made learning difficult.
- 'Mixed-grade' grouping: Girls reported their dislike for mixed-grade grouping (1st, 2nd, and 3rd). This hindered focus, created difficulty keeping up with the pace of the class, and made them feel uncomfortable being grouped with younger or older students.
- Discomfort to ask questions in class: Girls would feel hesitant to ask questions, which impeded their ability to clarify doubts, seek help, and fully participate in the learning process.
- Lack of spiritual education: Girls raised the issue of not receiving any spiritual education in their previous schools.

## **Importance of free, residential education**



(Interview, PBT Representative)

**Just like oxygen and sunlight are free, we believe that education, healthcare and food should be accessible and available to all for free as well."**

**In contexts where girls have to walk or travel long distances, on-campus boarding facilities eliminate the need for daily commute.** This, in turn, increases attendance as well as learning engagement. Students find that living in the hostel eliminates travel time to and from school, allowing them to dedicate more time to studying.

**Residential schools enable a safe and supportive learning environment, which positively affects progression through education.** In India, girls attending residential schools were more likely to complete secondary education compared to their non-residential counterparts. This was attributed to the success of the safe and supportive environment offered by these schools (Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, 2015).

**On-campus residential facilities contribute positively to girls' academic performance.** Students prefer these facilities to their home environments. The structured environment promotes focus, discipline and consistent study habits. These institutions enable girls to focus on their academic and non-academic outcomes and alleviate the need to contribute to household responsibilities.



**Residential schools foster the overall physical and emotional development of girls.** This is through the provision of:

- **Access to healthcare:** PBT caters to girls from tribal communities, offering them appropriate healthcare and support, leading to improved health outcomes.
- **A sense of belonging and community:** Students experience positive interactions and support from friends and staff, leading to a comfortable and encouraging learning atmosphere. In addition, residential institutions ensure that group settings are readily available to share concerns and clarify concepts, which helps with understanding and retaining information.

## **Coherence: To what extent is PBT's programme aligned with other educational programmes in Karnataka?**

**PBT's education programme of providing free, residential education in adherence with the NIOS curriculum is coherent with existing State-led educational programmes.** As an example, girls referenced two schools - Kittur Sainik School and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti - as alternative residential schools in the state.

**The Kittur Sainik School is an exclusive girls' military school** in Kittur that follows the CBSE curriculum from Grade 6 to 12. The school is open to girls on an all-India basis. However, only Karnataka domicile girls are eligible for the Government of Karnataka Merit Scholarship. The Kittur Sainik school also does not demonstrate evidence of being inclusive of all girls - including those who cannot afford education, who may not meet the physical fitness requirements (including girls with disabilities) and girls who are coming from low-literacy backgrounds. The school has rigorous academic and physical admissions requirements - including a comprehensive entrance exam on Mathematics, General Knowledge, English and IQ/ Mental Ability. Physically, the school has specific height and weight mandates as well as a physical fitness test to meet minimum fitness standards.

**The Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya school is similar to PBT institutions in offering free residential education;** at least 75% of seats are reserved for students with special talent or aptitude in academics. Affiliated with the CBSE curriculum, the school provides free residential education from Class VI to XII. This school, unlike the PBT institutions, reserves seats for children from SC, ST, and OBC backgrounds, as well as those with disabilities - including 27% reservation for OBC students in addition to SC and ST reservations. One-third of seats are filled by female students, and 3% of seats are reserved for disabled children. While this school is similar to PBT in certain aspects, it does not provide spiritual education or demonstrate evidence of encouraging pursuit of creative outlets for girls who may not excel at academics.

**Although the Karnataka government implements various scholarship programs, like the Merit Scholarship and the Pre-Matric Karnataka Scholarship, coverage and accessibility issues persist,** in addition to

- issues with scholarship disbursement owing to delays, communication gaps, and technical issues.
- lack of awareness, documentation difficulties, limited banking access, and digital divide cause hindrances.

These emphasise the need for improved targeting and efficiency towards affordable and accessible quality education for all, especially girls.



## Efficiency: How efficient was PBT in constructing the Gadag campus?

In 2017, the Gadag campus was initially constructed as a singular building which served a dual purpose of providing both residential accommodation and educational facilities. As the number of girls enrolling in the school increased each year, the organisation needed to expand the infrastructural facilities.

The new building was envisioned to be a Ground Floor with an additional two floor structure. The Ground Floor was planned solely for academic purposes, with the first and second floors planned to provide additional residential facilities.

Initially, PBT staggered the construction of the Ground Floor in phases based on funding availability: The Ground Floor construction began with the classrooms in 2019. However, PBT was unable to complete all eight classrooms with the available funding, thus, approached additional donors. ZEEL's funding has supported the completion of four classrooms. During this period, there was an interim pause in construction for 6-7 months.

**The four classrooms supported by ZEEL have been successfully completed.** However, based on our observations, two are being used as 6th Grade classrooms, while two are being used as a teacher's room and a 'projects' room.

### Classrooms built with ZEEL Support (Grade 6)



The washroom facilities that ZEEL have contributed to are not operational yet - as a result, we were unable to observe these during the data collection. Similar washroom facilities on the other side of the building required fittings to be installed as well as connections to the water supply. The Campus Director stated that the washrooms are currently locked from the outside to prevent accidental usage of these facilities till they are fully completed.

PBT has not been able to commence the construction of the first two floors since funding has not been secured to progress these works: as a result, the main building is incomplete.

- Along with funding constraints, the key inhibitors to efficiency as identified by respondents were procurement of labour and material.
- As the campuses - not just the Gadag campus, but all PBT campuses - are located in rural and remote areas, procurement of good quality raw materials is a challenge.



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

Labour is an issue we faced throughout the project because we can't get skilled labour - and a challenge we face across a lot of our campuses in remote areas. We usually get local skilled/ unskilled labourers from nearby villages."



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

We don't have any ready-mix concrete plants available near the campus. Whatever had to be done had to be mixed at the site itself. This delayed the project schedule. We had thought about getting it from Hubli but that was not feasible. The local flooring items had to be imported from Bangalore."



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

'We tried to push the construction work speed but it happened in a slow manner. Thus the project was delayed by 1.5 months compared to our initial expectations.'

Collaboration and communication over the duration of the project enabled efficient project completion. Respondents attributed these to:

- **Transparent communication:** PBT openly communicated the delays caused by the pandemic to the monitoring partner.
- **Cooperation in reporting and due diligence processes:** Initially, there were a small number of reporting-related challenges - however, upon feedback and dissemination of a template, a standardised reporting process and format were followed. These improvements also included the inclusion of utilisation proofs within monthly financial reports.
- **Smooth disbursement of funds:** PBT reported no issues with receipt of funds.

A summary of the overall challenges faced and the mitigation strategies PBT adopted can be found in Annex 2.

## Effectiveness: How successful has PBT been in providing quality infrastructure and holistic education for girls?

**PBT fosters a conducive learning environment through quality infrastructure.**



All Swami campuses are the same...the building infrastructure and facilities were really good. We had [a] comfortable space to live in and the academics [were] also really good."

(FGD, Girls)

Based on our observations of the two campuses, PBT has been effective in its provision of **quality infrastructure**, when pegged to U-DISE data. This is in comparison to the availability and quality of infrastructure at other schools in rural and remote areas, which respondents noted to be lacking (particularly WASH facilities, which are crucial for adolescent girls).

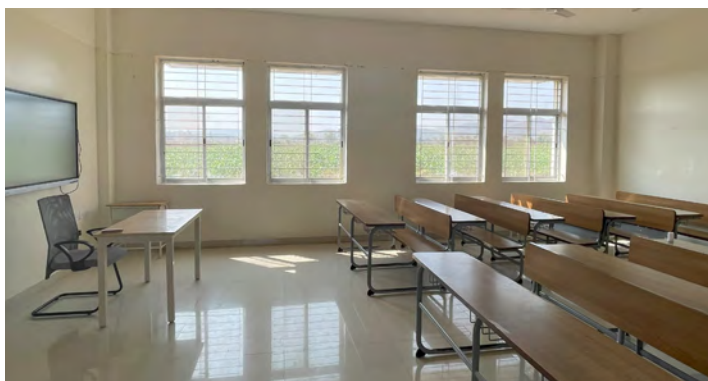
All stakeholders expressed satisfaction and happiness with the available infrastructure and resources, including teachers, parents and girls from both Sathya Sai Vaniniketanam (Gadag) and Sathya Sai Prasanthi Niketanam (Chikkaballapur) campuses. Parents were particularly satisfied with the security of the schools - as security personnel are deployed 24/7 around the campus.



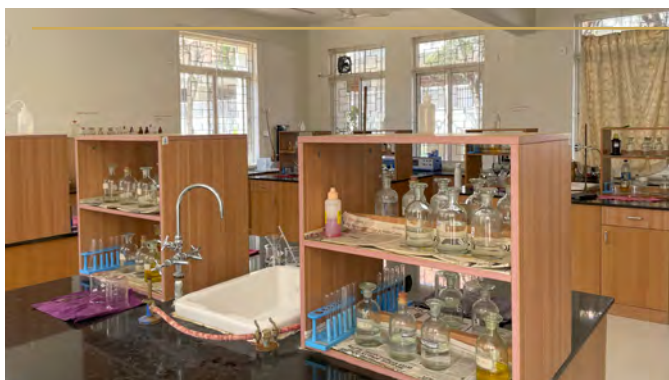
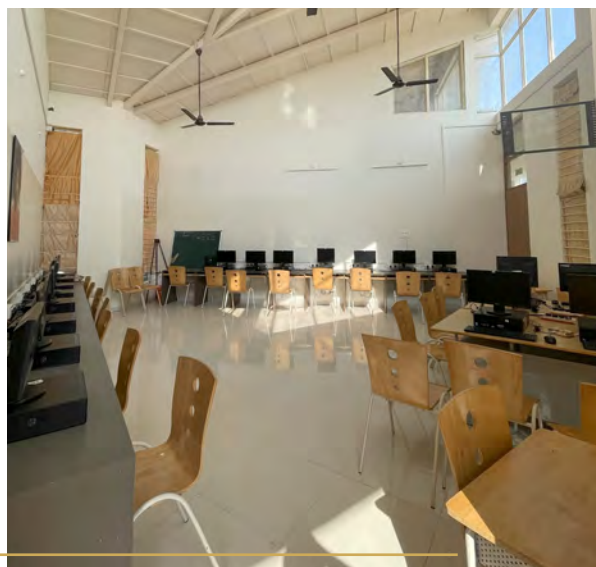
**We are happy and it's fully safe and [secure] for our girls. We can stay in our place without any tension.”**

(FGD, Mothers)

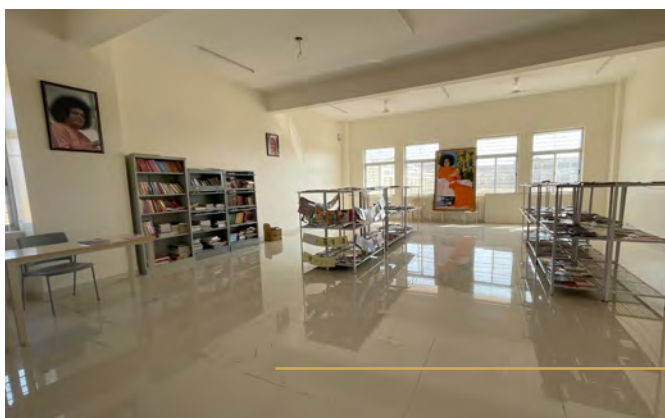
Girls appreciate the hostel facilities, with some stating that the school is ‘beyond their dream school’. Some of their favourite aspects of the campus include witnessing sunrises, sunsets, the moon, and stars, both from their rooms and during outdoor activities. The peaceful and natural environment contributed to their positive experience. They also expressed a preference for attending classes outside, stating that the campus environment fostered a more engaging learning experience. They compared the hostel facilities to a home-like environment.



ZEEL supported classroom (Gadag campus) and computer lab. Classrooms are well-ventilated and well-lit, with adequate space, individual seating and desks. One classroom is equipped with a Smart TV, and none had observable projectors. At Gadag, one side of the academic building overlooks nature



Chemistry and Biology labs at the PUC/ University have adequate workstations, safety protocols, materials and equipment.



Library at the Gadag campus: both campuses have well-stocked libraries with a diverse range of resources available. These books are centrally procured and distributed by the Head Office.



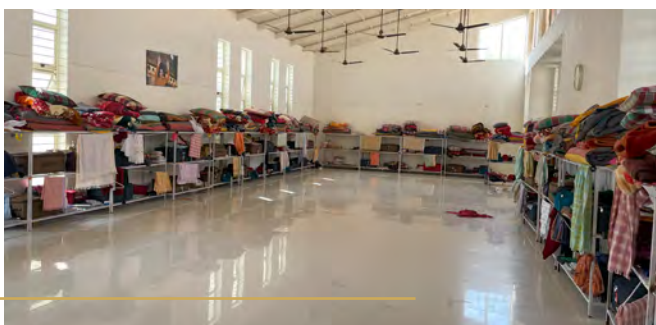


Water cooler at the Gadag campus: Electricity and drinking water is available and provided throughout both campuses: Both also have a generator in the instance of power-cuts. The Gadag campus has rooftop solar panels installed for heating water.



Washroom facilities at Gadag campus are available around the campus, single-sex and satisfactorily clean.

Washroom facilities at Gadag campus are available around the campus, single-sex and satisfactorily clean.



However, based on our observations, areas for improving effectiveness of infrastructure at the campuses include:

- **Installation of visual learning materials/ aids:** Classrooms at Gadag campus did not have any visual aids such as posters or learning materials displayed on the walls, nor were student projects displayed in classes.
- **Increasing storage facilities:** All classrooms at Gadag lacked cupboards/ cubby-holes or bag racks - students were observed to place their bags on the floor against a wall or sit on them at their desks.
- **Ensuring classrooms are utilised as intended:** Two of the four classrooms have been repurposed for non-academic functions such as staff rooms or project rooms.
- **Providing dedicated dining spaces:** Girls either eat in the multi-purpose hall, or in the case of the Gadag campus, in their dormitory rooms. According to an interview with a PBT respondent, the reason for this is that the multi-purpose halls serve a 'tiny purpose' otherwise, and thus they have decided to use this as a dining facility as well.
- **Installing disposal facilities in washroom cubicles and maintaining inclusive toilets** (for children with disabilities or temporary injuries): These were not observed at either campus.

**All stakeholders appreciate PBT's curriculum, which combines academic, spiritual and extra-curricular education.**

Global evidence finds that a well-rounded educational environment fosters a sense of belonging and purpose. Beyond academic performance, schools that provide holistic education enable improvements in confidence, critical thinking skills, and a heightened sense of community engagement.



PBT's approach to holistic education involves an equal emphasis on academics, spiritual education and extra-curriculars.

This has been influenced by the adoption of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) curriculum. This exposes learners to all forms of knowledge (including modern science, ancient Vedic texts, classical music and dance forms).

One of the primary reasons PBT adopted the NIOS is to provide girls with spiritual education alongside academic education: Respondents stated that the previous curriculum had stringent requirements and restrictions, which hindered the organisation from integrating the 'Para Vidya' curriculum.

Girls appreciate learning spirituality alongside academics, as well as the values of patience, love and respect for all. Girls stated they find joy and meaning through this - and all enjoy learning about the Sanatana Dharma, Vedic scriptures, Bhagavad Gita, and Upanishads alongside their regular studies.

PBT is effective in ensuring girls receive the learning support they need through the following mechanisms:

- **Small teacher-student ratio:** One of the reasons PBT restricts its annual enrollment is to make sure classrooms are not over-crowded.
- **Providing Bridge Classes at the beginning of the school year:** This helps girls transitioning from government schools 'catch up' when they join Grade 6 to ensure they understand foundational concepts in language and Mathematics.
- **Providing Extra Coaching Sessions:** The school provides extra coaching for learners who require additional support during the academic year and the holiday period.

Due to the curriculum's flexibility, teachers incorporate 'non-traditional' methods in the classroom (see Box 2).

Box 2:

### Teaching pedagogies adopted in the classroom

Within the classroom, teachers emphasise practical learning. Specific approaches teachers use include:

- **Question and answer sessions:** This enables teachers to gauge student comprehension and clarify any misconceptions.
- **Administering regular tests or quizzes:** These tests help identify students' understanding of the topics covered, areas where students may need additional support and track their progress over time.
- **Individual explanation by students:** Teachers encourage students to explain concepts or solve problems independently. This not only assesses their understanding but also fosters critical thinking and communication skills as they articulate their reasoning.

PBT supports teachers to implement these pedagogies through a separate department for teacher training and development.

- Teachers receive resources and materials for classroom use: Teaching aids, access to libraries, and digital education tools ensure that educators have the necessary resources to enhance students' learning experience.
- Teachers participate in shared platforms for learning: PBT teachers communicate over WhatsApp, participate in teacher training workshops and also receive visiting faculty from institutions they have collaborations with such as AIIMS and Banaras Hindu University.

## During 2020-2022, the institution adapted its teaching methods to ensure continuity of education while girls were at home during Covid-19.

This included:

- **Provision of smartphones and learning materials:** This mitigated risks that rural students from marginalised backgrounds, who did not have prior access to a smartphone, would face learning losses during this time.
- **Free-of-cost online classes available on the website and a digital application:** The website was reported to have been successful and received positive response, particularly due to the financial accessibility. The Trust continuously monitors the quality standards of online lessons to ensure the material is relevant and up to date.
- **Individualised in-kind assistance where needed:** The institution scheduled individual calls with students and provided financial assistance, groceries, and mobile phones to economically disadvantaged families.

## IMPACT: What positive changes are occurring in the lives of girls due to PBT's efforts and ZEEL's contribution?

**PBT effectively ensures that all girls are financially supported to continue their education.**

PBTs provision of sponsorships bridges the financial gap in accessing residential education, enabling girls from marginalised communities to continue their education.

This is especially relevant given the socio-economic backgrounds of girls enrolled at PBT institutions (Box 3).

Box 3:

### Profiles of girls and how they are enrolled at PBT institutions



(Interview, PBT)

The backgrounds that these students come from are mostly single-parent families, wife-beating families. This is the culture in village households. When they stay with us, they are really in a safe and secure environment. Child marriage is still prevalent in deep, rural India. Especially in Northern Karnataka. All meals are provided as well. Children are protected from the environment of their family where things may not be very comfortable.”

PBT endeavours to enrol girls who otherwise may not be able to afford or access education - with specific focus given to girls from “disadvantaged backgrounds”. This includes

**First-generation graduates:** Girls are often the first in their households to graduate from secondary-level education, let alone tertiary education.



(FGD, Girls)

It was my mother's wish - she could not study further due to her financial background, so it was her dream to send me to an English-medium school. It was far away but they still took the risk to help me study."

**Single-parent households:** 13 of the 49 girls we spoke to were from households where either their mother or father had passed away.

**Below Poverty Line families:** Approximately half of the girls we spoke to were from families whose parents were in sectors such as agriculture, daily wage labour (e.g., tailoring) or home-makers. The other half of the girls reported that their parents were engaged in work such as teaching, employees within the government sector, employees at the Head Office/ Ashram, etc.



(FGD, Girls)

My father had been thrown out by his family...we were on the streets...my father was unwilling to remove us from the English school. My mother sold all her gold and she made us study till 10th grade...my father thought about withdrawing us from school but all 3 of us got into Swami's institution."

**PBT has two approaches to recruit girls:** 50% of their students are admitted through general merit, open admissions and the remaining 50% through 'direct recruitment'.

The direct recruitment process involves deployment of volunteers within a 200km radius to the nearby villages to conduct household visits and survey parents and children separately to ascertain their poverty status (by asking questions related to assets, vehicles, possession of smart phones/ TVs/ refrigerators etc.). A key point mentioned by PBT implementing partners is the need to verify these, as often parents and children's responses contradict each other, and parents are caught 'lying' for the sake of admissions.

As mothers mentioned in a group discussion,



(FGD, Mothers)

They approached [us] by explaining that 100% free education with free hostel facility is there and till their higher education everything will be free for them and after education also they will get work here only. And they will help for other opportunities also. Especially here they will teach about discipline in life and along with studies they teach Veda and Upanishad also these all help them to grow in life."

If PBT perceives families to be able to afford education elsewhere, they 'encourage' parents to educate their child at another school.

**The mix of girls through open admissions and household surveys is intentional:** as mentioned by one PBT respondent, the intention is to provide a self-enforcing peer 'buddy' mechanism for improvement.



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

I want the 50% of general merit students to rub shoulders with the other 50% to show that “I can also be like them”. It’s a buddy-sharing mechanism - the mix has to happen to overcome self-esteem/ psychological issues [and inculcate] aspirational thinking.”

As part of the financial sponsorships, PBT covers tuition fees, uniforms, textbooks, security costs and expenses for personal items: All stakeholders stated that girls only need to show up in the clothes they are wearing and everything else would be provided for them. Details on education costs at PBT institutions are highlighted in Box 4.

Box 2:

### Average costs of education at PBT

As per 2020, the cost of education was estimated at INR 65,000 per girl per annum (this was the amount pitched to ZEEL and granted to PBT for 340 girls’ education).

**However, the costs of education are rising:** based on our interviews with PBT representatives, the average cost of educating a girl between Grade 6 - Grade 12 was INR 1,12,000, although the amount pitched to donors was INR 1,00,000.

**Costs further increase as girls progress through education** - undergraduate degrees cost INR 2,50,000/-; postgraduate degrees cost INR 3,50,000/- and medical education costs INR 8,00,000/-.

This includes supporting their tuition fees, travel, clothing, food, educational materials, security and personal expenses such as healthcare.

PBT endeavours to streamline education costs in the following ways:

- **Consistency between girls’ and boys’ education costs:** Though girls’ education is marginally more expensive than boys’ education (due to additional personal/ hygiene items required), this is not factored into the costs that are pitched to donors.
- **Consistency across campuses:** Certain input costs vary by district (e.g., food costs are higher in South Karnataka than North Karnataka), however, PBT compares expenditure across the campuses to ascertain where these can be reduced in certain items.

**PBTs sponsorships alleviate financial burdens families face:** The most consistently mentioned reason for sending their children to PBT institutions mentioned by mothers and fathers was the reduction in financial burden by taking care of school expenses.



((FGD, Fathers)

Here, free education is there with free hostel facilit[ies], and security wise it’s good and we are not [able to afford] fees [in] outside [schools].”





(FGD, Mothers)

They are paying school fees and hostel fees; it saves us from [the] financial burden. [They] provide all [the] basic necessit[ies] and mainly [take] care of health. It's very useful for poor people. And all these facilities are [a] big financial support for us."

**Over half of the girls supported by ZEEL have successfully progressed two grade-levels, including undergraduate and postgraduate degrees.**

Based on data shared by PBT, approximately 55% of girls sponsored by ZEEL in 2020-2021 have successfully continued with their education and progressed two grades as of this academic year (2022-2023).

Of note, 54% of 12th grade girls are in their second year of undergraduate studies. This makes them "amongst 1% of Indian rural women who get a tertiary degree." (Interview, PBT Respondent)

The detailed breakdown of progression by grade is shown in Box 5 below.

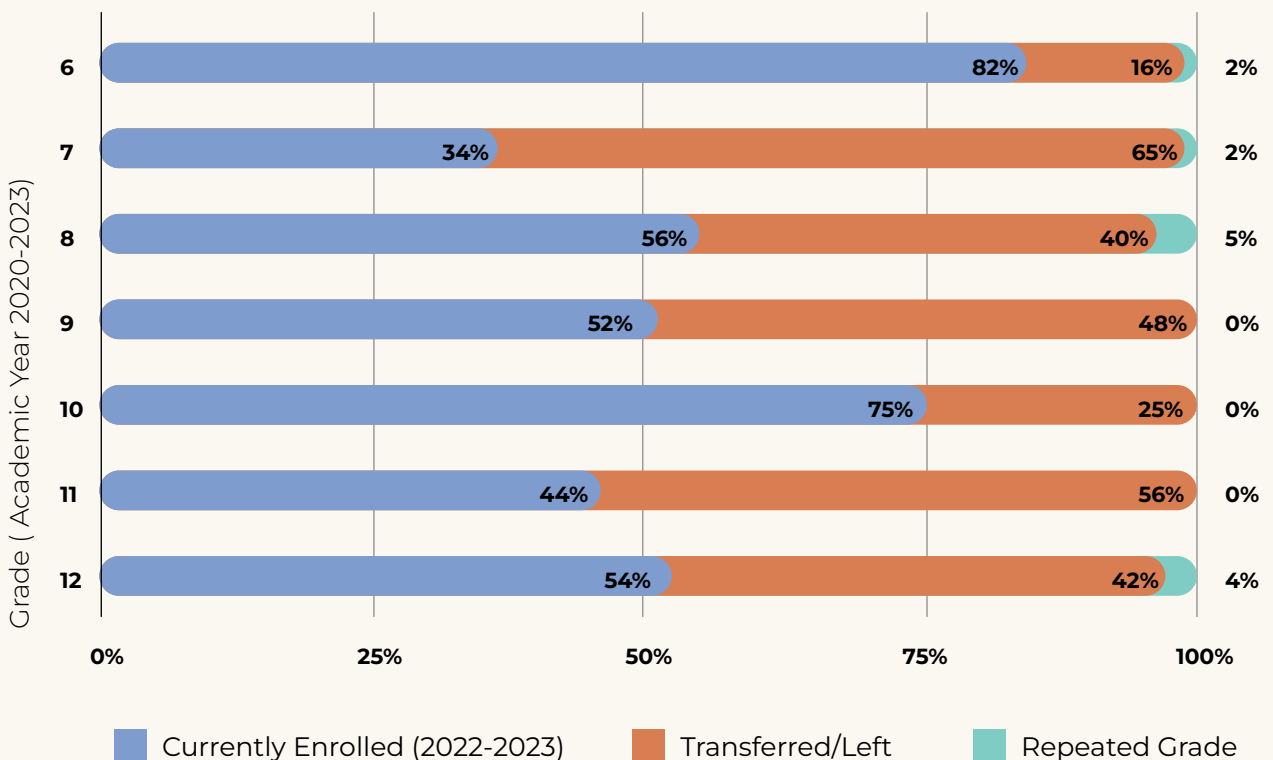
Box 5:

**Where are ZEEL-supported girls now?**

Based on data shared by PBT, 82% of girls who joined in Grade 6 are presently studying in Grade 8. Over 50% of girls who were studying in Grade 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12 have progressed two grades.

However, only 34% of girls who were studying in 7th have progressed till 9th and 44% of girls studying in 11th have progressed to the first-year of undergraduate.

Current enrollment status of girls supported by Zee (%)



This does not suggest that girls have **dropped out of school entirely** - it simply means they are not presently enrolled at PBT schools, and PBT has not tracked their present educational status.

There are two possible explanations for this:

- **Ripple effects of Covid-19:** It is widely known that Covid-19 severely impacted girls' education - aside from the learning losses as a result of school closures, girls' general barriers to education increased, such as migration, increased caregiving responsibilities, etc.
- **Perceptions of external opportunities available to girls upon graduating from PBT:** Discussions suggest that community members feel if girls are educated through PBT they may not be adequately prepared for competitive exams (such as NEET, JEE) and go on to pursue such degrees. Thus, this makes them reluctant to continue educating girls at PBT, preferring to withdraw them and transfer them to other schools that may be more specialised in these areas. However, interviews with PBT respondents indicate that they do support girls to prepare for these as long as girls demonstrate interest and academic capabilities (measured by academic performance) in these fields.

**PBT further enables girls' transitions to tertiary education through the provision of a monthly stipend.** This is effective for the following reasons:

- It incentivises parents to keep their daughters in school and enable them to pursue postgraduate degrees



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

Parents were not ready [to let their girls pursue post-graduate degrees] because they felt that if a girl is too educated, they wouldn't be able to find a suitable groom (e.g., equally or more educated) in their village. Then we started providing stipends to encourage the parents to let the children study. That incentive got a lot of admissions into PG. Even now, all PG girls get a stipend of 10,000 INR per month."

- By transferring the stipend directly into girls' bank accounts, it enables girls to become income-earners in their families.
- Upon completion of postgraduate degrees, girls' employment opportunities expand - with preferred choices being teaching or medical professions.

**Girls enrolled at PBT institutions have demonstrably increased academic opportunities compared to girls not enrolled in PBT institutions.**

As shown in Table 1 below, the proportion of girls successfully transitioning across levels of education declines substantively. Girls from Gadag are at higher risk of discontinuing their education than girls from Chikkaballapur.

Table 1: Approximate transition rates (average, %)

	Girls successfully completing primary school	Girls successfully completing secondary school	Girls pursuing tertiary education
Teachers (Gadag)	100%	75%	10-15%
Teachers (Chikkaballapur)	99%	70%	15-30%

One of the primary reasons girls in Gadag drop out of school is due to early marriage, which is related to the low value attached to girls' education: Child marriage is a common practice in 27 out of 31 districts in Karnataka - on average, nearly 25% of women aged 20-24 were married before the age of 18 (NFHS-4, 2015-16). The Covid-19 pandemic appears to be one factor that has impacted the prevalence of early marriage, as the number of reported cases were substantially higher in 2021-2022 than in 2017-2018<sup>2</sup>. It is important to note that actual numbers are likely to be higher than reported numbers.



(FGD, Teachers)

There remains a perception that once a girl reaches marriageable age, there is a significant pressure to arrange her marriage, with priority often given to boys' education. This mindset can result in girls receiving less emphasis on higher education, as parents may prioritize their daughters' marriage over their academic pursuits."

Financial constraints contribute to families' low-value for girls' education as well as the desire to marry girls early. This is a critical issue in Gadag district, and Northern Karnataka overall, where stakeholders emphasised the continued prevalence of early marriage being associated with 'fulfilling [families'] responsibilities' and 'getting rid of the girl'.



(FGD, Teachers)

Attendance rates tend to decline as girls progress through higher levels of education, particularly among those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds."

PBT teachers conduct counselling sessions with parents or home visits to bring them back to school, in instances where families do try to withdraw their daughters' admissions.



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

There was one instance of a girl at Gadag campus - she went home during the holiday and her parents wanted her to get married. Our chairperson had to go to the house, talk to the grandmother and convince her to come back."

<sup>2</sup><https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/bangalore/child-marriages-in-karnataka-rose-by-300-in-5-years-shows-govt-data-8149838/>

## PBT has impacted girls' academic and personal development.

As a result of joining the PBT schools, girls reported improvements in the following domains:

- **Academics** - stating that they do not face significant learning challenges or difficulties. In addition, they have the option to choose what they wish to study, with a variety of subjects available to them - including Botany, Zoology, Carnatic Music, Literature, Vedic Studies, etc.
- **Physical health** - Girls have learned healthy eating habits and receive good-quality, nutritious meals. In addition, the schools organise monthly check-ups and have telephonic consultations with doctors if required.
- **Self-confidence and personal development:** All girls reported a decrease in anger and a greater sense of responsibility since joining the school. They also appreciate changes in discipline, such as punctuality, selfless service, and respecting elders.
- **Extra-curricular activities they otherwise would not have been able to learn:** This includes performing arts (music, dance, drawing, drama), skills-based activities such as computer classes, child development classes and physical activities such as karate, sports and games.
- **Participation in conferences:** They participate in youth conferences, global cultural meets and the cross-campus Annual Sports and Cultural Meet.

## PBT's work is generating positive impacts within communities.

Community attitudes appear to be changing, albeit slowly, which may also be generating a higher demand for education at PBT's institutions. Respondents related these changes to:

- **Greater parent and community awareness of PBTs work:** This includes through PBTs community-level activities, such as Gram Seva, parents' service requirements, which expose them to the mission and work of the organisation as well as opportunities to go on international trips with Madhusudan Sai and meet with foreign donors.
- **Increased respect afforded to PBT graduates:** As mentioned by two respondents, two stories include:



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

There was one student who is the first post-graduate in her village. Now every parent in that village wants to send their child - boy or girl - to our organisation. They saw the child grow - when she used to go out for holidays, they saw her development over time. And now everyone in the village wants to send their children to our schools."



(Interview, PBT Respondent)

They see a big difference when the girls go back - they become champions for the school. Therefore, their attitudes towards girls' education are slowly changing. As an example, one of the girls - when she went back home - in their village, they had to do something on the computer - none of the boys were able to do it, but she was."



Nearby villages benefit from the establishment of the PBT campuses. Teachers and PBT respondents attributed these to:

- Greater accessibility in rural and remote areas, once roads for the schools are constructed.
- Electricity, water and internet supply that are enabled for the schools are also availed by local communities.
- Employment opportunities, as local community members can be contracted as construction workers during the construction phase, can seek employment in the campuses once established. Additionally, farmers can sell their local produce to the campus.

## Sustainability: How sustainable are PBT's educational activities and their outcomes in the long term?

Improvements in infrastructure are likely to sustain due to regular monitoring and maintenance of all the campuses. Implementers and the head teachers at the two schools stated that there is a separate department at the PBT Head Office that oversees the maintenance and repair works. All of the campuses submit a monthly report that includes whether any work is needed on campus, following which, a Site Engineer is deployed if attention is required. In addition, there are staff on campus to take care of any immediate plumbing or electrical issues.

Provision of financial scholarships may sustain; however, this requires a shift in donors' decision-making processes and how they conceptualise impact:

As one PBT representative stated,



(Interview, PBT Representative)

Many times, the way we look at charities in India is that they need to be really underprivileged/ deprived. Sometimes when [donors] come see our world-class facilities, they feel we are very well-funded - but that is not necessarily the case. The institution need not be in a shack. We have an end-to-end model. How many NGOs support from 6th Std till University? Here we give them a lifetime, their entire life is taken care of. We are really investing in the life of a student. So, without getting into the depth of the work we're doing, just by looking at it superficially, they will walk away."

Investing in girls' education over a longer-term period overcomes barriers to education and ensures that changes do not 'revert' - thus strengthening the likelihood of breaking the cycle of poverty. One component that PBT respondents emphasised is,



(Interview, PBT Representative)

I...want to appeal to donors through this report to support [operating expenses] - that is my current need. I would suggest corporates take up sponsorship opportunities/ education opportunities. I feel that is important and that they should run programmes for operational expenditure. For example, to the gentlemen from Greece "you built the infrastructure for us, now help us take care of the children".

Implementing partners, teachers and monitoring partners expressed concerns with respect to PBT's financial sustainability, especially the residential education model.

This stems from the fact that PBT is 100% reliant on external funding sources. A potential withdrawal of such funding could pose substantial challenges to the ongoing viability of the model.

**In addition, donors may be less keen to fund operating expenses such as financial scholarships.**

One potential reason for this could be that donor, particularly corporates, prefer to see tangible outcomes such as infrastructure, or are bound by internal policies that influence where the CSR funds are channelled.

At the same time, implementing partners seemed confident that support will continue to be granted as people see the work the organisation is doing - referring to seeking funding as an effort that must continue - and their benefactors/ patrons who are aligned to the values of the organisation will continue to support the mission.

**Respondents also noted that the creation of a virtuous cycle, wherein the “beneficiary becomes a benefactor” is likely to enable the sustainability of these outcomes as well.** All of our interviewees from PBT were alumni of the institution. The girls at the school also expressed an interest in pursuing further education and employment opportunities within the institution.

As an example, from one of our interviewees who graduated from a PBT institution and is presently working with the organisation,



(Interview, PBT Representative)

**“It’s an honour for me to work in the institution - because I’ve gone through it and benefited from it. So, changing that child’s life and the life of that family...I’m pretty confident that these institutions will grow more and more in the coming years and be the best examples for others.”**

Respondents highlighted the need for alumni to sustain the organisations, with one stating that,



(Interview, PBT Representative)

**Money is important no doubt, but manpower is more important for this work to be sustained. And how we’re addressing that is by getting our own students to be our employees. Only those who come out of the system know the value/ depth of the system. Getting someone from outside for employment’s sake - that level of commitment won’t be there.”**

## Conclusions and Recommendations

This section summarises the key conclusions of this report based on the findings above. The following recommendations have been designed for stakeholders implementing residential education programmes as well as donors who are interested in supporting these initiatives.

### Relevance and Coherence

Key barriers to education include financial barriers, transport-related issues, inadequate or entirely lacking infrastructure, shortage of teachers and dissatisfactory learning environments. By providing free, residential education, PBT meets girls' education needs. Compared to other NGOs or institutions that may be providing similar residential education, a distinctive aspect of PBT is also the adherence to the NIOS curriculum and the emphasis placed on spiritual education. In addition, PBT does not have stringent admissions requirements and targets girls from marginalised communities such as single-parent households, orphan status, Below Poverty Line families, etc.

### Recommendations

To further enhance the relevance and coherence of PBT's educational programs, it is recommended to incorporate comprehensive community assessments during household surveys. These assessments should serve the following aims:



#### **Address Concerns about Residential Institutions:**

Conducting community assessments will provide valuable insights into the perceptions and concerns community members may have regarding residential educational institutions like PBT. By actively engaging with community members, PBT can identify and address any misconceptions or apprehensions, thereby fostering trust and support for its educational initiatives.



#### **Evaluate Cultural Appropriateness of the Spiritual Curriculum:**

It is important to assess whether the spiritual curriculum implemented by PBT aligns with the cultural beliefs, values, and practices of the communities it serves. This evaluation will ensure that the spiritual education provided is culturally relevant and resonates with the local context, thereby enhancing its effectiveness and acceptance among students and their families.

Fostering open communication and collaboration with community members will contribute to the development of a supportive and inclusive educational environment conducive to the holistic growth and development of girls from marginalised backgrounds.

### Efficiency and Effectiveness

PBT has successfully completed construction of the classrooms ZEEL contributed towards, albeit 1.5 months later than expected. Factors such as transparent communication, flexibility in repurposing funds and adapting to Covid-19 have enabled the completion of the project. At the time of data collection, the washrooms were incomplete and not operational. A key challenge that has hindered the operational efficiency of PBT's completion of the Gadag campus is financial constraints. The initial construction of the academic building was staggered due to a need to continue to raise funds. After ZEEL's grant, the organisation had to secure additional funding to complete the extension of the Ground Floor. In addition, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated difficulties in procuring good-quality labour and materials which delayed the completion of the project as well.

Overall, PBT provides quality infrastructure that, to a large extent, mitigates barriers to girls' education. This includes ensuring classrooms are spacious and equipped with adequate desks/chairs, WASH facilities, etc. In addition, all of the PBT campuses are situated amidst nature in remote

locations, providing girls with a peaceful learning environment. The organisation prioritises girls' safety and has security personnel deployed 24/7. However, we find areas for improvement, including ensuring spaces are utilised as intended (e.g. residential areas as well as the multi-purpose hall are presently used as dining spaces), improving accessibility of washroom facilities for girls with physical impairments and improving the safety of outdoor spaces for playing/ sports.

All girls spoke highly of the curriculum and the opportunities available to them across the three components of holistic, well-rounded education: academic, spiritual and extra-curricular activities. The alignment with NIOS is a major factor in enabling the organisation to provide these, as it gives them the flexibility to impart the spiritual education PBT strongly emphasises. Teachers play a significant role in fostering girls' learning and personal development, and the school adopts measures to mitigate risks of drop-outs; primarily facilitated through parent/ family counselling sessions.

## Recommendations

The following list outlines important and priority infrastructural improvements that need to be made:



### **Install Disposal Facilities and Ensure Inclusive Toilets:**

Equip washroom cubicles with proper disposal facilities for sanitary products to promote hygiene and sanitation among female students. Ensure the availability of inclusive toilets designed to accommodate children with disabilities or temporary injuries, promoting inclusivity and accessibility within the school environment.



### **Enhance Classroom Environment:**

Displaying student work in classrooms can foster a sense of pride and ownership among students, while also providing visual aids for learning and inspiration. Install bag racks in all classrooms to provide students with designated spaces to store their belongings, reducing clutter and promoting organization within the classroom.



### **Improve Space Utility:**

Designate dedicated dining spaces within the school premises to facilitate a conducive environment for meals, promoting social interaction and healthy eating habits among students. Provide separate teachers' rooms and storage rooms to ensure that classrooms are not repurposed for storage or administrative purposes, maximising the use of classroom space for teaching and learning activities.

Leveraging varied available financing mechanisms can help overcome funding challenges and accelerate infrastructural improvements.



### **Apply for Grants and Funding Opportunities:**

PBT can actively seek out grant opportunities from government agencies, philanthropic foundations, or international development organisations that support education and infrastructure projects. Grant funding can provide the necessary financial support for infrastructural improvements without the need for repayment.



### **Crowdfunding Campaigns:**

PBT can launch crowdfunding campaigns through online platforms to engage with a wider audience and solicit donations from individuals who support their cause. Crowdfunding allows for direct engagement with supporters and can help raise funds for specific infrastructural projects.





### Prioritise and Phase Projects:

PBT should prioritise infrastructure projects based on their urgency and impact on student welfare and academic outcomes. By phasing projects and focusing on essential improvements first, PBT can gradually address infrastructural needs over time as funding becomes available.



### Explore Alternative Financing Models:

PBT can explore alternative financing models such as public-private partnerships, where private investors contribute funds for infrastructure projects in exchange for long-term benefits or revenue-sharing arrangements.



## Impact and Sustainability

PBT mitigates financial barriers to education - which is one of the primary reasons parents enrol their children at PBT schools. PBT secures funding to enable continuation and progression through education. This is all-inclusive, with all stakeholders stating that girls solely have to show up in their clothes and all other materials/ expenses will be taken care of - including uniforms, daily clothes, travel fares, textbooks/ learning materials, personal and hygiene items. PBT is making a difference in girls' lives by supporting them all the way through tertiary education. Girls enrolled in PBT schools report significant academic and personal growth, enjoying diverse extracurricular activities and participating in conferences, which expand their horizons. The positive impact of PBT's work is evident in shifting community attitudes toward education, benefiting not only enrolled girls but also neighbouring villages through improved infrastructure and employment opportunities. However dropout rates are higher at higher levels of education due to early marriage, which is related to the low value attached to girls' education:

PBT's infrastructure is likely to sustain as the campuses have been established and the organisation regularly monitors and maintains issues through monthly update reports, as well as teams deployed on campus to take care of minor problems. All stakeholders expressed concerns about the financial sustainability of sponsoring girls, especially in light of how donors perceive impact and constraints they may face in what they are able to or willing to sponsor. At the same time, implementing partners and teachers seemed confident that the organisation will sustain itself, citing factors such as faith and trust in patrons who are aligned with the mission, alumni efforts and growing demand for education as a result of wider impacts within the community. In addition, the organisation is contributing to the creation of a virtuous cycle, wherein girls who benefit from the institution return upon graduation as interns/ staff to sustain the school and carry it forward.

## Recommendations



### Promote Success Stories:

Develop a comprehensive strategy to highlight success stories of girls who have achieved academic and professional milestones after graduating from PBT schools. Utilise various communication channels such as social media, newsletters, community events, and local media outlets to share these success stories effectively. Organise alumni events where successful graduates can share their experiences and inspire current students and community members.



### Scholarship Opportunities and Alumni Network:

Promote Government and Private scholarship programs for higher education to support PBT graduates in pursuing further studies. Collaborate with universities, organisations, and government agencies to create scholarship opportunities tailored to the needs of PBT alumni. Build a robust alumni network by organising alumni reunions, workshops, and networking events to foster connections among graduates and provide support and mentorship opportunities.



### Securing Financial Support Beyond One Year:

Develop a sustainability plan that includes diversifying funding sources and applying for multi-year operational grants to ensure continued support for girls' education. Engage with existing donors to advocate for funding models that extend beyond one year, emphasising the long-term impact and sustainability of supporting girls' education. Explore partnerships with corporate sponsors, foundations, and philanthropic organisations that align with PBT's mission and are willing to invest in the organization's long-term sustainability.



## LIST OF ANNEXES

### Annex I: References

PBMT Monthly Reports
Repairs & Maintenance Expenses
Construction Report_ Gadag
Architect Estimate and Facilities
Security Bills
Activity Write-Up with Images
Staff List
Quarterly Reports
Total ZEEL Expenditure_ Estimated Expenses Jan 2021

### External Literature

'Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2022'. UN Women – Headquarters, 17 Sept. 2021, <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/09/progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022>.

Hassfurter, Karoline. 'Progress on Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene: 2017 Update and SDG Baselines'. UNICEF DATA, 12 July 2017, <https://data.unicef.org/resources/progress-drinking-water-sanitation-hygiene-2017-update-sdg-baselines/>.

Ramachandran, Vimala. Inside Indian Schools: The Enigma of Equity and Quality. Azim Premji University, 2018, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mrutyunjaya-Mishra-3/publication/367660710\\_Education\\_of\\_Socio-Economic\\_Disadvantaged\\_Groups\\_From\\_Marginalisation\\_to\\_Inclusion/links/63f205732958d64a5ce2c568/Education-of-Socio-Economic-Disadvantaged-Groups-From-Marginalisation-to-Inclusion.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mrutyunjaya-Mishra-3/publication/367660710_Education_of_Socio-Economic_Disadvantaged_Groups_From_Marginalisation_to_Inclusion/links/63f205732958d64a5ce2c568/Education-of-Socio-Economic-Disadvantaged-Groups-From-Marginalisation-to-Inclusion.pdf).

Residential Schools in India: Popularity, Benefits and Future Outlook, July 2023, <https://www.skvgwalior.org/blog/residential-schools-in-india/>.

Sharma, Nidhi. 'Half the States Fail to Use Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Tribals'. The Economic Times, 11 Dec. 2020. The Economic Times - The Times of India, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/half-the-states-fail-to-use-pre-matric-scholarship-scheme-for-tribals/articleshow/79668640.cms>.

Singh, R., et al. Reaching the Last Child: Evidence from Young Lives India. Centre for Budget Policy and Research, June 2018, [https://www.younglives-india.org/sites/default/files/syndicated/India%2520Country%2520Report%2520June%25202018\\_0.pdf](https://www.younglives-india.org/sites/default/files/syndicated/India%2520Country%2520Report%2520June%25202018_0.pdf).

Untitled. Karnataka Evaluation Authority, <https://kmea.karnataka.gov.in/storage/pdf-files/Reports%20and%20other%20docs/TALP%20ES.pdf>.

Jha, Jyotsna, Geeta Menon, and Puja Minni. Residential Schooling Strategies: Impact on Girls' Education and Empowerment. No. id: 10996. 2016.

<https://cbps.in/wp-content/uploads/Residential-School-Report-13-01-16.pdf>

"Aser 2022 - ASER: Annual Status of Education Report." ASER, Annual Status of Education Report, 18 Jan. 2023, <https://asercenre.org/aser-2022/>. <https://asercenre.org/aser-2022>

## Annex 2: Challenges in efficiency and mitigation strategies

Challenges Faced	Mitigating Measures
Procurement of Labour	Sourcing/ contracting workers from nearby villages. Sourcing skilled labourers from Bangalore for completion of specific work, such as flooring and concrete.
Procurement of Materials	Sourcing materials from nearby villages and if needed, from a 120-130 km radius.
Funding Constraints	Secured funding from ZEEL as well as additional philanthropists to complete the extension of the academic block (Ground Floor only). Repurposing funds that could not be utilised for their original purpose (e.g., in-person sports activities) due to Covid-19 towards completion of the building construction.
Delays in completion of works	Full-time deployment of Site Engineer for three years till project was complete



This research was conducted with the highest standards of independence and objectivity. No member of the research team has any financial interest, advisory role, or affiliation with entities that could influence the outcomes of this study.

This study adheres to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained, confidentiality was upheld, and participant welfare was prioritized.

## RESEARCH TEAM

**Ms. Sharon Weir**  
Senior Consultant

**Romanshi Gupta**  
M&E Associate

**Saral Purohit**  
Research Associate

## ABOUT 4TH WHEEL

4th Wheel Social Impact established in 2010, is a research and advisory firm specializing in monitoring and evaluation of social development programs. Our focus is on providing sophisticated insights to enable data-driven decisions in the realm of social development. We offer strategic advisory services to build robust monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEAL) systems for managing social projects. Our approach integrates practical, culturally relevant social impact assessment strategies involving diverse stakeholders.

For more information about our services and impact, visit [www.the4thwheel.com](http://www.the4thwheel.com)

## CONTACT US

For inquiries, collaborations, or more details about our research and services, please contact us at [hello@the4thwheel.com](mailto:hello@the4thwheel.com)

## STAY UPDATED

Stay informed with our latest research findings, stories, and discussions that drive social change: <https://substack.com/@4thwheelsocialimpact>